

November
2020
**Mission News &
Helping Hands**

Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Board for World Outreach
Sharing the Gospel in South America and Asia

Mission News From South Korea

By Rev. Samuel Choi, Pastor of Seoul Lutheran Church

Just as the world suffers from Covid-19,

South Korea suffers under the pandemic and is following social distance guidelines. It's difficult for churches to have normal meetings for Bible study, choir practice, elder meetings etc. So, Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC) has worship services using YouTube. Bible studies use a video conference program like Zoom. Choir practice has not been allowed. Yet, we thank God for protecting us in this difficult Covid-19 situation.

I think the early morning devotion, a common practice of Korean Christianity, is a good opportunity for God's people. SLC usually has it at 6 AM during the week and at 7 AM on Saturdays in order to encourage our members to attend. We have used a voice conferencing online program for the devotion since the end of 2018. Now, average online attendance is around twenty. It's amazing.

Every Saturday morning, I finish the early morning devotion prayer meeting and teach Bible group leaders at 8 AM. Based on what they learn, each group sets their time on weekends to study the Bible and share friendship. Even though they were not familiar with online meeting, they are happy to maintain a relationship with each other on the screen. Not all members have joined, but the number is increasing.

This year, we enrolled five students at Lutheran high schools in the United States. They started about one month late because of Covid-19, but for five months Canaan Lutheran Academy (CLA), an affiliate institution of Seoul Lutheran Church, prepared them for Lutheran high school with classes in catechism, English, mathematics and social science.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Rev. Thomas Heyn
Board for World Outreach
Administrator

This issue's featured field is South Korea. Rev. Samuel Choi, the pastor of Seoul Lutheran Church, gives us an update on the many activities taking place in the congregation despite the Covid restrictions they face.

We note the passing of Rev. G. J. Ananda Raju, the president of the Rajahmundry district of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India. His son has written a loving remembrance of his father's life and ministry.

As always, we appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible.



Confirmation 2020 at
Seoul Lutheran Church

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This year, it was particularly difficult to find and hire an American teacher who was Lutheran. I thank God for Ms. Young-sin Choi for running our CLA program. She is the daughter of one of the elders of SLC and a graduate of Martin Luther College. She was in charge of the class. I taught Lutheran catechism. Next year we hope to have an American teacher, Mr. Ben Carmichael. There still may be difficulties due to Covid-19. Nonetheless, there were five newly registered families this year who are now learning Lutheran doctrine in the new believer class. I thank God for working all of these things for the best.

One family of our church, the Mitchell family, lives in Ulsan located three and one-half hours from Seoul by car. They teach at UNIST, a public university dedicated to research in science and technology. I have a Bible study with them once per month. Hopefully, this family will be a seed member for a new church to be established there in the near future.

Please pray for Seoul Lutheran Church as follows:

1. Pray for Ben Carmichael, who will teach next year in CLA, that he may adapt well in South Korea and have good experiences.
2. Pray that CLA runs well for our mission.
3. Pray that new families may register and become true Christians by learning about and believing Lutheran doctrine.
4. Pray that God may preserve the faith and health of members during this Covid-19 pandemic.

In Memory of
Rev. G. J. Ananda Raju (1947–2020)
President of Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India
Rajahmundry, India



Rev. Ananda was born on September 15, 1947 and baptized as a Lutheran seven days later. His father, Rev. Jacob, was also a pastor and his mother, Pushpam, was a nurse. Although Rev. Ananda lost both his parents at a very young age, he grew up in the Christian faith reciting Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

In July 1969, he was married to Florence Nightingale. Their marriage was blessed with two sons, one daughter and four grandchildren. Both of his sons are Lutheran pastors, serving in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India ("LMSI") and his daughter Grace is serving as the principal of Grace and Truth Lutheran Cornerstone School.

Rev. Ananda was a second career pastor. He started his career in the Andhra Pradesh Paper Mills located in Rajahmundry as a chemist in 1970 and was promoted to become the Shift-in-Charge for the Quality Control Department. However, in 1995 he voluntarily retired from his secular job to study theology at the WELS' Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries Seminary located in Guntur, India.

After finishing his theological studies in 2002, he was ordained as a Lutheran pastor. He served at the Grace and Truth Evangelical Lutheran Church located in Rajahmundry for twenty-five years among Hindus. He faced many obstacles and threats from Hindu activists during those years, yet he did not stop preaching the gospel. The congregation grew from 0 to 250 souls during his service.

Also in 2002, Rev. Ananda became president of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India, Rajahmundry serving as its president until the day he slept in the Lord on August 29, 2020. While serving all those years as the president of Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India, he also served as a seminary professor and as the parish pastor of Grace and Truth. In 2005, he, along with his wife Florence, visited the United States to attend the ELS Synod convention. In 2018, together with his son Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli, he attended the ELS General Pastoral Conference where he was a speaker and presenter. He also spoke at several mission rallies while in the United States.

Rev. Ananda was well known to many not only in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India but also in the cities of Rajahmundry and Hyderabad and in the ELS and WELS. He was a much-respected leader, brother and a co-worker in the Lord's service known for his polite, loving and heartwarming interaction with any person he met. His meticulous accounting and administration were a blessing for the development of Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India and were much appreciated by many. He was a faithful, humble servant of the Lord and a down-to-earth person. He lived for God's glory trusting and relying on Christ's grace and mercy. **And he lived his name "Ananda", which means**

"rejoice" or "joy", not because of what he had achieved, but only because of what Christ has done and achieved for him personally.

These are a couple of his favorite Bible passages:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

By Rev. Kalyan K. Gollapalli



Pastor Ananda's Family



Pastor Ananda preaching

And he lived his name "Ananda", which means "rejoice" or "joy", not because of what he had achieved, but only because of what Christ has done and achieved for him personally.

News From Other Mission Fields

Peru — Coronavirus restrictions are easing and some activity is slowly resuming. Three recently graduated vicars are taking up responsibilities in various ministries in the Peru synod.

Special Request Answered: The jungle ministry has been blessed with an offering by an individual for the two guitars requested in the last issue of Mission News / Helping Hands. We are thankful for this gift.

Chile — Coronavirus restrictions are easing somewhat. Three laymen continue their theological studies.

India — The coronavirus continues to impact this field. Pastor G. J. Ananda Raju passed away due to the coronavirus. His family has recovered from the virus that also affected them. They incurred considerable medical expenses in their treatment. More members of Lutheran Mission of Salvation of India are becoming infected. In addition, we have just learned that severe flooding has hit the Rajahmundry district. Some churches have been damaged. Many have lost livestock, buildings and crops. We are starting a special campaign to help our brothers and sisters in India. Those wishing to contribute immediately may send their offerings to the address listed in the article to the right, at the bottom.

Latvia — The pastors recently met and are looking at the possibility of starting a new mission congregation in Riga's historic old city. More information will be forthcoming in the next issue of the Thoughts of Faith newsletter.

Czechia — The coronavirus has recently surged again in Czechia. We await further news whether Martin Luther School in Pilsen is open.

Ukraine — The pregnancy counseling centers are operating online as well as limited in-person. The mobile clinics have been visiting towns, often at some distance from their home base of Ternopil. One of the counselors and the family of the Ukrainian assistant administrator have been infected with Covid and, thankfully, are on the mend.

In Other News

Kenya — This group, now called the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya, will be celebrating the graduation of their first class of new pastors in November.

What Can We All Do to Help?

Pray for each of the mission fields in this newsletter. Pray for the national pastors of these churches and their members, that they might remain faithful in their homelands that often do not welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray for these Christian brothers and sisters who often do not have the kind of medical care and government help that is available to most of us in the United States. May the Lord continue to care for them and strengthen their faith.

We are always thankful for your offerings in support of these fields. Each field has many needs where you, God's people, can provide much needed help. You may designate a gift to a particular field or project on the memo line of a check. Or, go to els.org and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side.

For more information please contact us at in the following ways:

Board for World Outreach
6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN
56001

website: els.org/our-work-together/world-outreach/

Rev. Thomas A. Heyn
Administrator
theyn@blc.edu
(608) 335-4612

