

Serving the Lord in

ASIA

News from the Jastrams

February/March 2020



PLUM BLOSSOMS, JAPANESE PRELUDE TO CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Dear Friends,

A lot has been happening here in Asia since last we communicated! Of course, the coronavirus, or COVID-19 has loomed large in it all. Thank you for your concern and prayers as we live through the uncertainties and disruptions in daily life that are accompanying the outbreak. Initially, the disruptions were small—cancellation of sporting and cultural events, the staggering of work start times, but more recently very substantial adjustments, such as the rather abrupt cancellation of the last two weeks of school, which left parents scrambling to adjust schedules and make appropriate arrangements within a three-day period. (I do hear our neighbor boys in the apartment above us a lot more these days!) We've been informed that more change is to come next week when the government announces new measures to be implemented. It is preoccupying and as a consequence energy-draining some days. Nevertheless, we remain in good health and the work continues—despite some extra twists and turns.

THE PHILIPPINES

With the start of February, Dan's travel to the Philippines moved forward without any hitches. As you may recall, he was slated to substitute-teach at their seminary for [Rev. Roger James](#), who is on Dan's team in Asia as an LCMS theological educator, while Roger was in the States working towards completion of his doctorate in Missiology. It is always a pure joy for Dan to teach, and this round was no exception as he taught a unit on the "Freedom of the Will", another on "Soteriology—The Way of Salvation", and another on "The Small Catechism—Table of Duties."

The day before we left the Philippines, the government banned all flights to Hong Kong, but placed no restriction on travel (back) to Japan, for which we were hugely relieved, especially because, at that point Japan already had a number of infections, including people on the Diamond Princess cruise ship at port in Yokohama, so we were concerned.

NETWORK SUPPORT BUILDING

Another development just before leaving the Philippines and after a talk with his regional director, was that Dan and I would need to alter our summer plans. Dan would need to head back to the States as soon as possible,

which turns out to be this next Monday, March 9th, for a two to three month home service! He plans to visit new congregations in Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin. The two-pronged goal of his trip is to eliminate the deficit in our NSM account and increase our base of support by 30%, both of which are necessary to get our NSM account to a sustainable level for the long term. This goal has been challenging because Dan has a larger than average missionary budget, due in part to higher than average expenses associated with living Japan (both tax-wise and cost of living) as well as expenses associated with his managerial work. We are making very good progress on these two goals thanks to folks like you!

UNEXPECTED BLESSING

When we got back to Japan we decided to focus all our energies during this short period of time on reducing the deficit as much as possible before Dan headed to the States. We were overwhelmed to have received pledges and donations that we believe are bringing us close to getting out of the red by the end of April—more than we had hoped or prayed for. Thank you so much! This was our unexpected blessing from God through you, His people. Still in the future is the home service work of building new support to sustain us for the next two years.

CURRENT MISSION WORK PROGRESS

Dan also continues to make exciting progress in his visitation with Lutheran congregations and pastors for strength and encouragement in teaching and practice of the faith. More details to come when Dan returns.

AND UPON HIS RETURN

Projects he will be tackling include coordination of our OIM-Asia work of eighty project proposals for Lutheran literature and resources for the churches in Asia. We want to strengthen and equip our partner churches for their ministry and practice of the Christian faith.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Dan's colleagues and their families, missionaries Hans Trinklein and Carl Hanson, in the COVID-19 stricken country of South Korea as they continue to serve the Lord under great hardships these days.
- Dan's safe travels to the States, and good health and stamina for his visits to congregations in Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin.
- Good health and spirits while I hold down the fort in Japan.

We keep you, our friends and partners in this mission work, in our prayers also, first and foremost that you stay strong in your faith and close to God's Word and Sacrament that connect us to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God's richest blessings!

Dan and Joan Jastram
Your LCMS missionaries

To financially support Asia LCMS mission work, please consider adding us to your congregation's mission budget as a Together in Mission partner (Call 888-930-4438 for details.) You may also start, continue, or increase your financial support securely online through our secure LCMS website, lcms.org/jastram .
Thank you!