

LIFE AT THE SEM

February 2019

Ryan and Kari Maser

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Patience and focus on our everyday tasks as we look forward to our Vicarage placement (May 1st)
- Kari as she continues her teaching and coaching
- Ryan as he continues with his studies, that his desire for the Word and the Gospel would keep growing deep.
- For young people who are discerning their future calling, that God would raise up more men for the ministry

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT STOP!

Lately, this is what Kari and I have been hearing a lot of. Classmates saying how much the rain and ice in St. Louis brings them down. Friends and family from back home (in both MN and NE) saying how much snow they have, how tired of the cold they are, and how they wish for the warmer (albeit humid and sticky) days of summer. We all seem to be glued to the news website, constantly hitting “refresh” on our screens to see if another late start or snow day appears. By now we know that the Groundhog didn’t offer any consolation or hope for springtime. Where do we go next, as the rain pours, the wind howls, and the snow pile heaps over our front step? We will explore this more in the devotion below!

*The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the Lord blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever. Isaiah 40:7-8*

“TIME FLIES WHEN YOU’RE HAVING FUN”

On January 21st, I had the wonderful opportunity to go on a trip with four of my closest classmates and seminary friends, and our Director of Admissions, Rev. Bill Wrede, to New York City. This four-day trip included sight-seeing, stops in each of the five boroughs, trying (and enjoying!) the local fare, riding subways and buses, and visiting some of the most beautiful cathedrals I had ever seen. All the while we were guided by Bill, who served a few of the LCMS congregations in NYC prior to

accepting the call to Seminary eight years ago. This was an incredible trip, not only for me as a Midwestern kid to see how huge the Big Apple actually is (and see the ocean for the first time!), but to be immersed in a culture that I had never experienced before, to meet new people and to hear of their stories and lives, and to see God at work in the midst of a bustling city. I am blessed by the strengthening of friendships and the fresh perspective of culture and life I received. We praise God for the safe travel we had, too.

Since coming back from NYC, I am already four weeks into the new semester, which started on Jan. 28th. This semester I am taking Reading and Preaching the Word (Homiletics II), Worship and the Word, Church and World (a Systematic Theology course), and Teaching the Faith. In addition to that I continue to attend weekly Greek, Hebrew, and Formation (Small group) labs. Already, these classes have taught me many more necessary skills and have helped me dig deeper into the Word and how to apply it in the various tasks a pastor is called to do. On top of the class assignments, I have been teaching a Bible Study on the Lord’s Prayer at my field work congregation, and starting to prepare a sermon for Lent. As can be expected, I am very much looking forward to vicarage where I can put many of these things into practice!

Time has certainly flown for Kari. Not only does she continue to teach her 3 and 4 year-olds each week, but she has also been given a good challenge as 5th/6th grade girls basketball coach. Her season has a few weeks remaining and her team is still looking for their first win. Nonetheless, Kari continues to grow as a coach and provides a positive influence on the girls she coaches. Aside from her school responsibilities, Kari has enjoyed a few of the “Sem wives night out” events,



Having fun on a chilly NYC afternoon
(Central Park facing lower Manhattan)

including sampling chocolate at a local chocolatier and a craft night. Kari has also been a trooper, sitting through many Pre-Vicarage workshops with me, and learning about a variety of things to be ready for on vicarage. Kari (and Ryan too) is looking forward to an upcoming roadtrip to Louisville, KY and Cincinnati over Spring Break in March.

Kari and I had the opportunity to host and entertain several guests in the last few weeks. Kari's mom, my parents, my grandma, and my sister all came to visit and spend precious time with us. In addition, we had the honor of mentoring two high schoolers who came for the Seminary's "Taste of the Sem" event. They shadowed me at my field work congregation and sat in a few of my classes, interacted with Seminary professors and students, and had

lunch with Kari and I. Five years ago I had the opportunity to attend this event as a high school senior. We thank God for leading me to the Seminary, and we pray for His provision over these young men as they contemplate their future callings. If you know of any young men who have even an inkling of interest in becoming a pastor, or have a passion for sharing the Gospel with others, send them to Taste of the Sem in 2020!

THE WORD OF OUR GOD WILL STAND FOREVER

This time of year can no doubt be hard emotionally. The dormant creation, the overcast and gloomy days, the glare of snow and ice, the sunshine that only lasts for a moment and then it is hidden. The grass and flowers of spring and summertime have long since vanished. Perhaps health has failed, a loved one has passed away, depression abounds, a job opportunity turns into a flop, or day simply hasn't gone as planned. We find ourselves taken aback, grieving, pacing, wondering what life has in store for us next. But, hear these words from the prophet Isaiah, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." Isaiah certainly was no stranger to suffering. As a prophet Isaiah saw the ways in which sin and pain affected the people of Israel, who were disobedient to God and His word for them. It was not pretty, to say the least. In these verses, Isaiah makes a connection between the short life of the living organisms in a broken world and the mortality of humans who are born into sin. Like the grass that dies and the snowfall that covers it, human flesh will indeed fail - the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). As Christ followers, we know there is something more to life than living and dying. We cling in faith to the Word of God, which endures forever. We hold on to Christ, the Word made flesh, who died, rose again, and lives and reigns for all eternity. While our mortal flesh will soon fail as the grass withers and we succumb to the effects of sin, we can rejoice that our faith and hope rests in Christ, with whom we will live forever.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A BLESSING!

Kari and I are overcome by your messages, phone calls, prayers, cards, and gifts. We thank God for surrounding us with friends and family such as you, and we pray that God would continue to care and provide for you, as He continues to do for us. It is a blessing to be supported by you, as we continue to learn, teach, serve, and grow!

In Christ,

Ryan and Kari

*We thank God for your
continued prayers & support,
and pray that all is well
at King of Kings!*