

Masked Ministry

There is great concern about the deadly coronavirus here in Taiwan. Although as of this writing, there have only been 11 confirmed cases of people infected and no deaths, the memory of SARS 17 years ago is still very vivid, when at least several dozen died as a direct result of that virus.

The current virus has also affected the life of the Church here as, for example, already on January 26th Vicar Changlong Chen conducted the entire worship service, including while preaching, wearing a facemask. I chose to give the absolution and benediction without one. This past Sunday, though, I taught my entire catechism class wearing one, and the four students did too. That brought back clear memories of when I taught at China Lutheran Seminary in 2003 (during the SARS epidemic), and all my students were likewise face-masked. It is so much more difficult to tell how the students are comprehending the material when their faces are mostly covered up!

Because of the worries, face-masks have long-since been in extremely short supply here. The latest national news is that Taiwan citizens, as part of their national health insurance are entitled to purchasing two disposable face-masks each per week (costing less than 40 cents USD each). Please join us in praying for our heavenly Father’s mercy on those affected by this virus, in China, here in Taiwan, and worldwide.



Pastor Paul’s Call

Pastor Paul is a theological educator in Taiwan, serving with the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) and China Lutheran Seminary (CLS). He is called to teach, write, and help plant and pastor Lutheran churches.

To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to michael.paul@lcmsintl.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”
(Matthew 9:12-13 ESV)





What can you pray for?

Thanks for:

- the free gift of salvation in Christ, and the opportunity to proclaim that in Taiwan
- the publication of the new book in Chinese

Petitions for:

- God's mercy and comfort for all affected by the coronavirus
- wisdom and endurance for all the health care professionals and government officials struggling to cope with the virus
- the publication of many new resources in 2020

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www.lcms.org/paul

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

"I was sure I was going to hell"



Most Churches in Taiwan proclaim a very legalistic message to their members. I continue to hear examples of this from my students and Church members. Recently Zhuyin told me that at her former Church, when she often told the pastor's wife her struggles of trying to live peacefully with her husband, the pastor's wife always responded, "Well, if you really loved Jesus enough, you'd be able to be a good wife." Zhuyin became convinced that she simply must not love Jesus enough, and therefore she was sure she was going to hell.

One of my students recently told me that her daughter was told at Church that unless she served enough at Church she couldn't be God's child. Thankfully, when Christians from other Churches visit our mission congregation here in Hsinchu, they can often immediately tell a difference—we preach and teach Christ crucified for the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.

Over a year ago Junping attended my Sunday morning Bible class and then our worship service. After just that one visit, she determined that she needed to leave her Church at the time and transfer to our Church. Although it took her a year to gradually and respectfully step down from all the forms of service in which she was involved at her old Church, she now worships with us and is attending Pastor Lu's new member class and my catechism class.



A New Chinese Book!

The Chinese Church worldwide is so blessed to now have a new wonderful resource in their own language: *Reading the Bible with Understanding*, by Lane Burghard. This Lutheran Heritage Foundation project (with funding from the LWML) was translated, edited, and printed here in Taiwan, and I served as its manager and theological editor. There are great hopes that in 2020 an increase in the number of other good resources can be produced. Next to come is volume 1 of *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions – Reader's Edition*, and shortly after that an additional 1000 copies of the *Chinese Lutheran Service Book (pilot edition)* are scheduled to be printed. Lord-willing, also to be published this year are Chinese translations of *Lutheranism 101*, *Text Music Context*, the *What About* pamphlets, *Here We Stand*, and maybe more!

Keeping up-to-date: If you're not receiving this newsletter by email but would like to, please contact us at michael.paul@lcms.org. For frequent Facebook updates, go to the facebook group: "Michael Paul family Taiwan mission."

To support our work financially, you may make checks payable (memo line: "Support of Missionary Michael Paul") to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" and send your tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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