

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.



More Updates at theseaside.asia!

Language Mistakes

Kali and I confuse some words and come to an astronomically incorrect translation.



Thoughts on Culture: Small Talk

What is acceptable to ask a stranger? What is a common conversation with someone you just met? The answers to these questions are different in Indonesia.

Devotions in Indonesian



In language class we often have to write paragraphs. I try to write a short devotion which doubles as preparation for preaching in Indonesian.



A Return to Sihabonghabong

I recently returned to Sihabonghabong, a small rural village in the north part of the Island of Sumatera and the location of the GKLI central office. The journey begins with a 5:00 a.m. taxi ride to the Medan Airport, continues with a 40 minute flight to the mountains around Lake Toba, and finally concludes with a two hour drive over about 40 miles of rough mountain roads. The difficult travel is eased by the sunshine and 70 degree weather, which is a welcome break from the relentless heat and humidity of Medan.

I met Deaconess Sandra Rhein at the Silangit Airport and we were greeted by GKLI Bishop Esra Sinaga and Pastor Sitepu. On the way to the offices in Sihabonghabong Bishop Sinaga was excited to show us us a famous site where Ludwig Nommensen arrived in "Batak Land". The Batak people are tremendously thankful for the ministry of Nommensen, and the site reflects reverence to God for his gracious work of bringing them the Gospel through his servant. We also visited a site commemorating two Christian martyrs Henry Lyman and Samuel Munson and one of the first Churches on Sumatera. You can read more thoughts and reflections on these sights at theseaside.asia. From here we finished the journey to Sihabonghabong.



The goal of the visit was to help the GKLI make progress on the *Buku Ibadah Luther (BIL)*, their Indonesian hymnal project. With hymns and worship services mostly translated, they have asked us to help plan for publication. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done. So the GKLI Hymnal committee has set goals for selecting and translating prayers, bringing the liturgical calendar into Indonesian, adding some commemorations that are important to Christianity in Indonesia, acquiring copyrights, and proofreading. Their goal is to publish by Easter 2021.

More pictures of our work and reflection on theseaside.asia

Prayers



Thanksgiving

- Continued language learning.
- A productive Hymnal Committee meeting.
- Laurel and Eleanor making new friends.

Supplication

- Continued language learning.
- Safe travels to Mentawai in February
- To form friendships with Indonesian people.



Popular flower boards had us scratching our heads as we confused the Indonesian words for mourning and joy. Read more at theseaside.asia



Caroline hits the books with momma.



KIDS'

CORNER

Laurel, Eleanor, and Caroline are growing strong and continue to establish roots here in Medan. Laurel and Eleanor both have been calling Medan 'home' for some time now. It is bittersweet, but a good sign that Saint Louis and America have relinquished that title to Medan.

One day Kali and the girls were sitting at a restaurant in Medan when a young girl ran up to Laurel and gave her a big hug. She was a friend that Laurel had made at a Lego class a few weeks before! Laurel was so excited to see her again.



Caroline is very popular at our language school. What a blessing to be able to bring her along when we need to!



We were probably a little too excited about some of the contents of this care package we received in January.

Language Learning

Kali and I have been working hard learning Indonesian and after 5 months of classes we finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. We have recently finished Unit 5 of our training, which leaves us with just one more four week unit until we complete our classes.

The value of this time of language learning cannot be overstated. We are beginning to feel comfortable in every day conversation with the people we meet. When we think back to our first weeks here in Medan we are amazed at how much we have learned. There is a lot of repeating and parts of conversations that we miss. We still have a long way to go before we are fluent, but I am confident that we will continue to learn and get better.

Recently I was in Balige after the GKLI hymnal committee meeting. Deaconess Rhein had yet to see Lake Toba. So we just had to take this opportunity to get to the lake. I was able to contact a taxi, communicate three different locations around Lake Toba, schedule a time, negotiate a reasonable price, and order dinner all with absolutely no English. It even took me a while to

realize that I was interacting with the Indonesians with no English at all. It was a very encouraging moment.

Since we have arrived our language learning has determined our schedule and the structure of our day. Two hours in class, two hours of conversation, and two hours of homework. After we have completed the last of 6 units we know that our life will once again change. Thankfully, we do not have to move. Even so, we will need to adjust to the new demands of ministry here.





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