



Pastor Paul’s Call

Pastor Paul is a theological educator in Taiwan, serving with the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) and China Lutheran Seminary (CLS). He is called to teach, write, and help plant and pastor Lutheran churches.

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The Power of God’s Love



In a recent Sunday morning catechism class, we were discussing the 4th commandment and the importance of stable, traditional families for a society. Jiayu, a public school teacher for 37 years, related how the breakdown of families in Taiwan over the years has made her job so much more challenging. She then went on, though, to share an incredible story of God’s love in the midst of this challenging situation. When “problem children” begin to disrupt a class in her school, teachers always call on the principal to come and take the child away and discipline him or her. However, the principal at her school recently tested positive for COVID-19, and he thus wasn’t at school when one boy, well-known for his behavior problems, began acting up. “Johnny” lives in a very broken “home,” full of various forms of abuse, with no stability and lots of fear. That particular day in school he had brought the class completely to a halt by various disruptive actions, including banging his chair continually on the floor. What was Jiayu to do? The principal wasn’t there! And Jiayu is a hardly a “commanding figure,” like the principal. She thought, “OK, my only hope is to try something completely different.” She knew that Johnny (unlike the rest in his “home”) had some contact with a local Catholic Church, so she told him something like, “Johnny I know you go to Church. God loves you, and so do I. I’m really glad you’re in our class and so glad you can be with us today. I really care about you.” Immediately all his disruptive behavior stopped, and for the rest of the day he went out of his way to offer any type of help he could give to Jiayu in the management of the classroom.

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God shows His love for us in
that while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8 ESV)





What can you pray for?

Thanks for:

- the opportunity for Jiayu to give a simple witness of God's love to student Johnny
- the new homiletics class, which is helping the five of us to preach better

Petitions for:

- Johnny, that God's love for him in Jesus could continue to reach him through Church, Jiayu, and other Christians
- more reliable shipping, so that God's Word could be spread more effectively world-wide

Our mailing address:

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our mission station's crucifix

Our official website:

www.lcms.org/paul

There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at www.lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

Let's Practice Preaching!



Last month I began another 15-week homiletics (or "preaching") course, this time with four men who have already been preaching for at least several, if not many more, years. Two of them meet with me in person, while the other two join online for our two-hour class. Typically about half of our time is spent by one

of us preaching a short homily, and then all of us critiquing it and discussing other possible ways to preach the same text. We all benefit from the process and enjoy encouraging and challenging each other. The rest of our time is spent slowly going through "20 steps of sermon preparation," and also focused attention on learning how to better distinguish and apply Law and Gospel. While I need to drive almost an hour one-way to teach the class, it's well worth it, and while on the road I can learn even more as I listen to lots of good Biblical teaching I've downloaded from the internet.

Lost in the Mail

It's difficult to fully enumerate all the ways that COVID-19 has impacted our life and mission work. The marked decrease in the amount and depth of personal contact with people is perhaps the most challenging aspect. For example, the Taiwan population has been wearing masks in public (i.e., anywhere outside your own home) for over two years now, and it seems unlikely that will change for at least another year. I haven't seen the full face (except for briefly during the few times eating at Church was allowed) of most of our members now for all this time. Another increasingly frustrating effect of COVID-19 is the uncertainty of international shipping. Over the past year, less than half of the boxes of books that we have mailed have actually arrived at their destination. For example, one large box mailed from the US in August of last year never arrived here in Taiwan. An even larger box of books mailed from here to the US in December has likewise not yet arrived. We've mailed many boxes from Taiwan to various places throughout Asia, and at least half of them have not yet arrived. And all this despite the fact that shipping costs have risen markedly. While we do our best to increase online resources, we pray for our Lord's mercy that shipping would become more stable and God's Word could once again be reliably spread worldwide through that channel.



Keeping up-to-date: If you're not receiving this newsletter by email but would like to, please contact us at michael.paul@lcms.org. For frequent Facebook updates, go to the Facebook group: "Michael Paul family Taiwan mission."

To support our work financially, you may make checks payable (memo line: "Support of Missionary Michael Paul") to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" and send your tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861



You can **ALSO** make checks payable to "Mission Central" and send your tax-deductible gift to our friends at: Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034.