

Dear Friends in Christ,

Welcome to our new newsletter! Through these letters, we get to share with you the amazing work God is doing, both here in the US as we prepare for deployment to vicarage, and especially in Sri Lanka when we get to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the people we've been appointed to serve there.

Entering into the missionary candidate process through the LCMS Office of International Mission was quite a learning process. Before we ever learned that we might be headed to Sri Lanka, we found out that we would be raising 100% of the funds for our two years of vicarage, through a process called Network Supported Missionary (NSM), in which the missionaries travel from congregation to congregation, sharing the work God will be doing overseas and inviting churches to participate in that mission through prayers and financial support. The time it would take to generate a network of support was for us an unexpected add-on to an already elongated vicarage.

But as time went on, we became convinced that this mission to Sri Lanka was for us, and NSM would simply be a part of our work preparing for that. Here we are in the middle of the summer and we could not have imagined the amazing things God had in store for us. When Missionary Gary informed us he would be networking on our behalf, and when those notifications of your support started popping up in our inbox, we quickly realized that GOD WAS SENDING US TO SRI LANKA. We stopped worrying about the money and the time, because he was choosing to send us through you all, through Christ's church.



It was a great joy to visit Mission Central on the 19th of June and

meet some of the wonderful people who are sending us on our mission, including Pastor Hedstrom and some of the members and youth of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Lakefield, MN. What a blessing it was to meet those folks and to be sent by them then and there through prayer and the laying on of hands! Mission Central is a miracle place! Jesus is working great things for his church through Gary and Brent and everyone involved there.

Later that week, I (Ben) got to visit Peace Lutheran Church in Antigo, WI and share my very first presentation about the work God is doing in Sri Lanka where he is sending us to take part. The wonderful people of Peace were so welcoming and encouraging. It was especially exciting to be the guest of Pastor Dave Karolus, who had spent a few weeks in Sri Lanka several years back and recognized some of the people and places from my slides!

Overall, we're thankful for the time we get to spend in the states before our deployment. For an overseas vicarage, there sure will be a lot of opportunities to share God's word with his people stateside, experiences that can be nothing but mutually encouraging and educational for all of us. Through all of this, we're learning to trust God more and more—for everything—even if that's simply for strength on a hectic day of travel, or rest after a late night of sermon prep. *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:33).*

Yours in Christ,
The Vanderhydes—Ben, Grace and Larson

Please pray for us for energy, patience, and most of all for safety as we travel.

You can always send your gifts of love to our friends at

Mission Central
40718 Highway E-16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034

You can also make a secure online donation for our mission at lcms.org/vanderhyde

