

We Are Not Alone

The peace be with you! Today is my last Sunday at Hope, I know it sounds crazy. It has been almost a year. Time flies, I'm growing and Hope is walking with me on this journey.

I remember when I first started, I was excited and also nervous. I was excited because I have heard so many interns shared their stories during the internship. They told me how much they have been growing and many said they are clearer about their calls after the internship. My candidacy committee also keep telling me how internship could help me to learn. So, every single cell in my body is longing to learn. I was nervous because I have heard that some interns didn't get along with their supervisor or with the congregation. In the end it didn't turn out to be good place for them. Plus, my background is very different from most of the interns. English is not my first language, I didn't grow up in Lutheran church, and I never served in an American church. But now I can say, it is a perfect place for me to learn, I don't know about other interns, but I really have the best supervisor, the best internship committee, and the best people.

I remember my very first sermon, it was the third Sunday since I started, I felt that I spent the whole week to prepare the sermon. I preached here at this pulpit, and I was super nervous so after that, I asked Pastor Jen, "Can I go down to preach?" I felt myself being put so high and so far from people, and I knew that I was not sure if I want to be a pastor. A pastor that preach every Sunday on a pulpit like this? I don't know if I can do that. So for the next sermon, I went down and I preached down there at that corner and I felt good. But after that, I heard many feedbacks of hearing problems, they had a hard time of hearing the sermon. Both here in the sanctuary and also the early service in the chapel when we have two services.

Then Jen challenged me to go back to the pulpit and practice in the chapel with my very big voice. I did and it worked very well. Although there were several times, I want to asked her again, can I go down to preach again? But I stopped myself, I know that if this is my call, I have to overcome that feeling. Now, I can say that I overcame it

with God help and also with all of your support, your words of encouragement, it is because of you who keeps telling me how important this call is for me!

I remember the suggestions you give to me, “why don’t you try this?” “People want to hear the good news of your sermon.” “I think that part can go a little bit deeper.” I remember the moments I asked so many questions about the language and Lutheran traditions (and I still do!); I remember how nervous when I did the first Children’s Message; I remember the visitations with lots of great conversations; I remember the meals we shared together in Fellowship Meal, Hope Diamond gathering, and with many others; I remember the many great services, along with the beautiful decorations in the sanctuary; I remember some of the ups and downs during the year, some funny moments as well as some painful moments (writing a sermon!); I remember the smell of fresh bread, the taste of pizza, the sound of making bulletins, and the numerous of other activities.

All of moments now become the very precious memory for me because of you! Because of you all, my journey is not alone. This is the good news that speaks to me today. When Jesus sent out his disciples, he didn’t send out them alone but in pairs. So that they can help each other, encourage each other, pray for each other and share those up and down moments with each other. Jesus know that we need each other in this thing called ministry. No matter who we are in our families, parents, children, grandparents or grandchildren (I know some of you has great grandparents); or what roles you have, at school, at your work place, or at church. We are all called to be in this one ministry, and we need each other this journey.

Now, I’m here at this pulpit one last time with excitement and nervous again. For what is coming. Some of you may heard that I will start a yearlong CPE residency at Fairview Southdale Hospital. So, I won’t be disappeared and I will be Twin Cities for one more year. Here is my very last challenge for you, you know I like to give homework to you, I want you to find your prayer partners, pray with your prayer partners, have meals or coffee together. Send some messages or call them, check in with them so that we know that we never travel alone. Amen!