

BRIDGE

Monthly E-Newsletter of Asian and Pacific Islander Community
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

June 2009

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Our Asian and Pacific Islander community in the ELCA is very diverse and is structured into caucuses. Some caucuses will hold their annual gathering this summer, beginning in June with the Laotian group and to conclude with Asian

English group in October. It is our hope and prayer that this caucus-based structure of the Asian and Pacific will be strengthened. Caucus gatherings provide times for continuing education, fellowship, networking and strategic planning in respective caucus.

Rev. Pongsak Limthongviratn, Ph.D.
Director for Asian and Pacific Islander Ministries,
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NEWS

1. Rev. Thiem Baccam, Mr. Nengyia Her, Rev. Shen Lin, Rev. William Siong have organized an Asian ministries gathering during Rev. Pongsak Limthongviratn's ministry visit to the Twin Cities. Key Asian leaders have been working closely with Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEM) of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) of St. Paul Area Synod and Minneapolis Area Synod.

2. Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM) program of ELCA Western Mission Cluster (Luther Seminary and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary) has finished the third course (Liturgy) on May 23. The fourth course will be in August on Systematic Theology by Prof. Paul

Rajashekar, academic dean of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

3. ELCA Laotian Conference will take place on June 25-27, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Des Moines, IA. About 50 people will be present at this gathering.

CONGRATULATIONS:

1. To Mr. Hitoshi Adachi received M.Div. degree from Luther Seminary. Mr. Melvin Quetulio Antonio also graduated with M.Div. for Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest.

2. To the Rev. Seok-Hwan Jeong took a call to Korean Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, CO

3. To the Rev. Philip Mathai and Mary Philip who received their Ph.D. in systematic theology from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, May 17. Here's their story:



"We came to USA with their children to pursue Philip's doctoral studies and our sojourn here has taken us through Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, to Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia,

DID YOU KNOW? ALL Asian and Asian descent

Lutherans in ALL ELCA congregations and ministries are members of the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders-ELCA. To receive this E-Newsletter, please send your email address to pongsak.limthongviratn@elca.org

Pennsylvania, to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, where both of us completed our PhD's in Systematic Theology. Here Joy was also able to fulfill her dream of doing theological studies, along with working at the Registrar's Office of Garrett Seminary in Evanston, till 2005. She started with the MA program and later registered for the PhD. Our experience was unique in that we had the same advisor, Prof. Vitor Westhelle, and also in that we received our degrees in the same day.

Our attendance at Purnajiwana-South Asian ministry in Chicago got us involved in the ministries the congregation and those of the Asian community and Multicultural Ministries, ELCA. The call to the ministry gained clarity and pronounced as we were so encouraged by friends, especially the Rev. Dr. Fred Rajan.

Talking with Esther Prabhakar and Bishop Gary Wollersheim led to Philip becoming a candidate from the Northern Illinois Synod. Philip now serves at Trinity, Lanark, Illinois, from August 15, 2006. Our academic and vocational journeys have taken us to places and opened opportunities we would not have thought of earlier. Joy has had the opportunity of being on the ALIC committee, the Multicultural Seminar Committee and the Multicultural Board of LSTC. She has worked with and continues to work with the Women in Ministry, Justice for Women units of V&E. She has also written three articles in books that have been published, "A Woman of Sabbath," in *Mission with the*

Marginalized, ed. Samuel W. Meshack; "Majestic at the Margins," in *Still at the Margins: Biblical Scholarship Fifteen Years after the Voices from the Margin*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah; and "The Space in Between Spaces: The Church as prophetic Pest/Parasite," in *Being the Church in the Midst of Empire: Trinitarian Reflections*, ed., Karen Bloomquist. Philip oversaw the publishing of the South Asian hymnal, *Jeevan Sangeeth* published in 2003. He is now involving in the publishing of a new Asian Lutheran Songbook. He has also written the article "Being as Communion: Authentic Personhood" in *Mission with the Marginalized*. He serves on the Global Mission Committee and the Subcommittee for Racial Justice of the Northern Illinois Synod." We thank many who encourage us and support us, especially the Northern Illinois Synod, Multicultural Ministries, ELCA and Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders, ELCA.



PRAYER CORNER: Please pray for: 1) Laotian caucus gathering; 2) New graduates from seminary as they are preparing themselves for the ministry in the future.

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