

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Mr. Henson, Mr. McCollough, Mr. White, and Members of the Council of Lutheran Women,

I hope this letter finds you well. Since I last wrote to you, things have been very busy but also very exciting. I am now the worship minister here at CTS and am enjoying a great Fall Quarter here at CTS.

I began the summer by taking a trip to Riga, Latvia with the Theater Ensemble and a few other students to learn about the work of LCMS missionaries Dr. Quentin and Mrs. Lindsay Cundiff. Dr. Cundiff is a professor at the Luther Academy in Riga which acts as a centralized confessional Lutheran seminary for the entirety of the LCMS Eurasia region. It was amazing to learn about their work and meet some of their students via Zoom. As of now Luther Academy has two streams: English and Latvian. The Latvian stream is a residential program for native speakers, and the English stream is a distance program for all other students. The programs are structured in different tiers, with lower tiers being open to laypeople who wish to learn more about the confessional Lutheran faith, and then higher tiers being reserved for those pursuing the Office of the Ministry. It is amazing to hear of Lutherans sprouting up in places like Nepal, Pakistan, Italy, Spain, and many other places. We also enjoyed sightseeing in Riga and learning about the rich history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia.

The rest of my summer was spent learning Latin along with the STM and PHD students and working here in Worcester County. Additionally, Rachel and I celebrated our first wedding anniversary on June 4<sup>th</sup>, and we attended a couple celebrations for dear friends as well as the wedding. The rest of us are also very excited to be first-time grandparents for a baby girl due in December. The two of us are honored and privileged to take on the important task of supporting our dear friend's daughter in her faith and we look forward to the day when (Lord willing) we will be blessed with our own children.

This school year is set to be an exciting one as I begin preparing for vicarage. I will have my meeting with the vicarage placement director at the end of this quarter and then my meeting with my faculty mentor sometime during the winter quarter. Rachel and I are excited to find out our assignment in April and we give thanks for the work of Dr. Peperkorn and all involved with the placements. I've also assumed additional extracurricular responsibilities this year. I am the editor of our student journal *Cornerstone* and intend to publish an issue at the end of every quarter. I am also the president of Toastpastors which meets every week to help guys improve their public speaking skills and practice pastoral care in a low-risk setting by giving short answers on-the-spot to questions such as, "Is it true that all the books of the New Testament were written within 100 years after Jesus rose from the dead?" These roles, while time consuming, have also brought much joy and excitement and I am thankful for my classmates who selected me to fill these positions.

Fieldwork has also kept me very busy this quarter. I took Sunday school regularly and have the blessing of teaching under a new ministerial pair at by Rev. Donald and takes the students through the Gospel of Matthew, looking at the Old Testament influences behind the

text, the text itself, and liturgical and sacramental themes present in the text. Along the way the students and I also discuss how this Gospel shapes the Christian life today. Furthermore, my fieldwork pastor gave me the opportunity to teach a 10-week midweek study on the Lord's Prayer section of Luther's Large Catechism. This has been an exciting challenge and a great opportunity to apply what I've learned so far in my classes here at the seminary. The material is my own which I wrote originally as the final project for my Catechetics class with Professor John Fless. For this class at Emmaus, I've adapted it to the congregation and expanded or shortened the material along the way. I am grateful to my pastor for giving me this opportunity, especially since he informed me that this is the first time he's had a fieldworker teach a long-form study like this. I pray that on the basis of this class future fieldworkers will be given a similar opportunity. I also got to go on my first solo visit this quarter to a parishioner who was in the hospital. I was nervous at first, and there were a couple mishaps when it came to going to the right place, but I am glad I was able to do this and look forward to gaining more experience with visitation.

As for my classes this quarter, I am stressed in the biblical languages which I greatly enjoy. Personally I know one in the Hebrew which next in Latin in one of my weaker languages. My goal for both this school year and vicarage is to work these two languages especially. Coopera III (Latin) and Greek readings with Dr. Winicki long one in the Greek which is always fun. This is now my 5<sup>th</sup> year of experience with Greek my goal for this year and vicarage is to work on becoming more comfortable with the more difficult Greek of the New Testament found in the Epistles and Acts. Finally, I am also taking Advanced Theological German with Rev. Richard Lammert as an elective. Before this class, I had 5 formal years of learning German between High School and then my sophomore year of college. I'm ashamed to say I haven't quite kept up with it as much as I should have so this class has been great for building a habit of using it again. We began the quarter by using a reader put together by Carolyn Thompson Roberts called *Reading German for Theological Studies: A Grammar and Reader*. Currently, we are translating a sermon for the First Sunday in Advent by Theodor Kliefoth, an important figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Confessional Lutheran Revival who sadly has not had much of his work translated into English. We will end the quarter by translating some of Luther's letters.

Finally, Rachel and I are both very grateful for the continued prayers and support that you all have given us. It is encouraging to know that there are people who care for us near and far, especially on harder days. Both you and your generosity are a true blessing from God to us. If any of you ever have any specific prayer requests, please feel free to reach out. You and your organization are in our prayers, nonetheless. Take care!

Peace and Blessings in Christ,

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