

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."

As we wait to deploy to Sri Lanka, we remain here in Chennai, India, studying Tamil. We are also visiting many different sister churches of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC). John and Eli are in high demand to play violin and cello for church services. In the picture to the right, you will note, that John is actually playing banjo, (which is a little easier to transport than a cello). This is at choir practice following services at Our Savior Lutheran Church, KGF, Karnataka, India. ஆமேன் A very



We have had the joy of visiting these congregations of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church:

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Hosur, Tamil Nadu

Good News Lutheran Church
Malabar Mission Circle
Kozhikode, Kerala

ALSO

I had the privilege of representing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as the Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee.

Contact us at

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



Pastor Joseph (Good News Lutheran Church, Kozhikode, Kerala) interprets my sermon.

moving experience happened recently when I was invited by acting IELC President, Rev. J. Sukumaran to attend a meeting with the Malabar Mission Circle along the west coast of India. (Happily, the family was able to come with me!) ஆமேன் The congregations

in this region have been sadly isolated. I was not sure what to expect. I doubted that the pastors would use vestments or liturgy or the appointed readings. When we arrived for service, Pastor Joseph was already vested, looking like a biblical prophet to my mind! I quickly got ready, putting on the only stole I had, green, and a borrowed one at that! Rev. Joseph, quietly, politely, explained that this is Lent and we use purple, but when I explained my dilemma, he was very gracious.

ஆமேன் The service was conducted without instruments or amplification. (Unfortunately, we did not bring the boys' instruments on the train with us.) Pastor Joseph beautifully chanted the entire service, (except for the absolution and prayers).

The language was Malayalam, a sister language of Tamil; but the

melodies were familiar to us from Divine Service III, so we knew what was being said, sung, and prayed. Even without instruments the congregation sang the liturgy and hymns with gusto. ஆமேன் Most of the hymns, or lyrics, as they call

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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**
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 pictures

them, were of Indian origin, but we did sing the great Western hymn: "Praise to the Lord the Almighty, King of Creation." Pastor Joseph and I were sitting beside one another in the chancel, he singing his language, I singing mine, but then something wonderful happened: the middle line of the last stanza. I saw it coming. I wondered what would happen. And YES! Our two languages came precisely together on the one great Hebrew acclamation of faith: AMEN. "Let the AMEN / Sound from His people again." For an instant our voices were joined as one and then off again we sang in Malayalam and in English.



After the service this young woman asked for our prayers. She was having major exams the coming week.

ஆமேன் We have inherited such a treasure in the liturgy and hymns of the church! They do not belong to Germano-Anglo-Americans. These are the songs and liturgy of the Malabar Mission Circle. They were at home singing "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" and the liturgy as well as the hymns composed in their own language—hymns that might well be translated into English for our blessing!

ஆமேன் the foundational reason these ancient and new words and songs unite us is the great AMEN, not a word, but THE Word, Christ Jesus, the Word Made Flesh. In Him all the promises of God are Yes and Amen. Hell's gates and death's terror and sin's shame and Satan's power are nothing because Jesus is the Amen to the Father's determination to rescue the world.

ஆமேன் The Amen of Jesus sounds from His people again and again and again wherever the faithful gather to hear and to bathe in and to eat the forgiveness purchased with Christ's blood on the cross. His people cannot help but sing the Amen of Jesus in whatever language they might know. But, still, it is One Amen for there is only One Jesus. So voice unites with voice in joyful adoration of Christ.

Roger B. James

P.S. ஆமேன் is "Amen" in Tamil.



So, while on the Malabar Coast, we also, finally, saw elephants— even indulged in elephant rides.



That's the end for now! Heh, heh.



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.

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