

LIFE AT THE SEM

March 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 responsibilities at school
- Ryan as he continues with his studies, that his desire for the Word and the Gospel would keep growing deep.
- For all those affected by the flooding in Nebraska and other places in the Midwest.

ARE WE THERE YET??

For many of you, this is a question that you probably got asked quite a bit when your children were younger. I know my parents did, and it drove them crazy! This question still arises in my mind, as well as in many of my classmates, as the month of March comes to a close. As the semester becomes more tense and the demands of the coursework increase, we can't help but think of vicarage right around the corner. But, we still feel far away from it. It is so close that we can almost touch it, but so far away with the amount of homework, tasks, and projects that stand in the way. Sure, it is hard to be patient for things we look forward to!

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. — James 5:7-8

"JUST A-PLUGGING AWAY!"

While much can be said about how anxious we are for vicarage, we do have to admit how fast time has been going. We wake up on a Monday morning, Kari goes to school and I go to class, and before we know it, its Friday afternoon and the week is over. As I write this letter, I am at the halfway point in the semester. I have once again arrived at Reading Week, which is a week off from regular class meetings and an opportunity to catch up on readings, work on assigned projects, and work ahead a little on the academic tasks that await in the second half of the semester. Classes continue to go well for me. Some of the highlights are writing three sermons in the

month of March (2 for class, one for preaching at my field work congregation), creating sermon series using congregational profiles, working on case studies that address various church and culture issues (church fellowship, civil religion, etc.), and developing Bible study lesson plans. While the workload can be strenuous at times, I am very much appreciating the hands-on learning. I consider it excellent practice as I anticipate vicarage year and future pastoral duties.

Kari has completed her 5/6th grade girls basketball season. Some highlights for her include coaching the girls to a season-ending victory, and seeing how far they came as individuals and a team over the course of the season. Kari is looking forward to having more time at home, as the spring weather moves into St. Louis. She stays busy as always with her little ones. She just started a construction site unit with her kids, which to be honest, sounds like a lot of fun! Apparently the preschoolers agree, too. Kari is anticipating vicarage almost as much as I am, wondering where we will be and what God has planned for her next year.

We have been blessed to have the week off for Spring break/Reading Week, so we decided to take some time away from the hustle and bustle of seminary/teaching life. We are currently enjoying our stay in Louisville, KY, seeing some local sites, relaxing, remotely working on schoolwork, and enjoying some good food and drink. We also have plans to check out the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter, and visit some good friends in the Aurora, IN, and Cincinnati areas. We are thankful for the opportunity we have to do this, and for the benefit of time spent together before life gets busy in the remaining weeks of the semester!



Learning about the Louisville Water Tower!

PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE – JAMES 5:7-8

These verses from the end of James' letter brings to mind many things. For one, I can't help but think of the rich imagery. Like a farmer who goes out, plants the seed in his field, and waits for the coming rain and growth, we are called to be patient, sometimes for a long time. For many of us, we have lost this ability to be patient. In a world and society where things come fairly easy through technology, we cave in to the desire for instant gratification. Amazon Prime, of course, can bring it to my doorstep in 2+ days! Why wait any longer?

The first readers of the Letter of James also struggled with patience. They were not waiting for packages to arrive to fulfill their aching desires for more material goods. Instead, they were anxious for Jesus' return, and wanted him immediately. They were done with waiting around, wondering if Christ would **ever** come back. Some were even desperate, to the point that they thought that Jesus had forgotten about them on earth. This is what James is addressing when he writes these words.

Like many of you, I had the blessing of growing up with farmers in the family. These men and women taught me countless things, but one of the most important lessons was being patient. Waiting for the corn to sprout, tassel, produce ears, and then mature. Anxiously awaiting for the hay to dry on a hot July day, so that it could be raked and baled before a thunderstorm. Keeping a close eye out for the calf that was to be born. Looking to the sky and praying for the rain that didn't come until the following week. The list goes on and on. A farmer has a certain level of confidence and trust and expectation that his crops will yield, that his livestock will grow, and that the rain will come, sooner or later. These kinds of things are not his "first rodeo" so to speak. As we live our lives here on earth, we are to patiently await and have our confidence in Christ. This is the kind of hope and patience we are called by James to have and to live out. Even as the flood waters rise, when the job becomes overbearing, when the classes demand too much, and when your family's expectations are unreal, be patient and wait on Christ. Certainly we will face pain, suffering, heartache, and loss in this life. We may become restless and anxious, thinking that God has forgotten us in these moments. But take heart and have hope, the seed of faith has been planted in us and all things are in His hands. May you place your confidence and hope in Christ, for in Him we can have true patience in our moments of anxiety and fear!

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

We thank you for all of your support and prayer. Each day we think of and pray for you, our family and friends. God has truly blessed us with amazing people and congregations who support, pray, and provide for us in unexpected and remarkable ways! Thank you!

In Christ,

Ryan and Kari

*We pray all is well
at King of Kings. God's
continued blessings + peace
during this Lenten season.*