

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

# CONSTRUCTIVE WORD

## The Esala Prayer Letter—August 2020

...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:12-13



### Loss and Lament

Sometimes in our grief we try to stay busy so our difficult emotions can be avoided or we think it's not "Christian-like" to express doubt or anger with God, but these emotions build up and have a way of weighing us down or oozing out. While there are many promises in Christ that give hope, there's also a good bit of lament in the Bible. Naomi changed her name to Mara (bitterness) in her grief-stricken state. Tamar put ashes on her head, tore her clothes, and wept aloud after she was raped. And Job didn't reach for Romans 8:28 in his distress.

Among other things, he cursed the day he was conceived and said, "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." (Job 3:25-26) He was in a bad way, and the Bible didn't sugar-coat his struggle.

These times are hard. As I work with missionaries processing transition and loss, I've become keenly aware that many others are struggling. If you're one of those people, I want to encourage you that God is big enough to handle your sorrow, pain, and anger. We appreciate your prayers for us, but if there's a way we can partner with you in prayer, please send us an e-mail. [Sarah.Esala@lbt.org](mailto:Sarah.Esala@lbt.org)

### DEAR FRIENDS,

Little did I know in April how much would change between the time I wrote that prayer update and the time it reached your mailbox. Nathan, other LBT staff, and some of the missionaries who were in various parts of the world, grabbed whatever flights they could and relocated to the U.S. as borders closed rapidly making it very difficult to travel. We are thankful for the doors that opened to reshuffle LBT personnel to locations in accordance with their needs.

It's several months later and some of the missionaries who returned to the U.S. because of the uncertainty of the situation want to get back home to their places of ministry. **Pray for all involved in this decision-making and for the patience, wisdom, and open doors to make this possible when the time seems prudent.**

### SUMMER HAPPENINGS WITH THE ESALAS

Movin' and Groovin': In mid-June we moved from the home we've been renting for 7 years. The tricky part was that we hadn't found a new place to move into when we packed our stuff into storage. It led to a crazy kind of summer for us, but we are praising God for his generous provision through friends and family who have helped and encouraged us during this time and that a good home became available when we had about given up. By the time you get this, we'll have moved in!

Concordia Mission Institute (CMI): Every summer Lutheran Bible Translators participates in CMI. This year we met virtually. Both Nathan and I were involved in leading sessions. Nathan indirectly shared chapter 4 of his dissertation as he led a session on lament in light of COVID-19 by exploring selections from the book of Job. For another session I partnered with other member care colleagues to facilitate a workshop on transition. Both sessions connected well and allowed for powerful reflection times with others in our mission community.

PhD: Nathan has submitted his 367-page single-spaced dissertation to the readers for review!

### JOIN US IN PRAISING GOD FOR

- Nathan's ticket out of South Africa before the border closed
- Karissa's successful graduation and her job with AmeriCorps
- Our new home
- Nathan's dissertation submission

### JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR

- Flexibility, resourcefulness, and patience as Lutheran Bible Translators' work continues around the world with the challenges that COVID-19 brings
- Nathan's family's grief as his mother's health has significantly declined due to Alzheimer's
- Clarity and wisdom as my role within LBT expands
- An end to the pandemic



Graduation in the comfort of our home. While some dressed up, others decided to remain in PJs. 🧘

Exciting things are happening in Bible Translation and at LBT. Check out the opportunities below to learn more.

In Christ,

*Sarah for the Esala family*



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Join in exploring the exciting world of Bible Translation! Featuring interviews with leaders in the global translation community, *Essentially Translatable* is educational, exciting, and informative. Check it out from wherever you get your podcasts.

Are you looking for ways to share the story of Bible translation? On September 27 Lutheran Bible Translators invites you to join congregations across the world in worship. Bible Translation Sunday is a time to involve your congregation in this life-changing mission. Go to <https://lbt.org> to access free resources for you and your congregation.

