

SERVING THE LORD IN

THE PHILIPPINES

REV. ROGER & AMY JAMES



Advent + Christmas
December 2019



Rev. Roger James serves as LCMS theological educator. He and his wife Amy live and teach at Lutheran Theological Seminary and Training Center (LTS), the seminary of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP).



Rev. Ely Hernandez, pastor Holy Cross & St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Candon, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

PHILIPPINE FACTS

Lutheran Theological Seminary

- *LTS is located in Baguio City in a mountainous province on the large northern island of Luzon.*
- *LTS was inaugurated by the Lutheran Philippine Mission of the LCMS 30 June 1955 in Manila with two students.*
- *LTS was moved to its current location on property purchased by the LWML. The first year class at this new location had four students.*
- *This year LTS has six first year students.*

I didn't get to teach Pastor Ely Hernandez. He graduated the May of 2018. We did not arrive until July. He is going on his second year in the parish. He is twenty-two year's old. So young! Nevertheless, he is a gentle, dedicated pastor to his two congregations. He speaks the truth in love. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Truth and Love.

Amy and I recently had a chance to visit those two congregations, the weekend of the First Sunday in Advent. There was a circuit Lutheran Women's League meeting. My colleague, Rev. James Cerdeñola, and I had been asked to teach. Another young pastor, Rev. Dionell Carnate had come with his church women's group. He is a few years older than Ely. He is also circuit counselor and pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Badoc, several hours north of Candon along MacArthur Highway.

These two pastors are examples of faithful stewards of God's Word and Sacraments. They are the maturing

seeds planted by the Holy Spirit who came out of this small seminary in Baguio City. By God's Word and Spirit, these two and others will continue to grow up in knowledge, experience, and faithfulness all the years they serve as shepherds of our Lord's Church.

I have been impressed time and again since we have arrived here in the Philippines. I have been impressed with the preaching and teaching. I have been impressed that "Lutheran" is not some foreign notion imposed on these Asians, but that they are Lutheran in their own hearts. They won't give it up. They won't give it up precisely because it is not a western cultural artifact, but it is the blessed, life-giving Word of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God. They could no more give up their Lutheran identity than they could give up Truth, Love, the Word of God—than they could give up Jesus and the forgiveness and eternal life purchased by His blood on the cross.



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The church bell at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Tamurong, Candon City, the casing of an old World War II bomb!

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Good health and safety for us and our students and colleagues at LTS.*
- *For new students eager to study for the Holy Ministry.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *God has kept us healthy!*
- *The faithful pastors and laity of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.*
- *The faithful teachers who have trained men such as those mentioned in this newsletter.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us*



Rev. Dionell Carnate, pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Badoc, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

Of course there are temptations, lures, heart-wrenching struggles. These pastors face most of the same difficulties that pastors and people in the USA face. The first lure might be to use their gifts to make money rather than be a pastor. These are intelligent, likable young men. They clearly could be more “successful” going into some other line. Here in the Philippines, as in so many parts of the developing world, the temptation is not just to have a newer car and a bigger house, but to care for your aging parents or to have sufficient income to have a wife and feed the children.

They serve people with all the same crises that we have: catastrophic illnesses, depression, anxiety; but here,

the medical facilities fall far short of what we take for granted. Here mental illness professionals are few and far between. Here, pastors face broken families, addiction, impenitent and despairing sinners, just like in the USA. They have the daily and weekly duties of preaching, teaching and visiting. But here, they have few books and resources for on-going study, encouragement, and guidance in difficult situations.

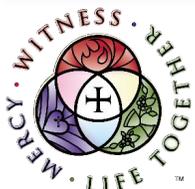
But there they are—joyfully doing the work they studied for at LTS and diligently serving the congregations entrusted to them by their church.

Thank be to our Lord for such men, who share the Truth, the Love, the Word of God—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for supporting us with your gifts, pledges, prayers, and encouraging words. We need them. Please continue! Thank you for giving us this blessed opportunity and honor to do our part in preparing more men like Pastor Ely and Pastor Dionell.

Peace in Christ! Merry Christmas!

Roger B. James



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on “Service Opportunities.”

To support the LCMS through the work of Roger & Amy James, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Support of Roger James.” Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/lastname.