

SERVING THE LORD IN

THE PHILIPPINES

REV. ROGER & AMY JAMES



Pentecost
June 2020



Rev. Roger James serves as LCMS theological educator. He and his wife Amy live and teach at Lutheran Theological Seminary and Training Center (LTS), the seminary of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP).



The masks suggest strange and uncertain times, as special student Miriam (from Myanmar) receives her certificate for completing a year of study at LTS. The cross is the certainty of our redemption at all times and in all places.

PHILIPPINE FACTS

The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia. It is about 80% Roman Catholic, deriving from being a colony of the Spanish for many centuries.

The second dominant religion is Islam at about 6% of the religious population. Islam is concentrated in the southern islands of the country, which are not far from Indonesia, the largest population Muslim country in the world. Islam is also growing in other areas of the Philippines.

The non-Christian, non-trinitarian religion *Iglesia ni Cristo* originated in the Philippines around 1914, after the United States took control following the Spanish-American War. It is the third largest religion with about 2.6% of the religious population.



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Are you more than a little tired of the adjectives *strange* and *uncertain*, as in “These strange and uncertain times,” describing the coronavirus pandemic and the riots in the USA? Me too. In fact, these are not strange times. Our Lord Jesus warned us of this long ago. For instance, He warned, “There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will terrors and great signs from heaven.” A little later He says, “Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing nigh” (Luke 21:11, 28). Catastrophes and wars and disasters and violence have been going on from the beginning. They are a sign of the end. This world cannot go on as it is. These times are not strange, they are the *new normal*—new ever since sin infected creation through our first parents.

There is a certain naïveté that believes we can progress to the point where selfishness, (a.k.a., sin) will be educated or bred out of humanity. Concurrent is the naive notion that we

will so increase in our knowledge and technology that we will be able to prevent all disease and disaster. It is not so. These things are an inevitable part of life in this fallen world. To be sure we strive against sin and to relieve suffering, but this will be the task for as long as this world endures. These times are not strange. They are sadly normal.

But neither are these times uncertain. Yes, on the one hand frightening events will *certainly* will take place, but the final outcome is also *certain*, for our Lord has promised that He will put an end to the injustices and violence and death of this broken world. The horror and violence of His cross is the inoculation that cures the virus of our sinful human nature. It does not cure us by making us better. That will happen in the world to come. It heals us by the forgiveness of our sins, purchased by Him enduring the penalty of our sin.

His suffering makes certain the eternal new normal of peace with God and with one another and with all creation, for those who trust in His saving work.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- God to provide a fresh batch of students to begin studying for the Holy Ministry or to be deaconesses in August.
- The safe delivery of our first granddaughter to Kezia and Aaron Nielsen, due early October.
- For congregations around the world to fully resume services of Word and Sacrament.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The safe delivery of Enoch Paul (top) to Eli and Rachel James! Grandson #5!
- Roger's complete recovery and that others in the LTS community did not get sick.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- All those who support us and other LCMS missionaries throughout Asia and the world.



Second year seminarians who will be going on their vicarages and women students who completed the two year deaconess program were recognized at Pentecost Sunday Service of the Word here LTS, obeying all physical distancing guidelines, naturally.

We did not have a graduation this May, since we did not have any final year students returning from vicarage. We only had first and second year students. Nevertheless, we had the joy of recognizing our three women students, who completed their programs.

Miriam, the daughter of a Lutheran bishop and wife of a Lutheran pastor in Myanmar, completed three terms of study and is now waiting to return to her family in Southeast Asia. Two deaconess students completed a new two year program. We

will miss them as they return to their homes to serve as God leads them.

In addition, three second year seminarians have been assigned vicarages (internships) in three different congregations. They will return in a year, God granting, to complete their studies.

Finally, our six first year students have been assigned to six different congregations for several months of field work before they continue with their second year of studies in August.

It has been an honor to teach these dedicated brothers and sisters in Christ.

Because of you, Amy and I have been able to serve here in the Philippines at Lutheran Theological Seminary. We ask and pray that you would continue to provide financial support and remember us in your prayers. We always enjoy hearing from you.

*Thank you, and
Peace in Christ,*

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 lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Roger & Amy James, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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

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 lcms.org/jamesfamily.