

News from the Michael Paul family serving our Lord in Taiwan

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Our family

Michael, Jen-Yi "Irene",
Rachel, Jonathan, Elizabeth



Pastor Paul's Call

Pastor Paul is a theological educator in Taiwan, serving with the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) and China Lutheran Seminary (CLS). He is called to teach, write, and help plant and pastor Lutheran churches.

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A New Year and a Sword

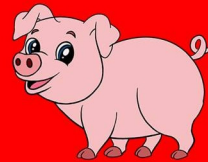
I'm typing this newsletter on the eve of Lunar New Year, by far the biggest holiday in Taiwan. Lunar New Year (also known as "Chinese" New Year or "Spring Festival")

is primarily a time for families to gather together. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are traditionally spent with the husband/father's family, and the second day of the New Year is spent with the wife/mother's family. An essential part of the celebration for most Taiwan families is to worship one's ancestors by offering them incense and food, and by praying to them that they would watch over their descendants still living on earth. The "sword" often comes to those families in which one or two members are Christians. Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:34-37 ESV). While Lunar New Year is still certainly a joyous family time, Jesus' sword of division is also very real and painful for many Christians when they gather with their family. There is both the pain of persecution from family members, but also the pain of knowing that their loved ones are still in the kingdom of darkness with no hope, as long as they continue to reject Christ. Please pray for Taiwan Christians, that they would remain faithful to Christ in the midst of persecution, and also that they would take advantage of every opportunity to boldly witness Christ's love and salvation to their unbelieving family members. Irene, Elizabeth, and I also have this challenge and opportunity as we spend time these days with her unbelieving parents and brother's family.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
(2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

Happy New Year!

新年快樂!



2019
Year of
the Pig





What can you pray for?

Thanks for:

- opportunities for Taiwan Christians to share the Gospel with family members
- pastoral student Youting Huang and the training in Law and Gospel that he's receiving

Petitions for:

- steadfastness in faith for Taiwan Christians experiencing persecution from family members
- more pastoral students like Youting to meet the needs of the Taiwan Church & society

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Our official website:
www.lcms.org/paul

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 "Service Opportunities."

Teaching Preaching

Along with the Lunar New Year celebration comes the winter semester break for schools and seminaries in Taiwan. For me it's a chance to "catch my breath" between two semesters of teaching. Last semester I taught "Introduction to Homiletics" for the first time, and the coming semester I'll teach "Introduction to Doctrinal Theology" for the third time. Teaching homiletics (or "preaching") was a challenge for me, but also a joy to see the students struggling to improve at distinguishing and applying God's Words of Law and Gospel. At least for this introductory course, I required the students to produce sermons with a three-part outline...Bible text summary, law, and then gospel. While I certainly don't think that all sermons for the Church should look just like that, I insisted that these beginning students focus on this basic structure first before moving on to other possible outlines. At the end of the semester, most students expressed appreciation for learning the difference between law and gospel, and hoped that they could grow more in understanding and applying these two words of God. Mission accomplished!



Pictured here is Youting Huang, one of my homiletics students, and also a member of the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (the LCMS partner church body) studying to be a pastor. Youting is 22 years old and currently a 3rd year student in the Bachelor of Theology program. Please pray to the Lord of the harvest for more students like Youting, as the Church has a serious shortage of pastors.

Brief Updates:

- **hymnal progress:** I spent a lot of time in January preparing the pilot hymnal for publication. Lord-willing the hymnal will be published by the end of February in time for two hymnal dedications in March. One of the dedications will include the participation of LCMS Rev. President Matthew Harrison here in Taiwan.
- **continued teaching video production:** My 15-minute Mandarin Small Catechism videos continue to be published on youtube. The last one produced was #85, covering the 4th petition of the Lord's Prayer. Irene is also preparing videos for publication which cover my Mandarin Old Testament Survey class.

Keeping up-to-date: If you're not receiving this newsletter by email but would like to, please contact us at michael.paul@lcmsintl.org. For frequent facebook updates, go to the facebook group: "Michael Paul family Taiwan mission."

To support our work financially, you may make checks payable (memo line: "Support of Missionary Michael Paul") to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" and send your tax-deductible gift to:

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



You can **ALSO** make checks payable to "Mission Central" and send your tax-deductible gift to our friends at: Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034.