

6 February, 2021

Dear Joslyn, family of John, and fellow believers in Christ's resurrection,

Forgive me for my absence. We are electing a new president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis today. I have asked Vice President Dr. John Wohlraabe to be with you today as a gesture of respect and love.

Pastor or President, small or large, church leadership is fraught with deep challenges and crosses, but richly blessed by countless joys and blessings in Christ. In my years of service to the church I have travelled the world, met church leaders and politicians, seen places where the gospel is exploding with new believers, and where the church carries crosses unbearable, but for Christ's mercy. I must state, that the joy I've found in spending time with John, Mark Schroeder and our respective theologians in serious theological conversation, and delightful repartee, seated 'round conference table and campfire, are some of my most memorable and meaningful moments of life. John's commitment to the blessed Gospel of free forgiveness only in the blood of Jesus, to the inerrant Scriptures, the doctrine of Catechism and Book of Concord, meant he had something to say, and it was worth hearing, even when it came by way of critique and criticism. And the moments of Christian fun and laughter are priceless memories which I shall carry with me 'til the day I too shall meet Christ face to face, just as John's soul enjoys the heavenly presence of his Savior now, awaiting the resurrection of all flesh.

Thank you, Joslyn and family, for sharing him with us. Thank you WELS and ELS for the conversation. Thank you Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the gift of John.

Amen, come Lord Jesus quickly. Many of us are waiting and none of us shall be disappointed.

Christ is Risen!

Matthew C. Harrison