

LIFE AT THE SEM

June 2019

Ryan and Kari Maser

PRAYER REQUESTS

- That packing and our move would be smooth and safe.
- For Zion Lutheran and their continued ministry in Pierce and the surrounding community.
- For Kari, that God would provide opportunities for her to work and serve in the upcoming year.
- For all seminarians and graduates who are moving to their vicarages and new calls, and for all incoming students at both seminaries.

NEVER A DULL MOMENT!

This is a saying that was taught to me by my grandfather, Marv. I have taken it to mean that life is full of surprises, twists, and unexpected moments. I have started many days expecting to accomplish a laundry list of things, only to find out that my plans change (for better or worse) by lunch time. A friend may need a hand, a project becomes too complicated, or a paper or sermon takes longer than expected to write and prepare. My loving wife may tell me to step away from my work to go to Ted Drewes' (the local ice cream joint) or Goodwill with her, or the opportunity to work a few hours comes up. Sudden things happen too, like a tragic accident or the sudden hospitalization of a former coach that makes us turn to God in prayer. Even with a schedule full of the mundane, there truly is never a dull moment!

This saying best describes the past month for us. Kari and I have had the opportunity and blessing to do a variety of things in the past month. We made it back to Nebraska the first weekend of June to celebrate the wedding of one of our college friends. While there, we unexpectedly saw some college friends that we haven't seen in a while. After that wedding, we took our nephew Liam back to St. Louis with us for the following week. What an amazing kid to have around! We enjoyed trips to the Arch, Ted Drewes', and the children's museum.

It was around that time when I started my intensive class, Studies in Creation. I took this class to earn some elective credit for my 4th year and to learn more about this area of theology. Talk about an incredible class! This class caught my attention in several unexpected ways, as I discovered how much I enjoy reading and studying the theology behind how we care for God's creation. As I was

discovering this new interest, Kari took Liam back to Nebraska and attended an early childhood educators' workshop at Concordia, Seward, with her mom, and spent some additional time in Gretna with her family. While Kari was gone, I had the unexpected opportunity to lead an outdoor family campout service at my fieldwork congregation, and some free time to accomplish a few woodworking projects. We also took some time to relax and celebrate our first anniversary (June 16th), and enjoy a nice steak dinner out. In the last week, Kari unexpectedly volunteered some of her time to organize the library at her school (Immanuel, Wentzville). As I write, we are looking forward to a weekend back in Nebraska, attending another wedding in Seward, seeing my parents, and visiting a few friends. But, as we have learned, there is never a dull moment when unexpected things happen!

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village. – Luke 9:51-56



Enjoying a wedding reception
in Bee, Nebraska!

AN UNEXPECTED REACTION

One of the themes that we see in this text is how Jesus reacts to rejection and opposition. His disciples, James and John (the “Sons of Thunder” – see Mark chapter 3), were presumably sent into a Samaritan town ahead of Jesus to make preparations for the teacher to spend the night and to proclaim the Gospel. However, after hearing that Jesus (the Jewish prophet and rabbi) was on his way to Jerusalem, the village inhabitants denied Jesus from staying the night. After telling Jesus the news, James and John responded in the expected human way – by wishing Jesus to rain fire down from heaven, so that the Samaritan village and its inhabitants would be destroyed!

But, unexpectedly, Jesus rebukes James and John. Rather than seeking revenge (as any other human being would), Jesus shakes off the opposition and moves on to the next town. I do not know about you, but this sounds alien to how many believers (including myself) react to moments when we are rejected because of the faith we have and the Gospel we bear. In our selfish and self-centered moments, we would much rather see our enemies destroyed instead of receiving the Gospel; revenge admittedly sounds sweet at times. But Jesus calls us to do something different as believers and disciples. Just as Jesus resolutely went on the path to Jerusalem to face the completion of the Father’s will in his death, resurrection, and ascension, so we are also called to do the Father’s will wholeheartedly, to share the Gospel in love, be patient with those who do not receive Christ, and bear the persecution and rejection we are confronted with. May you stand bold in your confession of Jesus, who does his work in unexpected ways and calls us to do the unexpected in how we share his message of life and salvation.

WE THANK GOD FOR YOU!

We rejoice and praise God for all the ways that you all have supported us and continually keep us in your prayers. We ask that you would continue to pray for us, in the next few months, as we transition into vicarage in Pierce. We plan to keep sending our newsletter throughout the upcoming year!

God’s blessings,

Ryan and Kari

*God's Blessings
& Peace this Summer!*

PS – We are moving from our campus apartment on **July 17th**. While we will be forwarding our mail through the postal service, we ask that you send any mail to Kari’s parents’ address, where we will be staying until we can move in on July 31st. The address is:

21813 Bobwhite Ave.
Gretna, NE 68028

After July 31st, our address in Pierce during our vicarage year will be the following:

Ryan and Kari Maser
220 E Court Street
Apt. 1B
Pierce, NE 68767

Thanks for your understanding and patience as we move!