

News from Rev. Dr. Edward and Monica Naumann, serving the Lord in South Asia



## Recent Events:

5 November: Theresa Araliya is born at Ninewells Hospital.

22 November: Theresa is baptized at St. Paul's, Milagiriya, by Fr. Rienzie Perera (Church of Ceylon).



Theresa gets her middle name from the Araliya flower, which was in full bloom on the day she was born.

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## Born and Born Again!



When the government announced that curfew in Colombo was renewed, due to a surge in the number of Covid cases, our hearts sank. School for the boys went back to being online, requiring constant supervision, and what was even more difficult, Monica was quickly approaching her due date. It was a struggle, but somehow we managed to get the kids logging on to their online classes and doing their homework. The due date came and went, and still we waited for the baby. We went for check-ups every couple of days, and still we waited, until at long last, nine (9) days after she was expected, baby Theresa Araliya was finally born into the world. I watched her take her first breath, and for myself I breathed a great sigh of relief and joy, as she and Monica embraced, a healthy girl with her healthy mother. Such a great blessing, born during a curfew, reminded us of the care of our loving Father in heaven. As the days went on, the curfew was lifted in our part of Colombo, but Grandpass, where our Lutheran congregation is situated, remained under lockdown. Wanting Theresa to join God's family as soon as possible, I considered baptizing her at home. But wanting to have the baptism in the dignified setting of a church, and wanting some friends to witness the event and join us in celebrating, I asked Fr. Rienzie if he would be baptize her, at St. Paul's in Milagiriya, near our house, and he kindly agreed. Thanks be to God for the saving grace of the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, which Theresa received on 22 November!

*Pastor Edward Naumann*



## Prayer requests

- For the faculty and students of Concordia Theological Seminary, Nagercoil, India, as they finish their studies and exams for this semester (and for Pastor Naumann as he finishes the grading).
- For the publications of the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church, and for all publication plans throughout South Asia, especially the recently finished Sinhala translation of the Gospel of John.
- For God’s blessing and guidance for our partners in the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC).
- For health and prosperity of all people in India and Sri Lanka.
- For the health and wellbeing of the whole Naumann family.
- For lifting of travel restrictions between India and Sri Lanka.

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# The Gospel in Simple Sinhala

As I completed translation of the Gospel of John into simple, spoken Sinhala this month, it quickly became apparent that I will often need to repeat the words of Saint Jerome to Paulinus, “Do not let the simplicity of the scripture or the poverty of its vocabulary offend you.” (*letter 53*). I never expected to be doing this kind of ‘pioneer’ missionary work in Sri Lanka. After all, translations of the Gospel already existed, in an Old Version (OV) and a New Revised Sinhala Version (NRSV). The current translations, however, are in an elevated style, far different from the humble simplicity of the original Gospel, and in addition, written Sinhala is far different from the spoken form. When I was explaining the Gospel to a Buddhist lady, whenever I had her read some passages of the Sinhala Bible, almost every time, I had to explain the meaning before she could understand. But the words of the Galilean fisherman should not be difficult to understand; they are simple and easily accessible to all people, unembellished by Greek rhetoric, and for that reason his Gospel was ridiculed and scorned by the worldly wise. Saint Paul confessed that the Gospel of Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23). The humility of our God, however, is not something of which we Christians need be ashamed. Especially at Christmastide, we will be reminded again and again of our Lord’s choice for how he wanted to enter this world, not clothed in the worldly glory of men, but in humility, concealing his heavenly glory in the womb of the Virgin, in the seemingly helpless flesh of an infant, in a lowly stable, in a lowly manger, attended by lowly shepherds, amid the beasts of the stall. Please pray that this new translation will be an instrument of God’s will, for the illumination of the spiritual darkness of this age.

එහෙත් මේ දේවල් ලියලා තියෙන්නේ, එවිට ඔබ විශ්වාස කරයි යේසුස් වහන්සේ ක්රිස්තුස් සහ දෙවියන් වහන්සේගේ පුත්රයා බව, එවිට විශ්වාස කරමින් ඔහුගේ නාමයෙන් ඔබට ජීවනය ලැබෙයි.

The above sample reads very simply: “But these things have been written, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, so that by believing, you may have life in his name.” John 20:31.

Through simple words like these, our God brings low the proud hearts of the wise of this world, and lifts up the lowly to hear and see the truth from above.

*Pastor Edward Naumann*