

# LIFE AT THE SEM

October 2020

Ryan and Kari Maser

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- For Kari and her students at Immanuel, Wentzville, MO.
- For Ryan as he begins his 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter studies and prepares for full-time ministry.
- For our nation, leaders, and the upcoming election.
- For teachers, professors, principals, school administrators, coaches, and others, as they work through many COVID-19 challenges in schools.
- For Concordia Seminary, as they seek to call their next president.

## JESUS 2020: OUR ONLY HOPE

It's crunch time! Only days remain in the countdown to Election Day. Perhaps you have already voted. It would be an understatement to say it has been a heated and polarized campaign year, with much uncertainty of what to expect after November 3rd.

I go running frequently through the neighborhood adjacent to the seminary. It is a beautiful neighborhood, with large homes and apartment buildings dating to the early twentieth century. Lately, it has been interesting to see the diversity in the political yard signs, with one home supporting one candidate and the next-door neighbor promoting the contender. It might go to show that people of different opinions and beliefs can in fact live next to each other!

There is one yard sign that stood out to me during my runs. It was not a Biden, Trump, or even the "Any capable adult" sign. It simply says, "Jesus 2020: Our Only Hope." Perhaps you have seen it in your neighborhood (see picture on the next page). I would like to meet and thank whoever came up with this sign!

Why? Because it is nothing short of the truth. When we look back on politicians, campaign slogans and promises, government functions and even laws and regulations, we see how imperfect and broken they are. Politicians are sinful people like the rest of us. While government has its role in our lives, namely to protect us and bring order, it is a human invention and has been occupied by people who have lied, cheated, and failed. Governments and leaders have even been known to suppress, persecute, and murder its own citizens.

In an uncertain time as this, there is hope. Not hope that fades with each passing politician, but a real and present hope, far greater than any government entity or leader. An enduring and everlasting hope in Jesus. In Jesus' last moments with his disciples before his death, Jesus spoke about how the disciples would face opposition and persecution in the world. For many of the disciples, this meant not only being opposed by the Roman government but being put to death by it on account of believing in and proclaiming Jesus.

What hope did the disciples have? Read **John 16:33**: "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, has overcome not just the government, its leaders; not just Satan, death, and the forces of evil; but the **whole** world in his death and resurrection. In his ascension, Jesus reigns at the right hand of God and rules over all. While Satan and the forces of evil seem to have their way in the world, they are no match for Jesus. They have been defeated.

That is the hope of the disciples and of us Christians today. Not in a political platform, candidate-elect, policies, or even laws and a particular form of government. Our hope is always in Jesus, the One who came to overcome the world and will come back again to make all things new. Jesus is our only hope, today, tomorrow, and forever.

## WAIT...ONLY SIX MONTHS UNTIL CALL DAY??

That's correct! Call Day (the day when we find out the church and community where we will be placed) is right around the corner. It is hard to believe that we are that close to finding out where God is leading us next to serve His church!

Until then there is so much to do. Ryan recently wrapped up his first quarter classes (3 of them) and has just enjoyed a short breather called Reading Week, where he has been able to relax, do some free reading, and work on various projects and sermons. He is starting three new classes that will take him through rest of the semester. He is excited to learn more about God's Word, specifically studying the Gospel of John and Galatians for two of his classes. It seems that he is always working on a sermon, too, as he has had several opportunities to preach at various congregations.

While Kari has continued to stay busy with her teaching and sees how God is at work each day through the lives of her students, she has also taken up many other various projects. One such weekend project was using her gifts and abilities to make custom t-shirts for her preschool coworkers. As a natural organizer, Kari also spent time cleaning up some of the Seminary Women's Association's containers so that she can prepare care packages for seminary families with newborns. We both enjoyed the opportunity to visit family members, our nieces and nephews, and many friends in a recent weekend trip back to Nebraska. We also look forward to spending some time with our parents in the coming weekends. What a joy it is to see everyone!

One other important event happened this past month. Kari and I had our placement interview with the Seminary's placement director. While we are super excited for this next step and are grateful for God's provision and guidance thus far, we do covet your prayers. Pray for Kari and me, that we would remain patient in the weeks and months ahead, that our hearts and minds would be set on our work at hand, and that we would be protected spiritually and emotionally. Join us in praying for the placement process, for the congregations who are calling a candidate, and for the Board of District Presidents who oversees our placement. Wherever we are called, we are excited to serve and give glory to God.



In an uncertain and troubling time as this, may your eyes be fixed on Jesus, who has defeated the powers of the world. Know that God is on the throne and is more powerful than our greatest fears. Have hope because Jesus has overcome the world.

In Jesus, our only **true** hope,

Ryan and Kari