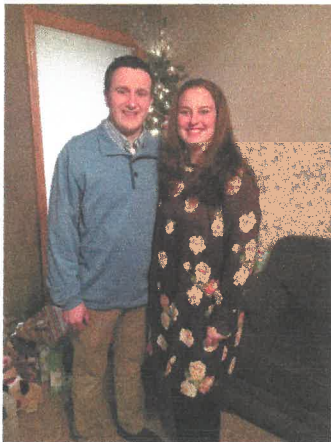


# LIFE AT THE SEM

January 2019

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Patience in God's timing as we prepare for and await our vicarage placement.
- Ryan as he concludes his Winterim course and gets ready for Spring semester.
- Kari as she begins her second semester as Pre-school teacher.
- For the work of missionaries here and across the world.



Christmas Eve in Gretna, NE

## WAIT A SECOND, THIS LOOKS DIFFERENT!

If that was your first thought, then you are correct! It is our hope that this new format will be helpful in giving you a more organized view into our life at Concordia Seminary, and provide you with a complete look at how your prayers and support are impacting our faith, preparation for ministry, and life! Kind of like a New Years' resolution, except we are planning on making this one stick.

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*"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)*

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## A CRAZY DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Like many of you, the months of December and January were crazy, with many things to get done, people to see, and celebrations to attend. Right after Thanksgiving, Kari and I made our first car purchase and decided to replace Kari's Malibu. We settled on a 2015 Ford Escape, which has been by far more reliable and safe. The basketball trip to Fort Wayne was an enjoyable experience, and the exams and papers in the last week of the semester, by the grace of God, all came to a close on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The semester, even though it was the most challenging one thus far, was a success! Kari and I had our vicarage interview on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and we now wait until May 1<sup>st</sup> to find out where we will be sent. I had the opportunity to preach at both Advent services on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> at my field work congregation and worked on campus during the week, while Kari wrapped up with her semester on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

We left immediately on the 21<sup>st</sup> for our "Christmas tour," where we were blessed to visit Kari's family for Christmas in Nebraska, and my family in MN for New Year's. Altogether, we logged over 30 hours in the car, 6 Christmas celebrations attended, countless pounds of delicious food consumed, several visits with dear friends and family members, and 2 opportunities to lead liturgy – at Kari's home church and my mom's home church. We thank the Lord for the time we spent and the blessings that were given and received, most of all remembering God's gift to us, Jesus.

Since returning, I have been studying in a Winterim course titled, "Mission and Ministry Seminar." We have been focusing on methods for church

planting and revitalization, missions, and outreach. We visited a recent church plant in St. Louis that is focused on sharing the Gospel with nonbelievers and those who have been hurt by the church. Then, we went to Mission Central in Mapleton, IA, to learn from Missionary Gary about being "not normal" missionaries in our everyday lives, and the importance of supporting missionaries abroad. The class then visited St. John in rural Columbus, NE, where we saw firsthand how God



Having a little fun at Grandma's!  
December 30<sup>th</sup> – New Richmond, WI

works through visitation and equipping the saints to rebuild a congregation that was on the verge of closing 23 years ago. The class has been a powerful experience so far, and God is definitely working on my heart for the mission of His church!

Kari returned to teaching on Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>. Her kids are slowly but surely getting back into the swing of classroom life. Kari is also coaching the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade girls basketball team at Immanuel, and continues to stay involved with the campus wives' group.

## THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The days following the crazy and busy holiday season, coupled with the frightful weather and dreary days can bring us down. We may find ourselves distant from the emotional and spiritual high that was celebrated just a few weeks ago. We go from anticipating the coming of Christ into the world and all that Christmas is for us to picking up the pieces and shreds of our mistakes, failures, and expectations. However, we know that Christ, the Son of God, has come to live and dwell among us. He came into the world to go to the cross and die. He rose again from the dead and gives all who believe rescue from the darkness of the world. He came in the midst of our darkness, our sin, our brokenness, and has promised to be with us with every step that leads us back to our perfect Father. The light indeed shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not know what to do with it. (John 1:5) May you rest in what God promises to us today and always: that His Son, Jesus, is the light of the world, the light that ignites our faith and trust in Him.

## THANK YOU!

We pray that this newsletter finds you all back into the routine of life, in whatever way that may look. Thank you for all of your prayers and support in the last few months, and always. It truly is a blessing, knowing that we are partnered with you on this journey and mission to serve God's people and His Church!

In Christ,

Ryan and Kari

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*Thank you for your continued prayers & support,  
as we look forward to all that God will  
use us for in service to His Kingdom!  
God's blessings & peace to you in 2019!*