

# The S.E.A. Side

Ministry in SouthEast Asia

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## Meet the Wood Family

Matthew, Kali, Laurel, Eleanor, and Caroline serve in Medan, Indonesia with LCMS International. Matthew supports *The Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI)*, by mentoring pastors, providing continuing education, and overseeing translation projects.

## Christmas in Medan

On Friday, December 13th Kali and I took the kids to a Christmas party at our school, LCE Medan. We have learned that parties follow a different pattern here! There are MCs, a strict schedule, and assigned seats. One cannot simply come, talk for a bit, eat a cookie or two, and go home. One has to participate!

Shortly after we sat down one of the American LCE workers began explaining some of her family's Christmas customs. This is common at an event like this where the people want to know more about both English and Western Culture. Even I had the chance to talk about our family customs. I should have anticipated that I would be asked. I didn't have anything prepared, but that wasn't going to stop me from getting up and talking about Jesus. There was no way I was going to turn this opportunity down!

Among other things, I shared that because Christmas is all about the arrival of The Lord Jesus Christ our family takes time to focus and prepare during the season of Advent. I explained our tradition of having a Jesse Tree. Each night our family reads a story about the family of Jesus from the Old Testament, a devotion, and hang an ornament on our Jesse Tree. We read about our ancestors in the faith and prepare for the coming of Jesus. As we read the stories we are reminded that the whole story is about Jesus and what He has done for us.

The event quickly moved on to other things: a talent show, a gift exchange, the eating of cookies. The opportunity to stand and talk about my faith stuck in my mind for the rest of the night. Here in Medan the topic of religion is not taboo or off limits. People ask about it. People talk about it. We have a tremendous opportunity here to help people focus on the work of Christ as they talk about religion and also to learn from them how to have a civil conversation about religion. Jesus is the center of the story, not us. May the Lord open our eyes to opportunities to make this known!



## More Updates at [theseaside.asia](http://theseaside.asia)!

### Opportunities to Talk about Faith

I took the opportunity to talk about Jesus. How did it go? Here I reflect the doubts and anxiety that come from talking about faith. Read more to find out.



### Christmas Party

Read a more detailed account of the event here! There was a gift exchange, plates of cookies, and more!



### Thanksgiving

This was our first major holiday in Medan away from family and friends. We found a turkey and even some friends to come over and share it with us!



### Prayers

#### Thanksgiving

- Continued language learning.
- All Visas Received!
- A Blessed Thanksgiving Holiday with new friends.
- Laurel and Eleanor making new friends.



#### Supplication

- Continued language learning.
- Mental health and joy during our first Christmas away from family and close friends.
- To form friendships with Indonesian people.



Kali and Caroline had to leave Indonesia for Visa reasons. We went to Taiwan and came across an Indonesian Culture festival in Chiayi, Taiwan!



We have found several off brand lego depictions of the street vendors. We finally caved and bought one.



# KIDS'



## CORNER

Laurel and Eleanor continue to adjust well to life here in Indonesia. All of us, Dad, Mom, and the kids have slowly gotten out of the habit of talking about our old house, Saint Louis, or America as home. The children are starting to proclaim, "We're home!" when we pull up to our house in Medan.

Both Laurel and Eleanor have started to form close friendships with children from play group and other expat kids. Currently, they are both focused on how we are going to celebrate Christmas.



Caroline comes to Indonesian class! Here, she's sleeping, but she is not always this quiet.



We get a lot of attention when we go out. This is a picture after church with some church members who were excited to see Caroline.

# Consider a Year End Gift

As the year comes to an end, please pray about contributing a special year end gift to help us remain and serve in Indonesia alongside the GKLI. The longer we are able to stay in Indonesia before returning to America for home service the better it will be for the ministry here and for our family.

We thank all of you who are already partnering with us through prayer and financial support. Your prayers encourage us and your generous support is vital to our work here and to our relationship with the GKLI. **Thank you** to everyone who has given to the Lord's work in Indonesia!

Please prayerfully consider continuing your financial support into 2020! You can renew your commitment, make a new pledge, or offer a special gift by visiting <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/matthew.wood>. None of this happens without your support. We work together as partners here in Indonesia.

