

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."

Here we are in Chennai, India, which is in the state of Tamil Nadu. You recall that we are here in order to study the Tamil language, in preparation for deploying to Sri Lanka, where most of our Lutheran brothers and sisters speak that language. Our beginning Tamil language course runs for ten weeks and meets every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for about three hours. THREE GRUELING HOURS! It is truly exhausting, but extremely interesting.



This says, "Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Tamil is a very difficult language for a number of reasons. While it has many loan words from English, the language itself is essentially unrelated to our Western tongues. Speaking of tongues, Tamil uses the tongue to make sounds that we do not have in English. For instance, Tamil has five variations of the /n/ sound, each of which actually have their own "letter" in the Tamil alphabet. So, you got your velar stop /n/; your palatal /n/; your retroflex /n/; your dentals and your alveolars. And Tamils can actually tell the difference between the sounds of each of these, but to my ear they all sound just plain "n". And don't get me started on the three different /l/ sounds and letters! I try to say a

Tamil word or two and I get quizzical looks, as if I am uttering pure gibberish—which, I suppose I am to their ears, but to me it sounds pretty close to what they were telling me to say! But I am boring you.

Every Sunday so far I have preached in English and either the pastor of the congregation or Mr. Ravi, our LCMS India Coordinator— (Note:



Pastor Meega (Bethlehem) translates as I preach.

We have had the joy of visiting these congregations of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, since arriving in Chennai:

St. Thomas Lutheran Church
Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Avadi (Chennai) Tamil Nadu

Our Saviour Lutheran Church
KGF, Karnataka

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Vellanur (Chennai) Tamil Nadu

Vaanmahal Lutheran Church
Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Contact us at

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

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with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.





Prayer Requests

- Thanksgiving that we have settled safely in India.
- For visas to move to Sri Lanka.
- For the mental capacity to learn Tamil.
- For good health of body, mind, and spirit in our new home.
- For a good renter for our home in Battle Creek, Michigan.
- For peace for us and our dear ones who remain in the U.S.
- For on-going funding. Without support we cannot serve.

Visit our **Facebook** page

**Thothiram:
James Family in
India**

for more updates &
pictures



"Nearer My God to Thee" with the musicians & choir of Vaanmahal L.C.

come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The common language before the Tower of Babel must have been magnificent, but there is a common language now once again, which cuts across all tongues. It is the language of the forgiveness of sins purchased by the suffering and death of the Son of God, Jesus. It is a language that sounds foolish to many, but to those who believe it is the power of God and the wisdom of God, so that, as St. Paul goes on to say, *"your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"* (1Cor. 2:5).

his name is /ravi/ not /raah-vee/ — as I just learned this last week! I haven't even been able to say a simple name correctly! Mr. Ravi speaks excellent English and, of course, Tamil... and Kanada, and Telugu, and Hindi, and Mahalayam, and maybe there was some other language he speaks but I can't even pronounce the name of it!) —anyway, my sermons are translated into Tamil, line by line, as I speak. It reminds me of the epistle reading from a few Sundays ago from 1 Cor. 2:1, where St. Paul writes, "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not



Children greeting us & receiving the sign of the cross following service.

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There is so much more I could say, but this time it is not my tongue, but the page, that fails me. We thank you for your interest in our work. We eagerly request your prayers, and we respectfully request your financial support as you are able. Please pass word about us on to others who may be interested. To you who are already supporting us with your kind gifts all we can say is thank you and

Peace in Christ,

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.

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.

Click on

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