

July 14, 2015

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

My head hurts.

For the last three weeks, I have been at Virginia Theological Seminary taking courses for the Doctor of Ministry program. The days were long, with morning classes running from 8:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. and afternoon classes going from 2:00 to 5:30. In between, we had chapel and lunch, and by the time each day concluded, I was hungry and tired. One night, I was so exhausted, I was ready to go to bed early, when I checked my watch and saw it was only 7:00 p.m.!

I guess that's what happens if you are not accustomed to being in a classroom.

I love being part of the Doctor of Ministry program, though. I learn so much every time I am on campus. My recent classes included *Foster Cultures for Spiritual Guidance*, *Public Witness and Community Partnerships*, and *Theology Seminar: Asking the Tough Questions about God*. In small groups, we did case studies, discussing and analyzing challenging moments from our ministries. And, even in more relaxed, informal conversations, I pick up so much from my fellow students, all of whom have so much wisdom and insight to share.

Learning is an integral part of our spiritual journey. By reading the Bible, studying the mysteries of the divine, asking questions, even the tough questions, we grow closer to God and our relationship with God deepens. St. Anselm said theology is "faith seeking understanding," and I believe we are all theologians, to one extent or another, because we all seek a greater understanding of the Lord.

For this reason, over the last several years, we have worked hard to enhance our education programs at Grace, and we are already preparing for the upcoming year. Beginning in September, we will have lots to offer, many ways for you to explore our faith and seek that greater understanding. I hope you will join us. I promise your head won't hurt, and your heart just might be filled.

See you on Sunday,
Andrew