

# Singing the Church's Song in Asia

Becky Bartelt's December 2023 Newsletter  
Serving the Lord in Taiwan/Asia

## Christmas Letter



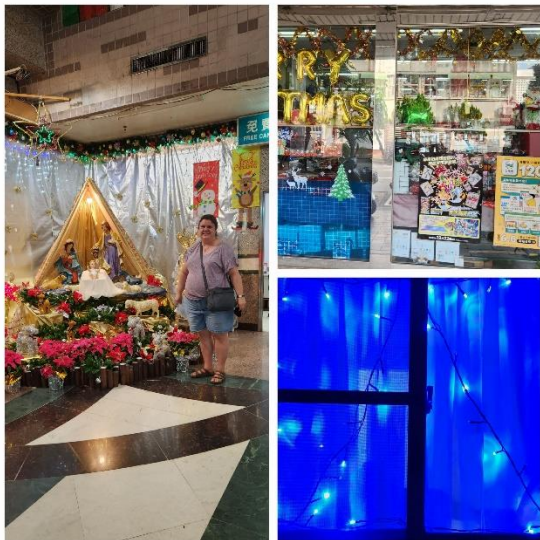
This time of year I usually write a Christmas letter and send it out in early December, but this year I am sending a post-Christmas letter to all of you. This year has been a year of many new things through the ups and downs of culture shock and my family's health. I thank you for your prayers and notes and support of God's work here in Asia to share the Gospel through music. I thank you all for your prayers for my family's health. I am happy to report that my dad is doing much better and my sister just had her last chemotherapy treatment. Now we wait and pray to see what comes next and if the side-effects will dissipate. I look forward to sharing with you in this newsletter how we celebrated Christmas here in Taiwan even though December 25th itself was a normal workday in Taiwan. I pray your celebration of Jesus' incarnation was joyful and meaningful as it is only through Jesus' becoming one of us that He could die and rise again to defeat sin and death and guarantee new life for us in Him! God's blessings to you this Christmas season!

Yours in Christ,  
Becky

## Christmas Day

Christmas day was quiet in the Luther building where I live. We had a festival service at 9 with me playing the hymns and the regional director's children playing the liturgy. I shared Christmas cookies with my neighbors (and the choir members on Sunday). I had a festive lunch with my colleagues and neighbors from Australia, the Lockwoods, and some great conversation. I had a nap. I also had a chance to talk with my family and open the present they sent me, which I had put under the tree (upside down, so I couldn't read the customs label on the top which listed the contents!).





## Advent Lights

I did not have an Advent wreath this year. I was unable to find the appropriate candles without traveling to a different city where there is a Christian bookstore. That will be a goal for next year. However, I was very excited that I successfully bought blue Advent lights. There were no blue lights in a box available at the stationery store, so I had to ask in Chinese if I could buy the last strand of blue lights hanging on the wall. I managed to do it in Chinese and was very happy about that! There were many Christmas lights and decorations in the stores, but I only saw one manger scene—in the Catholic hospital near my home.

## Cram School

For the last several months I have been teaching music and English to children at a cram school in Chiayi City. Most children in Taiwan attend a “cram school” after school to learn and study even more. These children are from families who can’t afford such a cram school. The leader of the community in which Salvation Lutheran Church is located provides this cram school and partnered with Salvation Lutheran to provide this class. The children learned music concepts and English songs including “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” which they sang at the Christmas concert. In addition to learning songs in English, Ruth Wu, the local pastor’s wife, taught them “Silent Night” and “Joy to the World” in Chinese. One of my favorite moments at the concert was hearing the children sing those two songs with energy with the rest of the congregation. After the concert congregation members shared gifts they had chosen with each child and shared in some cookies and hot apple cider. Pictured are the two children I got to share gifts with.



## Outreach Christmas Concert

On Sunday, December 24th at 7 p.m. Salvation Lutheran Church held a Christmas concert to reach out to community kids and their families and to share the good news of Jesus, born for all to rescue us from sin. The concert included the church’s adult choir, two children’s choirs, a choir of women from the Friday Night English Bible study at Salvation, handbells, a string quartet, a piano duet, a recorder/flute duet and a recorder/cello ensemble. Pastor Wu shared Bible passages and the Gospel message between pieces. They also included the text for all the Christmas pieces, even the instrumental ones, in Chinese and English. The adult church choir sang one piece in Chinese and one in English. The cram school children (see above) sang “Go Tell It On the Mountain” in

English with the Friday Night Bible study children singing the verses in English. The concert concluded with cookies, hot apple cider (It was down to 58 degrees Fahrenheit!) and presents for the children. Please join me in praying that the seeds planted can continue to be watered and grow in Jesus!

## All-Asia Family Retreat in Indonesia



This is a picture of the All-Asia Family Retreat in Cambodia last year. Almost all the LCMS workers in Asia and their families gathered for Bible study, worship and fellowship for three days. This January we will meet in Indonesia. You would think it would be easy to get there, but it will take almost 20 hours with a layover in Malaysia to get there. There is no direct route from Taiwan to Medan, Indonesia. I am looking forward to seeing, studying and fellowshiping with fellow LCMS workers in Asia!

### Please pray for...

- fellow missionaries dealing with a mother's cancer and a son's death.
- safe travel to and from the All-Asia Family Retreat.
- continued perseverance in learning Chinese.
- that the side-effects of my sister's chemo treatments would dissipate.

### Please give thanks for...

- my dad's continued recovery from back surgery.
- My sister's final chemo treatment for now.
- a successful Christmas Outreach Concert.

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Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Becky Bartelt.

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In the memo line, please write Bartelt-Taiwan

Give securely from any device at: [lcms.org/givenow/Bartelt](https://lcms.org/givenow/Bartelt)  
Or, call a donor care representative at 1-888-930-4438

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

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