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Diocesan Council

The CELC Council has been busy working through strategical planning, pass budgets, and work through by-laws to be brought to the next Diocesan Assembly.

While this sounds like the business of any other organization, they recognize that these are all in service to the Gospel. They are about setting the direction of the CELC as they seek to serve their people with God's Word and proclaim the Gospel to all in Sri Lanka.

I have been privileged to attend these council meetings and work alongside them especially in strategic planning.

They recently sent a letter requesting the LCMS to formally recognize fellowship with the CELC. God willing this will happen at the Synodical Convention this summer.

Please keep the council in your prayers as they seek to remain faithful to God's Word in guiding the CELC.

Preach the Word



Rev. Paul Nelson, Theological Educator in Asia teaching class

Paul wrote: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." 2 Timothy 4:2

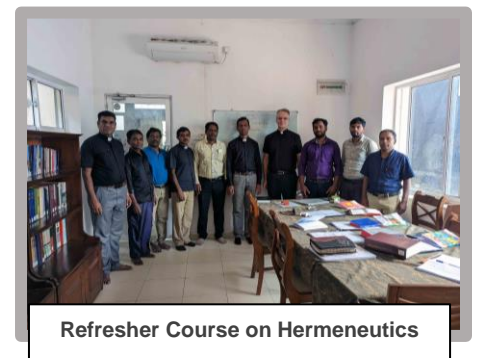
The Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church has established guidelines by which to judge whether a person is suitable and well-prepared to assume the Office of the Holy Ministry. This includes assessing Biblical knowledge, ability to articulate the teachings of the faith, Church history, ability to conduct the service, preach, minister to people with the Word of God and Sacraments.

The five evangelists of the CELC are going through being assessed this year. This will help them to understand strengths and where they need to improve. During this time, they are being provided with refresher courses on these topics.

I taught the first course in January on hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the art of

biblical interpretation. We reviewed principles of biblical interpretation which always begins with prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance to reveal the truth.

In February, Rev. Paul Nelson made his first trip to Sri Lanka to teach a refresher course on the Small and Large Catechisms. Next month, he will return to teach on Christian Doctrine with focus on the Augsburg Confession.



Refresher Course on Hermeneutics



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[Jesus said:] “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 8:11



Rev. Gnanakumar is the most recently ordained pastor in the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church. In September 2017, then Vicar Gnanakumar was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry. At the time, English District President Hardy was supposed to come to Sri Lanka to ordain him. However, Pres. Hardy was unable to make the trip and so authorized Rev. Charles Ferry, the Asia Regional Director to conduct the ordination.

At the time, an ordination certificate has not been prepared. This did not affect Rev. Gnanakumar’s status as an ordained minister. He has been faithfully preaching and administering the Sacraments for over five years. Finally after more than five years, a ordination certificate was prepared and signed by Pres. Hardy and Rev. Ferry. I was

privileged to present the certificate to Rev. Gnanakumar this January.

The CELC has four ordained clergy, serving more than 15 congregations and mission stations. Encouraging and training men to enter into the Office of Holy Ministry is on the forefront of the minds of the people in the CELC. The assessment of the current evangelists is part of those efforts and will be guide to the training of future pastors.

Please pray that God continue to give strength and wisdom to the current ordained ministers, guidance to the evangelists, and encourage young men to seek the Office of the Holy Ministry.



Rev. Gnanakumar receives his ordination certificate



Rev. Gnanakumar's ordination certificate

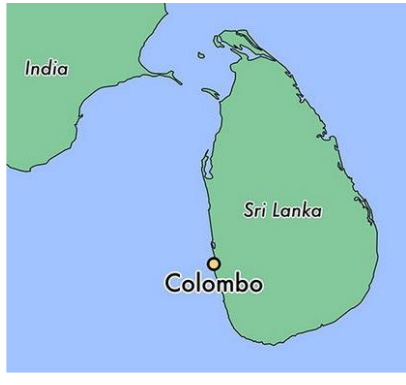


Coming to America

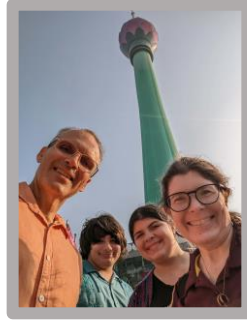
We are coming to the US this summer in order to reconnect with family and mission partners. We won't be able to visit everyone, but we will try to visit with as many as we can. If you would like a visit, contact me at: smahlburg@yahoo.com.

Also, we are looking for a home base for July-Sept. If you have or know of a place in Michigan that can accommodate 5-6 people for a reasonable rate, please contact us.

Finally, we also need a vehicle to travel with during our stay. If anyone has a vehicle they could loan, rent, or even possibly sell, please contact us.



Mahlburg Moments



The Lotus Tower

At the end of October we had a special outing to visit the Lotus Tower in Colombo. This is the tallest free standing structure in South Asia. It has just recently opened up the observation deck. The view was fabulous.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- God's mercy on those suffering in Sri Lanka
- Opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- CELC hymnal project
- To grant the CELC Council wisdom and courage they lead the church.
- Evangelist evaluations
- Future pastors in the CELC
- The Mahlburg family's trip to the US this summer



Skye gets a warm welcome in December

December saw us getting ready for Christmas. One of our greatest joys is being able to welcome back the kids who live in the States. This year only Skye was able to come back. We miss them all.



Meeting missionary JP Cima in Cambodia

At the beginning of January, the Asia Region had a family retreat in Phenom Penh, Cambodia. This was the first family retreat since January 2020. It was wonderful to see the sights and catch up with the other missionary families.

GIVE THANKS PRAISE TO GOD FOR:

- Faithful partners in God's mission work in Sri Lanka
- CELC leadership
- Rose's acceptance in Michigan State University

At the end of January we celebrate our first birthday of the new year. Steven was actually up country on his birthday. The family celebrated together after he came back two days later.

Some may notice that we missed a birthday in this newsletter. Martha's birthday was in December. Steven was up country at that time as well. Somehow we missed getting a picture when we did celebrate it.



BREAKING NEWS: Rose has been accepted to Michigan State University and will start there in the Fall as a Freshman. We are proud of her.



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. Click on "Service Opportunities."

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Steven & Martha Mahlburg. Make checks payable to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

OR

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, IA 51034

On the memo line include Mahlburg-Sri Lanka

Give securely from any device: lcms.org/givenow/missionarypage

Call a donor care representative: 800-930-4438