

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.



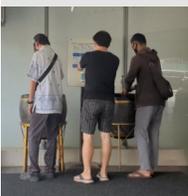
More Updates at theseaside.asia!

Quarantine Blessings

Kali reflects on some unexpected blessings of our stay at home time. In Indonesian they call it “Di rumah aja”



The New Normal in Medan



What does life look like in post-lockdown Medan? There are probably a lot of similarities with the rest of the world and a few differences.

Visit lcms.org/wood to Download our Prayer Card

AND

Send Support for the Lord's Work in Indonesia.



A Soft Opening

A common practice for new businesses is to have a soft opening before a grand opening. This is a time get to know the feel of how the business runs, make adjustments, and prepare for regular operation. I mention this because life and ministry in Medan at the moment feels very much like a soft opening to ministry.

Many are already familiar with the term “new normal.” But that doesn't quite describe our ministry and life here in Medan. Kali and I finished 10 months of intensive language training the same day the country went into covid-19 lock down. Life has been one constant transition for the last two years and we are ready for the constant transition to come to an end, but we are not returning to normal. Our lives were not normal before, they're not normal now, and they will continue to be not normal.



As Indonesia opens up we see the shape of ministry being slowly revealed. This is a time to get the feel of ministry, make adjustments, and prepare for regular operation. There will be regular travel to Jakarta to meet and work with our theological translator. After two trips, I made adjustments to minimize the impact on my wife and children, use resources more effectively, and maximize productivity.

Regular contact with the leaders of the GKLI and planning for continuing education opportunities also shapes the ministry. Two catechism workshops have given some experience already and I continue to get acquainted with how this process ordinarily works as we make plans for the publication of the Indonesian Hymnal.

Annual renewal of our visas is a regular part of life as well. This is a very important process which goes through the GKLI, the PGI (an association of churches in Indonesia), and the Ministry of Religion (part of the Indonesian government). Our visas are up for renewal this month. So please pray that this process continues to run smoothly.

Kali and the girls are learning what normal looks like as they begin another year of homeschool. This year is different because Eleanor is entering pre-school. So there's two of them that need attention now. It is amazing to see them excel. Kali does a wonderful job of teaching. Laurel and Eleanor do a wonderful job of learning.



Prayers

Thanksgiving

- The children's success in homeschool.
- Developing friendship with our neighbors.
- Strong and consistent financial and prayer support.
- The consistent and constant love of Christ among the changes and chances of the world.



Supplication

- Visa renewal process.
- Continued progress on the Indonesian Hymnal.
- The GKLI as the church serves her people during this time.
- Faithfulness of Christians and church leaders in Indonesia.
- Wisdom for the Indonesian Government.



Caroline's 1 year birthday! Amazing to reflect on how God provided for us through her birth and life!



Pastor Eben Ezer, our theological translator, invited me over to his house for dinner while I was in Jakarta. It happened to be his birthday!



For a long time now we have been asking for prayers to make more connections with Indonesians and make Indonesian friends. God has graciously blessed us over the last few weeks as we have gotten to know our neighbors. Three or four times a week our kids play in the street with the neighbor boys. White people playing in the street draws attention and soon there is a whole crowd. It is good for us. We are making friends and getting to know the community. Our girls are playing and being kids with other kids. Praise God!



Our neighbor celebrated his fifth birthday and invited us over for pizza and cake. What a fun afternoon and evening.



Kali has used her extra time at home to learn more about water color painting. Now we have some personal decorations to make our house feel a little bit more like our home.

COVID-19 Update

As of the writing of this newsletter 184,268 people have tested positive for covid-19 in Indonesia, 7,750 of whom have died and 132,055 have recovered. In the province of North Sumatera, where we live, a total of 7,265 people have tested positive 323 of whom have died and 4,283 have recovered. People in Medan wear masks in public places and all stores and restaurants have handwashing stations at their entrances.

We are all healthy and living in Medan, Indonesia.

Matthew has begun to take monthly trips to Jakarta to meet with our theological translator. In Indonesia travelers are required to get a rapid response covid-19 test. Proof of the negative test is required to enter the airport and stay at a hotel. Matthew has been getting to know the lab techs at the testing facility nearest to our house. So far all of the travel has been safe and comfortable.



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Hymnal Update

The Indonesian hymnal project contains over 40 hymns newly translated into Indonesian. Some of these hymns have great historical significance. For instance, this hymnal will introduce *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*, *Triune God*, *Be Thou Our Stay*, and *At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing* into the Indonesian language.

We are working with a great theological translator who has translated these hymns faithfully. It is no easy task! Indonesian words tend to have a lot of syllables so getting as much as possible into the translation requires a lot of work. Over the last two months we have been working together to refine his translations. We are double checking syllable counts, adding rhyming, and doing our best to make sure the emphasis of the music matches the translation. So far we have worked through 21 hymns and there are plenty more to go!

