



## MEET THE WOOD FAMILY

Matthew, Kali, Laurel, Eleanor, Caroline, and Kermit serve in Medan, Indonesia with LCMS International. Matthew supports *The Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI)*, by mentoring pastors, providing continuing education, and managing mercy and translation projects.

**GIVE NOW &  
KEEP US IN INDONESIA!**  
SCAN BELOW



OR TEXT

'LCMSWOOD' TO 41-444

OR MAIL IN A CHECK

### Payable to:

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861  
Saint Louis, MO 63166-6861  
On the memo line include:  
**Wood-Indonesia**



To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter write to:

**Matthew.Wood@lcms.org**  
with ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

## WORKSHOP ON THE FORMULA OF CONCORD



### Theologians of the Formula of Concord

From left to right: David Chytraeus, Andreas Musculus, Nicolaus Selnecker, Martin Chemnitz, Christoph Kaerner, Jacob Andreae.

The week after Thanksgiving I made the trip out to Dolok Sanggul, a small city just south of Lake Toba. The 172 mile drive through mostly narrow mountain roads takes about six hours. Once there I met with about 50 pastors, evangelists, and congregational teachers to present on the Formula of Concord.

### The Formula of Concord



The GKLI requested an introduction on The Formula of Concord, the last of the confessional documents in the Book of Concord. It was a blessing for me to review these confessions and see how they continue to be relevant even in Indonesia today.

After the death of Martin Luther a series of theological disputes arose among the Lutherans. The Formula seeks to resolve these theological conflicts through faithful interpretation of Scripture. It addresses topics such as the role of good

works in the life of the Christian, adiaphora, the physical presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, the two natures of Christ, predestination, and more.

### The GKLI and the Formula

The GKLI was born out of similar conflicts to those faced by the Lutherans who wrote the Formula. Christianity came to North Sumatra through German Missionaries in the mid 19th Century, a time when a genuine Lutheran confession was not prioritized. One-hundred years later in the mid 20th century the church those missionaries organized faced an identity crisis as there were multiple theologies—Reformed and Lutheran—being taught at their seminaries and proclaimed from their pulpits. The founders of the GKLI adhered to a precise and genuine Lutheran confession and were forced to organize a new church body in order to remain faithful to that confession.

So, for us all this was an edifying review of our confessions and their enduring significance for the life of the Church. The GKLI attendees were engaged and asked excellent questions. They might not have been able to articulate it, but they nevertheless showed their theology to be in line with the Formula.



## PRAYERS

### SUPPLICATION

- For our theological translator, Eben Ezer Aruan, that the Lord would bless his translation efforts..
- For Indonesia as they approach their national elections in February.
- For passport renewals in the coming months and patience with our next visa renewal process.
- For continued work with the GKLI and to identify ways to expand our reach in Indonesia.

### THANGKSGIVING

- For successful Church Fellowship dialogue between the LCMS and the GKLI and that the Lord would continue to bless future dialogue.
- For a wonderful Thanksgiving celebration in Medan with friends and colleagues from America.



## FAMILY UPDATE

Life of the Wood family continues on as normal. The home school year is in full swing and the girls are doing great. The LCMS contingent in town for Church Fellowship dialogue—Michael, Jonathan, Charles, and Sam—joined us for Thanksgiving celebration after the Church Fellowship talks, and they got to know Kali and the girls a little better.

We also had the opportunity to take a short family vacation which involved a lot of swimming and a trip to the Penang upside down museum.



## SUCCESSFUL FELLOWSHIP DIALOGUE



From left to right: **Back Row:** Rev. Michael Frese (Deputy Director of LCMS Church Relations), Rev. Charles Ferry (OIM Asia Regional Manager), Rev. Matthew Wood (LCMS representative in Indonesia), Sam Borgwardt (OIM Asia Region Business Manager), Rev. Anton Ben Gurion Hutagalung (Head of GKLI Department of Mission). **Front Row:** Rev. Eben Ezer Aruan (GKLI Treasurer and Translator), Rev. Lamris Malau (GKLI General Secretary), Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw (Director of LCMS Church Relations), Rev. Bishop Jon Albert Saragih of the GKLI, Rev. Bishop Emeritus Aladin Sitio, Rev. Kimson Sinaga (Head of GKLI Department of Deakonia).

The LCMS and the GKLI met together on the 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> of November for church fellowship dialogue. The talks went very well and exceeded everyone's expectations. They were not a presentation of formal papers, but rather two days of sitting around the table and discussing theology, the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and different items of casuistry that came up.

More specific details of the conversation are, for now, being kept private as dialogue is still in progress. Rev. Dr. Shaw and Rev. Frese have already made plans to return next November. This is encouraging progress toward Altar and Pulpit fellowship. The GKLI has been pursuing this relationship for some time and is thankful for the renewed attention from LCMS Church Relations.