



CHRISTMAS 2022 WAS A BLAST! Like many countries over the world, globalization ensures that Cambodians know of Christmas. Decorations can be seen throughout Phnom Penh in December (and sometimes staying up long past the Christmas season!). Christmas classics in English can be heard in shops and malls. These external reminders of Christmas are nice, but are, unfortunately, devoid of any substance connected to the actual Christmas story. In a country with only 2% Christians, most Cambodians have no idea what Christmas is about. It is simply an imported cultural festival. But therein lies great opportunity for the church! In December, churches throughout Cambodia see Christmas as a ripe chance to proclaim the message of Jesus to those who do not yet know him. Special services and outreach programs are common in rural and urban areas. While some of our Christmas plans fell apart due to a bout with COVID-19, we did enjoy plenty of Christmas joy. Christ Lutheran Church in Phnom Penh had their Christmas service on December 18, with large numbers of members and guests in attendance, and capped by the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. Pastor Songim gave a great message about the gifts that God gives us in Jesus—namely our salvation. J.P. was honored to do a Scripture reading (in Khmer!). J.P. preached on Christmas morning, and in the evening we hosted the church's youth group for a party. We are honored to play a small part in what God is doing through His people in Cambodia.

J.P. TRAVELED TO Kampong Chhnang to teach Luther's Small Catechism once again. Combining two groups, there were over 20 people in attendance, many of whom are key lay leaders from Pastor Kim Hai's area preaching stations. J.P. taught through all three articles of the Apostles' Creed over two days. The most boisterous conversations revolved around the third article, when we read Luther's startling words that "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him." It was a great chance to emphasize the depth of our human depravity, but also to be reminded that "the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in the true faith." May the Holy Spirit continue to lead these dear brothers and sisters!



AIMEE'S FATHER, Brad, visited Cambodia this Christmas. This is only the third year in 15 that we've been able to spend Christmas with family. What a great holiday gift!

PRAISES: for a joyful Advent and Christmas season, with plentiful opportunities to serve and share; for quality time with Aimee's dad; for a fantastic regional gathering for LCMS Asia missionaries, which we hosted in Phnom Penh (more on that next month!); for three Cambodian leaders who recently graduated with their Masters degree. **PRAYERS:** for a persistent cough that has bothered Isaac for three months; for safe travel for J.P.'s parents, who will spend two weeks in Cambodia from January 21; for upcoming trainings schedule for late January and early February; for Celeste as she starts learning to drive a car in preparation for obtaining her learner's permit.

WANNA HELP US impact the people of Cambodia? Give online here, or mail a check to 1) P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 (payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), OR 2) 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034 (payable to Mission Central). For ALL checks, in the memo line write "Cima family-Cambodia."

SQUARE TWO

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