

GOLD GRADUATE OF THE LAST DECADE



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Major: Religion, Math, and Education

Current Role: Pastoral Intern at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Excelsior, Minn.

What did Concordia mean to you as a student?

When I was a student, Concordia was home. It was a place where I could be my quirky self, where I could ask deep questions about life, and where I would develop some of the best friendships I could imagine.

What does Concordia mean to you now?

Concordia is a place I am immensely thankful for. It shaped and crafted me into a thoughtful and informed individual who is rarely satisfied with the status quo.

What is a life lesson you learned in college?

In college, I learned to say yes to trying new things, which regularly pushed me out of my comfort zone. This was foundational in broadening my horizons and beginning to recognize just how much I don't know about the world.

Did you have a defining moment at Concordia that helped shape you as a person?

I took a course on Liberation Theology my sophomore year at Concordia. This class introduced me to systemic injustice, power structure, and resistance from oppressed communities in a way that was life-giving and hopeful. This class completely reformed how I look at the world, and I am so thankful for it.

Do you remember a favorite assignment you tackled as a student? Why was it so enjoyable? Did you build skills while working on it that transfer to your current work?

For my interfaith dialogue course, I ended up building a website from scratch to provide a general overview of a number of major world religions. I tried to make it dynamic so that people could interact with it. It took dozens of hours to make the site, figure out how to code what I needed to, and do the research that I would be posting publicly. I loved it so much. I was actually sad when the semester ended, and I had to turn in a completed project. Learning how to manage a website and domain, as well as some basic coding, were useful skills that have translated into my work since. Also, the knowledge I gained researching the content has really served me well, both while teaching and now as a pastor.

If you could say one thing to your past college self, what would you say?

Take some fun electives. You'll never have that same kind of chance again, so have fun learning for the sake of learning.

How did your time at Concordia prepare you for your current work?

Concordia prepared me to talk with people from all walks of life, to walk with people when they're struggling, to not be afraid to ask questions, and to always work to make our community a better place. In my role as a pastor, this is the majority of my work and, in a lot of ways, it feels like everything I did at Concordia better prepared me for this.

Do you have any favorite Concordia memories you'd like to share?

After I graduated from Concordia, I came back for my first Homecoming and ended up walking with the float of an organization I used to be a part of. It was so much fun to be welcomed back into the community so quickly, and I loved being able to see all my other alumni friends as I walked the parade route. It's amazing how quickly Concordia welcomes alumni back.