

Dear Council of Lutheran Women,

April 7th, 2021

We thank you heartily for your prayers, support, and interest throughout our time in seminary as our family has continued to grow and thrive. We are happy to share that our son, Felix Simeon Smith, was born on March 9th. It was thirteen days after his due date! Thanks be to God he was born healthy and Abby has been recovering well. It was hard to wait so long and it was sometimes confusing being in a German hospital, but none of that compared to the relief and joy of finally holding our son.

The recovery time has been excellent! The entire campus rejoiced with us and arranged a three-week-long meal train when we got home. Our daughter has been completely sweet with Felix and already acting like a big sister even though she's not even two. It worked out that Felix was born during the break between semesters. When our daughter was born we had to pack up and begin vicarage a couple weeks afterwards, so this time has been particularly special to us.

Felix was baptized on March 21st, in a nice service. It's a tradition in Germany that the one being baptized receives a baptismal verse, and that is the basis of the sermon. Felix's verse is Isaiah 41:13, *"For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you.'"* After the service, the students surprised us with a concert of baptismal hymns outside our window.

The class schedule here is different than in America — my Spring semester is only beginning on April 13th and goes till July 16th. I'm looking forward to my next semester here and continuing my Lutheran pastoral formation. It's not yet clear if classes will be online or in person. Due to the school's small size it's exempted from many of the lockdown regulations.

We've been in lockdown here since December. We're not sure if we'll be able to travel before it's time to return to America. Even if we can't, our home is filled with life and we live in a great Christian community.

Joy!

Dylan, Abigail, Elsie and Felix