



The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

The Taiwan Times

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Andrew and Noel Schaff Missionary Newsletter from ChiaYi, Taiwan

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.”

Luke 24:1-9

Visitors to the Tomb

This April has been a somewhat bizarre holiday season! We have witnessed pictures of extraordinary Easter celebrations and worship taking place from family and friends in the States as well as around the world. Taiwan has been blessed having been spared some of the brunt force of the virus. By the grace of God we were able to worship together in something of a familiar setting in a small congregation this Easter.

Known as “Resurrection Day” in Chinese, Easter, is an incredibly odd celebration to traditional Taiwanese thought. This month is more associated with Qing Ming Festival (清明節), or Tomb Sweeping Holiday. It is considered one of the most revered and significant holidays in Confucian beliefs. It marks the main way the families express devotion to parents and grandparents as well as ensure well-being in the afterlife.

At this time extended families visit gravesites of their families’ deceased to clean and perform rituals. Qing Ming has a list of customs. Families should visit the gravesite in larger groups. This is considered better luck and more respectful. Those who are considered susceptible such as pregnant women and the sickly should not attend as it is believed they will attract unwanted spirits. The family should neither dress in too bright of colors nor too much black. Simple conservative clothing is considered most respectful. The family should behave in a way that is quiet and reverent.

First, the family will clean the area around the grave, sweeping away debris, weeding, adding additional soil if needed. Families bring wine, food, paper ghost money, incense and flowers which are then placed at the grave.

Usually the family tries to bring items that the deceased family member enjoyed in life. People place the food out so it is easily accessible, but do not consume it at the gravesite. Finally, participants will acknowledge the neighboring graves placing incense sticks on them and saying a prayer of thanksgiving to the folk deities of the Earth.

Immediately upon leaving the grave people try to go to a busy or crowded place with a lot of commotion to distract away any unwanted spirits that may have followed them from the graveyard. Then they may go home and bathe with scented gels. If in the following days anyone who visited the grave feels physically or mentally unwell he or she may visit a temple or a Fengshui specialist for help.

This is the belief that most Taiwanese are familiar with and grew up practicing. There is a sense of real fear in the grave. Although some of the traditions and beliefs seem so different from those we know in the Christian faith, the fear surrounding death and the grave is not one that is surprising or unusual. It is our very sinful condition that brings about death. Death can be scary. Death is separating. Death is painful. Death is final. Death is Satanic.

Perhaps this is why Easter is referred to as Resurrection Day in Taiwan. CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED. His death on the cross and resurrection made complete atonement for our sin. Death no longer needs to be scary. Death no longer separates. In our physical death and resurrection, we are given perfect and immortal bodies. Death has been conquered!!!

This is the life-saving and live-giving message that Andrew and I hope to share this Easter season. God has miraculously blessed us at this time in Taiwan with the ability to still teach face to face at Friday Night Bible Study and share this message in the Word. It gives us the opportunity to live day to day and interact with students in a way that shows that death and the grave are so different from what they have learned. If there is one message that we share and pray they would know and believe it is that Christ is risen. He is risen for us! He is risen for them! Christ is risen for you! His resurrection day is the first resurrection day. He will come again and raise all and give eternal life in His presence to all those who believe. We pray that the Lord would keep us faithful to His Word and the proclamation, teaching, and living of his Word until He returns. God grant this to us all!

UPDATE

We were recently blessed with the opportunity to move into teacher housing on the CMS campus. We praise God for the blessing of a home and a place where we can open our home and witness His Gospel in our day to day lives!



Prayer Requests

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Pray for Us
Andrew and Noel Schaff

Email us at:
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- Please continue to pray all people suffering from Coronavirus in various ways worldwide. Pray that God would bring Himself glory and grant swift relief.
- Praise and thank God for the continued ability to proclaim his Word face to face at CMS and Salvation Church in Taiwan at this time!
- Please pray for Andrew's continued tutoring work and outreach with students Leonardo, Sarah, Melody and their families that the Lord would use the class as a chance to share the Gospel with them.
- Please pray for Andrew's classes at CMS that students' hearts and ears would be open to the message of the Gospel heard often for the first time in their Bible classes and chapel messages.
- Pray for the students that continue to return to Friday Night Bible Study classes that they would come to saving faith through the continued hearing of the Word.
- Thank God for our new home on CMS' campus. Pray that this would provide one more opportunity for us to witness to those living on campus.

We Thank God for You!

Your prayers and encouragement are greatly appreciated! If you would like to financially support the ministry in Taiwan, please make checks payable to LCMS World Mission, clearly designating for Andrew and Noel Schaff, and send to:

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Or adopt us as missionaries through Mission Central in Mapleton, IA. You can contact our friends at Mission Central using the following address:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034
Phone: 712-882-1029
You can email Gary at Gary.Thies@lcms.org

"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints." Philemon 2:4



Salvation Lutheran Church Good Friday Service.



Impromptu 12 grade concert.



A Myna giving it's own concert.



Our new home on Concordia Middle School campus.

