

October, 2010

Well, Hi there Steve! It's me again, Steve Aves, from the front lines of CHAOS. CHAOS stands for Claiming Him As Our Savior and that is the name of the Senior High ministry at St. John's.

First, a reminder and disclaimer; what is said here is my babble alone. If you don't want to receive these periodic Emails from me, just reply and tell me not to send you any more. No hard feelings.

Quick note; Taylor Wiese has written an article which is at the bottom of this message. Don't miss it!

I'm writing to you on Saturday night, October 10 and we're having a lock-in at the church. There are 38 young-adults and 7 adults (Older-adults? Full-adults? That's debatable) here tonight. The brave adults are; Steve Terry (the youth director), Steve Aves (me), Ruthanne Aves (my lovely half), Kirk Fagerland, Lisa Sorenson, Cindy Music, and Brian Temple. When you see any of them please give them a big thank you.



The 38 youth here tonight include 4 who are not regular CHAOS folks. Nice outreach on the part of the youth who invited them.

I'm sitting at one of those round tables in the new youth section. I can hear them playing a game called "Sardines." It's a game where someone hides and everyone else tries to find them. When found, you hide with them - therefore getting mashed together like Sardines. I'm not able to join them at the moment because I've twisted my knee (Yeah, well this happens when you don't wear appropriate footwear and play "tag".) I was thinking, this game has been popular for as long as we've had lock-ins at church. I'll have you know Ruthanne is the reigning queen of Sardines - she has never been found. Oh, and that hiding spot goes back to when she hid with Liz Slusser.

Steve, there is lots of fun stuff we do at CHAOS but what isn't mentioned very often is how the programs Steve Terry offers at CHAOS, St. John's, and you are impacting the future of high school youth and the church at large.



Fostering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is what church is all about. I contend that the second most important thing church offers is a safe place for people to find and express their talents. Who knows what those might be? For some, it's the discovery of singing. Others it might be leadership or missions to areas of the world that really need help. Look at how many from St. John's have discovered ministry! I recall that just two weeks ago we had hosted an ordination of a new minister from St. John's.

An example of one person using an opportunity to explore their talents is shared with you at the bottom of this Email from Taylor Wiese. Taylor is a high school senior and CHAOS youth. So until next time I get a note out to you,

God Bless and thank you for your support of Youth Ministry at St. John's!

Taylor Wiese's article is AT THE BOTTOM. Don't miss it.

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p.s. If you have any questions about CHAOS or want to know more about volunteering some of your time, call me at 309-530-3651 or Steve Terry at 309-827-6121.

The following article is from **Taylor Wiese**.

This summer I went to Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio for the month of July. I was there for a program called Summer Seminary Sampler, and it was exactly what it sounds like. High school and college students from across America (alright, well at least as far as Kansas) came to participate. There were 15 of us who chose to make this a part of our summer, and I can honestly say I will never lose the friendships I made there.

There were three major parts to the program in Ohio; Service, Classes, and Mentors.

Every day for the three weeks we would go out into Columbus and do a different service project. These ranged from working in a food pantry, community gardens, free stores, and soup kitchens. I had many incredible experiences but the two that stand out most in my mind were Camp Friendship and Lutheran Memorial Camp. Camp Friendship was a summer camp for mentally challenged adults. There were about 40 adults there, and the camp was run by high school and college kids who committed themselves to these adults wholeheartedly. They were there to listen and to assist, to love and to learn. Both the campers and the counselors had something to gain from each other and they came into the week with no reservations.



The second project which really stuck out to me was our day at Lutheran Memorial Camp. Basically this was a day of hiking and camp songs, and I loved every minute of it. It reminded me of how much I love camp in the way that only camp can. I can't wait until my summers off from college when I can be a counselor.

The classes I took at the seminary were some of the most interesting I've ever taken in my life. I was looking for something different than a youth group devotional when I applied and that's exactly what the classes were. We took three different courses over our time there, but the one which stood out the most to be was the Theology class taught by Rev. Dr. Jason A. Fout. We were asked to think outside the box, and he presented many different ideas. Here is an excerpt of one of my more fascinating classes -  
Question-What did God do before creating humans, or the universe? Was he lonely, bored, ect.?

Dr. Fout- What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? The question is impossible, you can't have both. Similarly, this question, while interesting, doesn't really work. In essence, it is asking what God did before creating. But time itself is a function of the creation. So it is a category error to ask what God did before creating, because there was no temporal sequence of 'before' or 'after' before time was created!

As Christians, we also-mostly- want to say that God is eternal and changeless, and also that God does not 'need' anything. And so we don't want to say that God created out of boredom or loneliness that God depends on the creation for a relationship, or anything else. So why did God create if God didn't need the creation? The creation is a wonderful, gracious, generous gift- something entirely unnecessary and gratuitous. Besides, can you imagine the pressure on us as creatures if God was really depending on us to be friends, or anything else?

The classes really lit a fire in me to read and learn as much as I can about what it means to be a Christian.



The Mentors completed the trifecta that was Summer Seminary Sampler. My mentors ranged from pastors to community organizers and all were intriguing individuals who had so much to share. My favorite mentor was Jody Schwimner, a local Hospice Chaplain. For our mentoring time one day, we went and visited a woman named Mary. Mary's favorite food was a White Castle burger (I tried it- completely disgusting) and so Jody bought two to bring to her. When we walked into Mary's room at the nursing home, her face completely lit up. We spent the next few hours sitting and talking while she slowly ate her burger. Mary wanted to draw out the visit as long as possible, and Jody made it clear that we weren't in a hurry. It's hard for me to describe the

powerful feeling in the room, and I can only say that God was there. I am completely inspired by Jody and the complicated and often difficult work she's doing for God.

I wish I could better communicate how important and extraordinary my time in Ohio was. I miss everyone at

the camp, but I mostly miss the feeling that I was exactly where God wanted me to be. Away from the Seminary, I struggle more to find my path but have confidence that God will be there for every misstep.

Taylor Wiese wrote this article. Tell her "Thanks for Sharing" next time you see her.