

# Hearts In Seoul



Hans

Gretchen



Abi, 22

Mike, 20

John, 18

## LIFE

# Behind the Mask

Well, dear friends, I don't have to tell you that it's been a pretty unusual couple of months! There's a lot to talk about, but right up front I want to say:

- 1) All Trinkleins are safe and healthy.
- 2) We hope and pray that you are all safe and healthy, too.

God is our Rock, our Refuge, and our Strength in times of trouble! You are all in our prayers, and we appreciate your prayerful intercession on our behalf as well.

So, wayyyy back in January, most of the world was going along, business as usual. Semester was to begin March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Gretchen, Johnny, and I were due for a short visit to the United States in the second half of February.

- 1) I had a presentation to give at the *Best Practices in Ministry* conference in Arizona;
- 2) Our daughter Jael was due at that same time, and Gretchen wanted to be there for her;
- 3) And Johnny is planning to attend Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, so a campus tour was definitely called for.

The trip (and the presentation, and the baby, and the tour) came out just fine! See Gretchen's Pearl for more grandson info. But it's what happened *after* that, that makes for the excitement.

South Korea was one of the epicenters of COVID-19, in late February. But Koreans are used to wearing masks (most people already owned them on account of the Yellow Dust and such); only the social distancing was new. Citizens of this tight-knit nation rallied together to do what was necessary—including Luther University. We delayed the start of the semester for two weeks (everybody else did, too) and then decided to start the semester with online classes only. Quick as a wink we bought a custom-tailored Learning Management System (computer program) to handle all the posting of videos, submitting of assignments, attendance, grading, etc. There was a very steep, very fast learning curve—especially for those of us who don't speak the language the program displays on the screen! But two weeks later, the first videos got posted, and now, a week after that, I **almost** feel like I know what I'm doing.

So we all wear masks in the hallways and meetings, squirt hand sanitizer entering AND leaving rooms (hellooo, dry skin!) and don't 'party' very much. Alone in my office I ditch the mask, and alone at home it's the same thing—I'm not afraid of getting COVID-19 from the cats. ☺

And yes, I'm alone. Gretchen was still in the States when the CDC issued the Level 4 Alert (Do Not Travel/Come Home). I couldn't in good conscience leave my mission post, since classes were just starting, but Abi and Mike

had to leave the country no matter what, to renew their "visitor visas" just like they do every 3 months. Problem: about the only country that was accepting Americans was America itself! So they are there, probably for the entire summer, with Gretchen and her folks, in Phoenix. Johnny also joined them, since it seemed to me to be healthier for him (sanity-wise!) to be where most of the family was, rather than alone at home 12+ hours a day while I'm at work.

No, it's not fun. I miss my family, and I'm hoping that we can be reunited before autumn. But at present, all Home Service (furlough) trips are "off" until we see what happens with the virus. Personally I think that South Korea is a fairly safe place to be, given the aggressive measures they've taken to combat the virus AND the fact that I don't physically interact with too many people at this stage.

Still it's strange to be going through this season, isn't it? Easy to succumb to worry or fear. But there really is no reason to fear: the same God who created everything...the same God who knew the end of all things from before the beginning...He's watching over us for our good. So I'm thankful for wise government leaders who are doing the best they know how, to protect and provide for us. Pray for them, and also for God's people all around the world! We know that God is able to (and promises to) "work all things together for good" for us. More news next time, and until we meet again, may He keep every one of you safe in the hollow of His hand!

With you in His service,

**Fun Korean Fact**

One of the many ways that Koreans are fighting the virus is the wearing of face masks. In fact, so many people buy these masks that the government has had to start rationing them at local pharmacies. Each day of the week corresponds to a certain birth year, and people born in those years may buy up to two masks per person. However, the lines for buying masks often extends to the end of the block, and they're usually sold out before noon.

To be added or removed from the mailing list, send an email message to [Hans.Trinklein@lcms.org](mailto:Hans.Trinklein@lcms.org) with the word "add" or "remove." Synod Contacts: Phone: 888-THE-LCMS Web: [lcms.org](http://lcms.org) Email: [infocenter@lcms.org](mailto:infocenter@lcms.org)

# SIBLING STRIP

It's been an interesting couple of months.

The boys and I been having the less-than-desirable experience of experiencing the same pandemic twice. We were sent back to the States on 12 hours' notice a few days after the cases started dropping in Korea and started rising in America. It'll make a good story someday after it's over, but in the meantime it's just a bit stressful.

But at the same time, it's been more annoying than scary, even in Korea when our phones kept wailing emergency alerts about new cases in the neighborhood pretty much every day. Mike had to cancel his Korean classes for a couple of weeks, I haven't been to the taekwondo dojo in over a month, and everyone's jobs except Dad's were put on hold. Church was cancelled as soon as the number of cases in Korea took that huge leap at the end of February. There were a couple of weeks where I saw less than an hour of sunlight altogether, and the carbon-filter-and-cloth smell of the inside of my mask is getting really boring.

There's been an amusing side to it too, though. When Dad and I would go grocery shopping to stock up every couple of weeks, the stores were uncommonly empty, and everyone there was wearing masks. I even saw a baby who couldn't have been more than a month old wearing a little respirator mask. There was a bottle of hand sanitizer zip-tied to the railing in our apartment building's elevator. And the cats loved the fact that I almost never left the apartment for more than 15 minutes.

One day we'll all be laughing about this. "Hey, do you remember when Covid19 happened?"  
Looking forward to that.



1. Jael with baby Ezequiel
2. Abi, Mike, and Johnny with Yiahn, a family friend, at the airport right before leaving for America
3. Hans with Professor Kim Jun Hyeon filming a video segment for one of his online classes
4. Gretchen and her sister Heidi in Phoenix, Arizona

## Gretchen's Pearl

### My Heart Is Hooked

As Hans mentioned in his article, our family has been on a wild ride, just like most families in the world. I am so grateful for this unexpected time with my parents and sisters in Arizona, and I was so blessed to spend a month with Jael, Levi, and their sweet new baby, Ezequiel Zechariah. In fact, I had the privilege of being at the hospital for his birth on February 23rd. The Lord is so gracious and kind!

But as much as I love being here in the U.S. with most of my family, I am realizing my heart is hooked in Korea. Not only is Hans there, but I believe that our work there is not done.

Right before Hans, Johnny, and I came to the U.S. in February, I met a young Korean woman at Oksudong Lutheran Church, the Korean church we attend regularly. It was the first time she had ever set foot in a church. She had come with a friend who had just started playing the keyboard for the worship services there. We sat together for lunch after the service, and she shared part of her story. For the past few years, God has been bringing many Christians into her life. In fact, she feels surrounded by them! I told her it sounded like God "had her number." She agreed. We ended up inviting her and her friend over to our home one afternoon the following week, where we continued our conversation. I saw her one more time before we came to America. I was able to give her a Korean Bible, and last I knew, she was meeting regularly with her keyboardist friend who was explaining the Scriptures to her as they studied the Bible together. Talk about being able to work in a ripe harvest field! What a privilege it was to see the fruit of the prayers and labors of other believers!

The other harvest field in which my heart is hooked is that of the orphans in Korea. During the past six months or so, the Lord has been knitting my heart to His regarding the plight of Korean orphans. I have yet to discern what the Lord wants me to do, but I am eager to find out! For now, I will pray and wait...and labor in the harvest field in America with all of you. Certainly there is much to do here, and we have all been called to serve here "for such a time as this." What an honor to be His children and to share His amazing love with hurting, needy people all around the globe! Rise up, Church of Christ!

We have Great News to share!

*Gretchen*

*Abi*



### *Prayer Request*

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| 1. | For wisdom for Hans in his role as Dean of Diakonia College |
| 2. | Thanksgiving for the safe delivery of Ezequiel              |
| 3. | For wisdom as Hans designs and plans his courses            |
| 4. | Thanksgiving for all our dear friends and supporters        |
| 5. | For strong, loving relationships within the family          |
| 6. | For good Spiritual fruit in all our relationships           |

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