

May 4

Friends—

The end of the school year is in sight! Sometimes it feels like it should be and other times it feels like we only just began. April has been a busy month between tests, presentations, as well as having several full weekends. The highlight for the weekends for me was at the beginning of April when a group of students took a three hour road trip to a state park in western Indiana to meet up with a similar group of students from our sister campus, Concordia Theological seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. This was a lot of fun for us to get to meet some of the other students studying to be pastors in our church body that we otherwise would never get to know. We spent several hours visiting, comparing notes on seminary life, and asking questions about each other's classes, campus and teachers to get a fuller picture of what life is like for the other group. Hopefully this tradition will continue in the years to come!

Later in the month was the call day services for the second and fourth year students. Second year students now know where they will spend next year on their vicarage (internship), and the fourth years found out what congregation they will go to as new pastors. It was exciting to watch and share in the joy of these 'older brothers' I have gotten to know and congratulate them. Everyone I have talked to seems pleased with where they are sent! Next year it will be my turn....

The Synoptic Gospels class has been quite enjoyable, we have discussed what makes the gospels unique among other literature as well as what the three synoptics have in common with John, where they differentiate, as well as what differences and similarities they have among each other. We also discussed the various theories other theologians and church bodies use as to which gospel they believe was written first plus some hypothetical documents that, according to others, were the original sources for the four gospels we have today.

Intro to Practical Theology has spent this month dividing our section into small groups to give group presentations on mock situations we might come across and how to go through the four step process we learned in handling them. My group presented last week and we imagined we were in charge of a youth group watching a movie (we picked *Coco*), and explaining how we would steer the conversation using the four steps we learned to get the youth to reflect on the different themes and topics presented in the film. I was in charge of explaining step 1, and so I presented to the class the theme of the movie as well as referencing a journal article from another staff member on film theory and how different character types are portrayed in films.

Homiletics has had us turn in both sermons for the class, now, and this past week we went through our reflections on Walther's *Law & Gospel* book. We were asked to come

up with issues we found confusing or disagreed with, and so Pastor Peter has been able to address those with us. Next week we will start delivering one of the two sermons we wrote in front of the class. We will record them and then go over how our delivery went, with the recording being ours to keep.

Creeds & Confessions has kept working through various parts of the Book of Concord. Today we discussed the office of ministry and the parts that are essential and nonessential in this process. We discussed what makes our understanding of what makes a pastor a pastor different from both the Roman Catholic side and the Evangelical Protestant side.

At my field congregation, Pastor Femmel invited our family over to his house a couple weeks ago for fellowship and dinner, along with the second year student who also attends there. This was a nice chance for our three families to talk shop and enjoy each other's company, as well as congratulate him on learning about his vicarage assignment (he will be staying local.) Now with him being gone next year I might be the only student attending there in the upcoming year or perhaps we will get a new first year student as well. Time will tell on that one.

At the Lutheran Senior Services nursing home I still assist with the weekly Sunday service in the afternoons. I've gotten to recognize several of the faces who frequently attend and hopefully I will get to participate in other activities there during the summer.

As always, thanks for continued prayers, encouragement and support. I still know this is the right path for me to take and have enjoyed what I have gotten to learn and absorb here so far. Sometime in the summer we will make a trip to Minnesota to visit friends and family. Once we know for sure when it will be I will keep those of you in that area updated. To God be the glory!

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