

Deaconess Intern Dispatch



Lisa Mai – Deaconess Program

Beaverton, OR | Distance Education Student | Concordia Theological Seminary – Fort Wayne, IN

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Mother's Godly Wisdom

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. 1 John 2:9-11

When I was growing up, my mother taught me never to say that I hated anyone. "To hate someone" was a swear word in my family. I could hate, or better yet, strongly dislike, *lima beans*, for example, but I could not hate my *brother*. Although my mother did not quote 1 John 2:11 to me, she, as a child of God and loving mother, taught me what it meant. So, I knew better than to hate someone.

When I became an adult and life took some awful turns, I was tempted to hate. I heard the angry thoughts. I caught myself wishing ill toward others. But God in His grace and mercy worked on me through His word. Over and over again, I heard the Spirit remind me, "Vengeance is mine..., says the Lord,"

(Romans 12:19) and "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth." 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (ESV)

One particularly hard day, I was driving home with tears of anger, hurt, and betrayal burning in my eyes. As I pulled in the neighborhood, two of my Christian neighbors were walking by. Seeing my face, they immediately stopped, and I pulled over. As I vented, I kept crying, "I cannot hate! If I hate, the devil wins!"

Indeed, when we hate, we give the devil a toe hold. The devil has us where he wants us, that is, fooling us into a spiral of despair, thinking we must hate for things to "work out right." Yet we are baptized! We are in Christ! The devil has been drowned! As we memorized it in Luther's Small Catechism, "St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six, 'We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.'" Or as the ESV says, "we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

As baptized children of God, we walk in the light of Christ. We live in love because we are in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, who works in us. The new commandment to love one another is new because now **we love, as Jesus says, "as I have loved you."** Our love for one another flows out of Christ's love

for us. It is not our feeble and faltering efforts that fulfill the new commandment. Rather, it is Jesus who fulfills the commandment for us and in us. Jesus does in us what we cannot do. He works forgiveness of sins and love and mercy. He fills us with His Word and with faith which trusts the Word. In Jesus, we walk in the light, because He is the Light.

Dear Heavenly Father, You sent Your own dear Son into the world to be the Light in the darkness. In baptism You made us Yours and filled us with the Holy Spirit giving us faith to trust You. Send us into the darkness with Your Light, with Your love, forgiveness, and mercy that we may point those who live in darkness to You. Soften hard hearts and open blind eyes to see the Light of Jesus, repent of sins, and receive, from You, faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. We ask this trusting in Your great compassion and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Crucified and Living One. Amen.

As we celebrate Mother's Day this month, I am forever thankful for my mother who loves me and taught me about God's love through her words and life. (I have also learned to enjoy lima beans, and I truly love my brother!)

Peace and love in Christ,

Lisa Mai
Deaconess Intern

Seminary Update

Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne announced that due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Intensive in May and May's Commencement would be held online only. For me, that means I will have my Theological Interview in a "Google Hangout" format and will give my presentation about my practicum online as well. Commencement will be Friday May 22, 2020 at 4 pm ET (1 pm PT). Here is the link for anyone who would like to watch. <https://www.ctsfw.edu/daily-chapel/>. I am finishing my class with Pastor Chad Kendall about the "Lutheran Confessions in Today's World." In May I begin my class, "Catechetics: Teaching the Faith" with Pastor Seth Mierow.

Thank you for your faithful support and prayers! Would you please pray for where the Lord needs me to serve as a deaconess. In August, I will finish my studies, and God willing, I will receive a call. Although the circumstances are challenging in the world and in our church, the Lord is not surprised by them. He has all things in His hands, including the plans for my life (and for your life!)

Prayers

+For pastors and deaconesses as they serve in the church during difficult times of physical distancing. May God give them encouragement and hope as they serve remotely.

+For parishioners who are isolated from family, loved ones, and the congregation, may they cling to Christ's abiding presence in His Word and in their baptism. May the Lord give them comfort, and perseverance.

+For the healing of the nations from the coronavirus which plagues us. May the Lord turn hearts to Him in repentance and in sure hope of salvation in Jesus. May God grant wisdom to scientists and doctors who seek for a cure or treatment. May God comfort the dying and heal the sick, according to His will.

+For those who have lost their jobs. May the Lord give them gainful employment that provides for their needs, according to His will.

+Thanksgiving for the gift of faith in Jesus, who loves us, gave His life for us, and lives eternally. May we ever rejoice in Him and trust in Him.