

News from the James family, planning to serve the Lord in Sri Lanka



# Serendip

*an old name for the island nation of Sri Lanka (once known as Ceylon). From this comes the English word serendipity, meaning, "happy surprise" or better, "unexpected blessing."*

Our thoughts are always on Sri Lanka and what life will be like when we deploy permanently. Everything is exotic and new to our imaginations, so it is startling to remember that life in Sri Lanka is ordinary human life. The very same things that we experience and suffer here in our familiar settings are also experienced and suffered there. I understand that this is obvious, but sometimes the obvious escapes us and simply needs to be stated.



Next to birth, I suppose the most obvious and universal aspect of life is death. Our thoughts of Sri Lanka and the people there have been all about life, so it has been a shock that in these last months we have been confronted with death--two tragic deaths. NOT the death of these men here pictured, but of loved ones in their families. First, the sad and unexpected death of Pr. Nadaraja's father-in-law; second, the death of Mr. Nathan's younger brother. Mr. Nathan is our LCMS field officer in Sri Lanka. He must now see to the welfare of his brother's widow and two young children.



Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died, even though He knew that He was going to straightway raise him from the grave. Jesus knew that death was not just a natural part of life. We try to make death a friend, but our guts agree with Jesus. No matter how hard we try to domesticate death, deep down we must admit that death just doesn't fit with life, or why would we weep? Why would we fear?

Even when death comes as a welcome relief to the sorrows of this world, honesty compels tears. When tears are not shed at a death, then we know that death is even more tragic than most: Here someone has died and no one cares.



### Thanks to these Congregations

We have had the pleasure of visiting the following churches since the last newsletter:

- Salem Lutheran Church**  
Taylorsville, NC
- Our Savior Lutheran Church**  
Midland, MI
- St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
Hamburg, MI
- Christ Lutheran Church**  
New Baltimore, MI
- Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
Twin Falls, ID
- Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Eden, ID
- St. John Lutheran Church**  
Buhl, ID
- St. Peter Lutheran Church**  
Eastpointe, MI

Contact us at

[roger.james@lcmsintl.org](mailto:roger.james@lcmsintl.org)

if you would like us to visit your congregation or organization.

To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to [roger.james@lcmsintl.org](mailto:roger.james@lcmsintl.org) with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.



## Prayer Requests

- Consolation for the families of Pr. Nadaraja and Mr. Nathan during this time of personal loss.
- Continued recovery and good health for Pastor Devanesan.
- That we would be able to get visas that will allow us to deploy.
- For wisdom. We need wisdom regarding what to do with our worldly possessions.
- For fruitful visits to congregations and partners as support raising continues.
- For funding. Without support we cannot serve.

But that is, in fact, never the case, for there is always one who mourns at a funeral, even if every other eye is bone dry: the One who wept for Lazarus just before restoring him also weeps for every other soul.

But thankfully this is not the only comfort we have in the face of death. God has also destroyed death. Not just temporarily as He did with Lazarus, but eternally by Himself dying and then rising again on the third day. Jesus consumed our sin on His cross and He also consumed death that comes because of our sin. This message--this truth spans all times and all places.

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I just returned from a rather quickly-planned and short trip to Sri Lanka. I was able to visit with the families who lost loved ones. I preached at Pr. Nadaraja's church the first Sunday. The second Sunday, I had the honor of conducting Divine Service at Mr. Nathan's home. Another aspect of life in a fallen world is sickness. Our dear brother, Pastor Deva, was sick and hospitalized during much of my stay. Visiting him in a Sri Lanka hospital ward was an experience unlike anything I have ever had! Imagine the picture below, except four times as many beds and all beds filled with patients and every patient with several visitors! Thankfully, he is now recovering at home. Our prayers continue for his good health.



To do real pastoral care in SL was a great joy, giving me a little taste of what I hope to be doing in the not too distant future. However, my chief reason for the trip was to do some leg work regarding a visa for our deployment. This is the next big step, and I pray that I will be able to tell you soon that the time is near for us to make the move.

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Financially, what can I say? Just as we need your prayers, we still need your financial support and we will need it for years to come, God grant. Thank you, one and all; thank you, congregations, schools, and circuits, for your kind gifts. As I often say, your on-going support is crucial for our deployment and work. If you have been considering supporting us, we would be very grateful for your help.

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [roger.james@lcmsintl.org](mailto:roger.james@lcmsintl.org).

Also check out [www.lcms.org/jamesfamily](http://www.lcms.org/jamesfamily), and if you are able to support us financially, check out [www.lcms.org/givenow/jamesfamily](http://www.lcms.org/givenow/jamesfamily). Remember that 100% of your gifts go to our support. No administrative costs are deducted. Also remember that pledges of support are even more helpful than one time gifts.

Peace in Christ,  
Pastor Roger B. James

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

Click on  
"Service Opportunities."

To support our work financially, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 790089  
St. Louis, MO 63179-0089.

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Roger James." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at [www.lcms.org/jamesfamily](http://www.lcms.org/jamesfamily).