



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!**
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PEKANBARU



Pastor Eben Ezer Aruan (Left) and Pastor Wood (Right) present on the biblical understanding of Church and Ministry.

Pekanbaru is a city of about one million people in the Riau province of Indonesia located in the central area of Sumatra. By car it is about an 18 hour drive from the central office of the GKLI and about an hour and a half by plane. There are several GKLI congregations in and around Pekanbaru and it is difficult for their pastors, evangelists, and elders to make the journey to Medan or the GKLI offices Sihabonghabong. They have long been asking that we come to them so that they can all participate in a theological workshop.

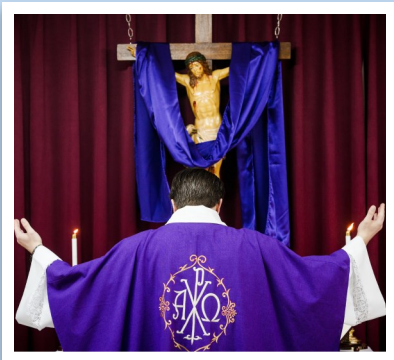
Church and Ministry

Bishop asked me to modify the Church and Ministry presentation I made to the vicars and pastoral candidates last year. The blessing and curse of teaching on Church and Ministry is that it really is about everything. Answering the question, "Who is the Church?" gets into faith and justification. Answering, "Where is the Church to be found?" gets into the theology of the Word and Sacraments. The topic of ministry encompasses the distinction between the universal priesthood of all believers and the ministers that serve in their midst. The job of proclaiming the Gospel gets into distinction of Law and Gospel during which there is opportunity to talk about the three functions of the Law. Of course there is al-

ways opportunity to talk about the Church's ministry to unbelievers, worship, the relationship between Church and state, and so much more. So much of our theology influences and is expressed through the theology of Church and Ministry that there's no limit of what to talk about.

**Where there is forgiveness of sins
there is life and salvation.**

Unfortunately, there is a time limit to talk about it all. We had one day on Church and one day on Ministry. Eben Ezer and I tried to keep our commentary brief and allow for questions which could guide the discussion to things that the GKLI pastors, evangelists, and congregational elders were curious about. One big question was, "How can a pastor forgive sins?" We turned to Scripture and saw how Jesus calls the disciples to forgive sins in Luke 24 and John 20 and also how the whole Church is involved in Matthew 18 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. The Church and the pastor are not in competition trying to show off a higher authority or a more genuine forgiveness of sins. Rather we see The Spirit working through the Church, the Apostles, and pastors to distribute the gift of reconciliation with the Father that Jesus won through is death and resurrection.



PRAYERS

SUPPLICATION

- Family of **Sahat Hangoluan Sinaga**, a reading and writing teacher for the Sanak people, who was discovered dead in a river by his wife and mother-in-law.
- For Visa renewals due on April 4.
- For continued work on the Indonesian Lutheran Hymnal. That we would reach our March 31 deadline to have it ready for lay out and design.
- For continued work with the GKLI and to identify ways to expand our reach in Indonesia.

THANKSGIVING

- For successful renewing of Matthew's and Caroline's passports.
- For a successful and safe workshop in Pekanbaru on Church and Ministry.
- For the amazing financial and prayer support received in 2023!

FAMILY UPDATE

Eleanor recently celebrated her 7th birthday with some friends at a local hotel pool.

All three girls recently started gymnastics classes once a week and they are loving it!

The school year rolls on. Eleanor is becoming an excellent reader and mathematician. Laurel reads everything she can get her hands on and also doing remarkably well in Latin. Caroline is not in school yet, but she's ready to go next year!



INDONESIAN HYMNAL UPDATE

It has been a while since I have provided an update here about the Indonesian Lutheran Hymnal. The final proof read of the Hymnal is scheduled to be completed by March 31st. We should finish within a day or so of that deadline. Deaconess Sandra Rhein is working on the agonizingly tedious process of gathering all the metadata for the hymns and liturgies. It seems like an inordinate amount of work goes into all those little words at the bottom of every page, the index, and copyright acknowledgements. However, all those little words are invaluable to those who know how to use them!

Our goal, as of today, is to have the Hymnal ready to print by July and a dedication ceremony in November, which would coincide with Deaconess Sandra's travels and a second visit from LCMS Church Relations.

Pastor Wood and Pastor Aruan work together on editing hymn translations. There will be over 40 new hymn translations available in the Indonesian Lutheran Hymnal.

