

Dear *Lucie Witte and the Council of Lutheran Women,*

Blessings to you! My name is Chris Sturges and I am one of the Seminarians that you are supporting at Concordia Seminary. Thank you so much for your generous donation to help me financially here at Concordia Seminary. Without support like yours, there would be no way for me to pursue the call to Pastoral Ministry. Your wonderful gift both financially and in prayer keeps me motivated to continue working through the difficult academics here knowing that the Church is behind and supporting me. I thank God everyday for your wonderful generosity and His amazing gift through you!

I wanted to give a bit of background information about me at the beginning of the new year. While I was born in Texas, I spent most of my childhood in the Metro-Detroit area in a suburb called Lake Orion. During that time, my family attended Faith Lutheran Church in Troy, Michigan, where I was confirmed and served as a Bible teacher in Sunday School for many years. It was during that time that God started to work on my heart with the call to pastoral ministry that continued during my college years at Hillsdale College. While I majored in History, I was most impacted by my time of service and ministry to the fraternities on Hillsdale's Campus as I worked establishing Bible studies with Greek Intersivity in the Greek houses. During that time, my own fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, saw God work amazingly with 10 brothers coming to faith during my time there. That service combined with some discussion with my pastors led me to feel and accept the call to pastoral ministry and begin my studies at Concordia Seminary last year.

During my time on campus here, I not only work on my studies but also serve three days a week at my fieldwork congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, in inner-city St. Louis. I work at some of the inner-city camps serving the children of the community by helping provide food, a devotional, a craft, and playing sports with them. These times are fantastic to be able to practically work and learn ministry alongside my academic studies. During these times, there are a number of different moments where you see God's hand and Spirit working among these kids who may not necessarily get the depth of love and care that they need at home. One of the most grace filled moments came as we said the Lord's Prayer in our exit. One of the students actually volunteered to lead it and we found out that he had memorized it on his own to help him pray to God. It was so amazing to see a fourth grade boy able to recite and lead others in the Lord's Prayer! One final moment was when a second grade girl who came up to me crying because another girl had called her ugly. Before we were able to reconcile the two girls, I was able to share God's Word with her and let her know that she was beautifully made and loved by God. It was a pretty powerful moment.

All of these moments of academic learning, practical growth in ministry, and spiritual development are made possible by your generous donations financially and spiritually. Once again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to be able to pursue this calling. Please know that you are constantly in my prayers and your gifts are already being put to use in the ministry of God's Kingdom. Please feel free to mail me back or email me at sturgesc@csli.edu any specific prayer requests that I can include for you. All in all, God's blessings to you and your family and I look forward to keeping you updated as my ministry partners in what God is already doing in St. Louis!

In Christ,

Chris Sturges

Isaiah 40:30-31