



It's Sunday in February 2014: I made a wrong turn on my way to the church from Minneapolis, walk in late through the front door of the Sanctuary, and am sitting in church with the Lauer's when I hear Pastor Grorud's pitch, "We are looking for a new Director of Children and Family Ministry, here at Faith. Kacie is leaving us, something about wanting to live in the same town as her husband," and I think to myself "That job sounds like something I would be interested in. I think I should apply".

It's February 20th, 2014 at 5:15pm; I am nervously sitting awaiting my interview at Faith Lutheran Church. In my head I am running through all of the qualifications I have to be the Director of Children and Family Ministry. It's now 5:30pm; I am sitting in the upstairs conference room surrounded by the interview team. Amidst the interview I am asked two questions that have stuck with me, "If you could start one program here, what would it be?" And I tell them about my dream of starting a ministry to support individuals and families with disabilities. Disability is a word I cringe at because I truly believe these individuals and families have abilities far beyond my understanding. Later on I am asked, "Why are you applying for the job of Director of Children and Family Ministry?" I pause and answer honestly, "I don't know what I should be doing with my life, but what I do know is I am not ready to get back into a school, I can't keep working at the airport, and this job sounds like something I could succeed in."



A few weeks later I accept the offer to work at Faith and begin emailing with Pastor Grorud about a start date. I end one of my emails with the line, "Looking forward to starting this new adventure with Faith."



Moving on to December 2015 -- I received a gift from my best friend, a children's book titled, *Necks Out for Adventure*. I finish reading the book and feel a tug at my heart for a new adventure, but uncertain as to exactly what that might be. It was one of those moments where I realized God's plan is so much larger than mine and after numerous late night conversations with friends and family, I felt God saying, "GO". So, thus begun the birth of my third summer with YouthWorks! After rereading my Thoughts Journal, and experiencing the overwhelming sense that this season in my life is meant to live alongside individuals and families with disabilities, I decided to go.

Within the next few months I will be moving out of the house I rent with Gladys, living out of a suitcase in South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation overseeing three sites that facilitate mission trips, planning a wedding, living in the tension of not knowing and letting God lead me on my next adventure, and that is where my plans end. I am extremely thankful for my time at Faith Lutheran Church. At Faith, I have for the first time since I left for college, experienced what it is like to have a church home that loves, cares for, and supports me. As well as a church that nurtures growth by extending grace. After many long months of turmoil I have reached a feeling of peace. Peace in knowing that God will provide. He will provide for Faith Lutheran Church, he will provide for the next season in my life, and he will provide for you individually.



It is well, (it is well), with my soul, (with my soul), it is well, it is well, with my soul - from the old hymn, *It Is Well With My Soul*, has been ringing in my heart for the past few weeks calming my anxious heart and I pray as the staff and congregation enter into this new season those words would calm your heart as well. My last day at Faith Lutheran will be May 17th, 2015. I do not know exactly what is next, but what I do know is this is not goodbye, it's see you later.

In Christ,

Wendy Toops

