

Fourth Year Response

- Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Chase and it is a blessing to be in this place at this time with you. God truly is faithful and this is what we are celebrating this afternoon.
- Over the past four years, these cinder walls that we call Bethany College have captured me. How did this place become so full of life and discovery? First and foremost, we declare that God is and has been at work here—both in profound ways and in ordinary ways. We also praise him for the people that he has called to serve him here throughout these 88 years.
- As a first year student, I was a little bit nervous to call the faculty and staff by their first names! Is that even okay? What about mister and missus and all that? Well, it was okay and I also learned to them by other names. Friend. Mentor. Teacher. Helper. Listener. Discipler. Care-giver. These names are full and rich and deep.
- The image of seeing is one that we find often in Scripture. For a couple of months now, I've been fascinated by the story in Mark's gospel where Jesus heals a blind man in two stages. After Jesus' first touch, he asks the man: "Can you see?" And the man says: "Sort of, but the people look trees walking around." And then comes Jesus' second touch and full sight is given to the man.
- As students, we come here and life often feels a lot watching like trees walk around. We can't quite make out the rhyme or reason and we have many questions about life, love, Jesus. Why do we do all of this? Then, we are taken by the hand and taught, mentored, discovered, comforted, formed by these faculty and staff. They have walked with Jesus, they know him, they love him and they mediate his touch to us, knowing us, loving us, guiding us through the trees.
- One of my favourite preachers, Jo Saxton, says: "you can't be what you can't see". And we have seen you. We've seen Jesus in you. And now we have an idea of what to be. So, to all who have served at Bethany in these 88 years, thank you. Thank you for letting us see you. Thank you for letting us see your love for Jesus shine through in your lectures, your commitment to details and administration and art, your care through maintenance, cleaning and food. Thank you for letting us see your journey. Thank you for letting us see your struggles. Thank you for letting us see your love for life and fun. Thank you for letting us see areas where you are growing. Thank you for making the trees less scary. Thank you for mediating his touch.
- The theme of this weekend goes both ways. YOU are our letter on our hearts. The way we've been mentored, cared for, loved and taught- may these lessons be imprinted on our hearts and flow out of our hands, eyes, tongues and souls as we go from this place, to whomever we meet, as a letter written by the Holy Spirit. We thank you. We see you and you see us. We love you.