

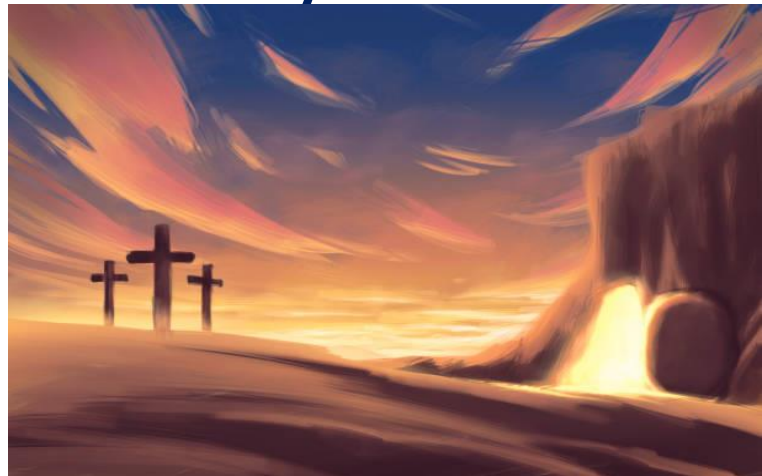
JOHN 5:24 "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

APRIL 2025



# LUTHERAN STUDY CENTRE

## Ministry Newsletter



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*"In his life Christ is an example showing us how to live*

*In his death he is a sacrifice satisfying our sins*

*In his resurrection a conqueror*

*In his ascension a king*

*In his intercession a high priest."* MARTIN LUTHER

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## From the Director's Desk



Greetings from all of us at the Lutheran Study Centre – FELCMS. By God's grace and power our journey through the year 2025 has been good. As we approach the Holy Week, let us continue to look ahead to the victory and the power of our Lord Jesus on the Cross. Good Friday, reminds us of Christ's great sacrifice and love for sinners and Easter reminds us of the victory over sin, death and devil, which Jesus shares with us. Let us hold on to His promises and grace for a meaningful journey ahead by committing our ways to God. As we note in **Psalm 37:5** "Commit your way to the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Let us continue to confess Christ's Lordship and commit our ways as we journey through 2025.

Similarly, Luther in his commentary on Genesis notes: "But it is the chief subject of all Holy Scripture to know and understand God when He makes a promise. For He helps and brings support with the realization of His promises...(LW 8:201). Furthermore, as we read in Psalm 20:4, God is the One who can make our plans to succeed. Let us commit all our plans to God; since, He alone has the power to bless us with success.

As we know, the Lutheran Study Centre was established to serve the Churches' need in enhancing our Lutheran Identity. We are doing this with the support of Lutheran Church of Australia/IM, Lutheran Church in America/GM, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria/MEW, and Lutheran World Federation.

Hence for 2025, various programs has been arranged for Pastors, Seminarians, Lay Leaders, Youths and Women. Some of these programs will be conducted in Sabah and others in West Malaysia.

At the Lutheran Study Centre we continue to work based on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Theme, which is "**Standing Firm and Striving Side by Side for the Gospel of Grace.**" (Philippians 1:27). This theme describes the aspiration and focus of the Lutheran Study Centre.

**REV DR WILFRED J SAMUEL**

**Director – Lutheran Study Centre**

*"But since Christ has taken my sins upon himself, has died for them, has suffered himself to be slain on account of my sins, they can no longer harm me; for Christ is too strong for them, they cannot keep him, he breaks forth and overpowers them, ascends into heaven takes sin and sorrow captive."*

**Dr Martin Luther**



## PALM SUNDAY : 13 April 2025

**Text: John 12:13** - "They took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

**Introduction:** Palm Sunday is a joyous day and commemorates the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem as prophesied. People rejoiced with the coming of the Savior and it also marks the beginning of Holy Week. However, a few days later, we know Jesus was arrested and crucified. People changed their opinion about Jesus quickly. In John 12:12-19, John gives some details on the group that was following Jesus and shouting 'Hosanna'

1. **Following Without Understanding** – This can be a real challenge for the Church. Many who follow Jesus, may not really understand why they are following. In John 12:16 we read, "At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him." Let us genuinely ponder over this question and understand why we are following Jesus. He is our appointed Saviour and no one else has the authority to forgive our sins.
2. **Following Jesus to See Signs and Wonders** – John 12:18 "Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him." Here we note that this group of people had great admiration for Jesus and looked up to Him as a celebrity. The Bible reminds us that Jesus did the miracles not to become a celebrity by doing miracles but to show the people that He is the appointed Messiah.
3. **Following Jesus and Being a Witness** – In John 12:17 we read of another section of the group, which is constantly testifying about Jesus and glorifying Him. "Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word." Jesus called us to be his disciples, so that we can become His witnesses, even to the ends of the world.
4. **Following Jesus to Find Fault** – In John 12:19, we note that some people who were part of the crowd followed with a negative motive; to find fault. It is strange that people with negative intentions were also in the Palm Sunday procession. It comes as a reminder to us that those who are against the gospel are carefully watching us as a Church in order to find fault and destroy our mission and ministry. Hence, we need to be careful as we walk for Christ; as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." Let us walk carefully and be guided by the Word and Spirit of God.

**Prayer:** Thank you God, for sending your Son and paving the way for our lives to be set free through Jesus' death and resurrection. Help us to journey towards the victory of the Cross and Resurrection and help us to remain in the profound truth that Jesus truly is our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY : 17 APRIL 2025

**Text:** John 13:1-3 - “The day before the Feast of Passover, Jesus already knew that it was time for Him to leave this world and return to the Father. Jesus loved all his followers on earth, and He would love them to the end. Jesus and his followers were having dinner. Satan had already stirred a desire in the heart of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot to betray Jesus. But Jesus knew that the Father had given all power to Him. Jesus also knew that He came from God and would return to God.”

**Introduction:** Love is the foundation in our Christian life, hence, without love we can never be the salt and light in the world. Betrayal is the opposite of love and faithful followership. Love is the pulse and ultimate driver of Christian life and mission. Martin Luther in his writings on the Freedom of a Christian, had said that “a Christian is a free person and at the same time he/she is a servant who serves all people. On the night before He was delivered, that is, when He was facing the crucial moments before His arrest, it is noted that He certainly loved them to the end (13:3), even when He experienced misery and moments of death, He spoke words of forgiveness.” What does this love of Christ mean to us, in the context where betrayal is common?

- 1. Betrayed but Love Continues** - We need to be present with our loved ones, our fellow humans, in their distresses and weaknesses. Christ is God incarnate who came into the world as a true human being to be with us whom He loves. God did not just observe us from heaven, but He came to be with us in all our suffering. Although he was betrayed, Jesus' love and kindness towards us has not changed.
- 2. Betrayed but Jesus Serves Us Graciously** - God's love puts all of us into a position where we need to serve one another with humility. John notes that even though “... The Father had given all power to Him” (13:3), but Jesus continued to serve like a servant; and washed the feet of the disciples. Even the one who would betray Him. Mission is a Christian call to servanthood to all people regardless of one's background and position in society.
- 3. Betrayed but Jesus Grants Eternal Life to Sinners** – (1 Cor 13:8). Although it is clearly noted that Jesus did know that the “time has come” (13:1) and that one of His disciples will betray Him (verse 11) and the others will flee from Him, yet that did not stop Him from completing the salvation plan. Hence because of love we too must remain faithful to the mission work, which is the salvation plan of God.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we are grateful that You love the whole world. You reveal this by the presence of Christ with us. You too radiate Your love to others through our lives. Give us a loving heart that will willingly, faithfully, and humbly serve You and others, and continue to shine throughout our lives. Pray that the Holy Spirit would empower us to do greater things for you God. In Jesus' name - **Amen.**

## GOOD FRIDAY : 18 APRIL 2025

**Text: Luke 23:33-34 / 40-43** - “When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.” (33:34) / “But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (40-43)

**Introduction:** Golgotha, which was the place where Jesus was going to be crucified is outside Jerusalem. The procession arrived there around nine in the morning. We note that the portrayal of the crucifixion scene in Luke’s Gospel has a wide scope; namely to highlight that Jesus’ offer of salvation included all kinds of sinners – including those serving a death sentence. Jesus’ action here provides immeasurable hope and reflects the extent of God’s grace, as proclaimed in the book of Isaiah. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

1. **Christ’s Determination to Face Death** – Crucifixion was a painful and shameful way to die. Here Jesus is put in that situation for our sake. But to Christ the Cross was not a problem but a solution; where the power of sin, death and devil could be completely destroyed. Jesus was on a mission entrusted to Him by the Father; that He should bear the Cross. It was God’s way of showing us how much He cared and loved us. Now we in the Church are entrusted with a mission; to take the gospel to the lost members of our community. John 10:16, “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”
2. **Christ's prayer for His Enemies** – In normal human terms, one would have expected Christ to have cursed the enemies and prayed to the Father to destroy the people who were executing violence against Him. Contrary to that, we read in the Gospels that Jesus prayed for them; that their sins would be forgiven. Jesus was committed to fulfill God’s will and mission; that through His suffering and death sinners could be saved. “But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!” (Matthew 5:44). Let us love our enemies and pray for them too.
3. **Christ’s Promise for Sinners** – Christ was able to promise paradise to the convict because He is God and He had the authority. Paradise here is indicative of eternal life. Life which is beyond the control of time and space.

**Prayer:** God our heavenly Father, we thank you for your dear Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whom You sent to die for us, that we may inherit eternal life. Help us to be your faithful followers. In Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

## EASTER : 20 APRIL 2025

**Text: John 11: 25-26** - “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

**Introduction:** Easter is both the celebration of **victory** over sin/death/devil and an **offering** of true worship to God for the reconciliation made possible through Christ. Human beings have the capacity to solve many problems, but when it comes to SIN, DEATH and the DEVIL, human beings are totally helpless and incapacitated. It is in this context that we discover the solution to sin, death and devil; the victorious resurrection of Jesus. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- 1. From Death to Life** – Job 14:14a “If someone dies, will they live again?” Job raised this important question, and every religion too tries to provide an answer to it. People generally fear death because it is seen as the end of life. Christ through His death and resurrection has brought hope. Easter therefore is about the death of death and the celebration of life everlasting in Jesus.
- 2. Saved by Grace Protected from Second Death** – “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death.” Revelation 2:11. The principle is simple: those who are born once will die twice and those who are born twice will die one. Born twice means born physically and also have experienced the ‘born-again’ spiritual birth. By God’s grace such people will be delivered from the second death in hell. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8
- 3. Living a Victorious Christian Life** – “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...” 2 Timothy 1: 9-10. Victorious Christian living starts with the clear understanding of God’s purpose in our lives and recognition of the power of Christ’s resurrection which has transformed and empowered us through the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. As Luther notes: “He who loses sight of the Word of God, falls into despair; the voice of heaven no longer sustains him; he follows only the disorderly tendency of his heart.” (“Of God’s Word”, Table Talk)

**Prayer:** God our heavenly Father we thank you for your Son and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us from sin/death/devil and has opened the doors of heaven that we may enter freely by grace through faith. In Jesus’ Name - **Amen**



## LSC EVENTS SCHEDULE – 2025

MONTH	EVENTS
12-14 February	<b>ELCM Pastors Retreat</b> (Lutheran Distinctives Training)
2-4 April	PCS – Assistant Pastors/Evangelist Training ( <b>Certificate in Lutheran Ministry Course Module 3</b> ) – Kudat
8-10 May	Seminari Theoloji Malaysia – Tamil Module Lecture
14-15 May	Mekong Mission Forum / NIC meeting in Hong Kong
18-31 May	Germany Study Visit – PCS, BCCM, ELCM Bahasa Malaysia Faculty/Pastor Training
8-10 July	<b>ELCM Pastors Conference</b> (Lutheran Distinctives Training)
24-26 July	<b>Orang Asli Pastors/Evangelist</b> Training in Cameron Highlands (LCM)
8-9 August	PCS – Assistant Pastors/Evangelist Training ( <b>Certificate in Lutheran Ministry Course Module 4</b> ) – Kudat
15-17 August	<b>ELCM – Lutheran Distinctives – Bukit Mertajam</b>
8-9 September	<b>Luther Seminary</b> – (Lutheran Distinctives Training – Kudat)
10-12 September	<b>Luther Seminary</b> – Ecumenic Course
18 September	<b>Mandarin Seminar</b> – Worship, Sacraments and Mission – Lutheran Reflection (VIA ZOOM) 9 am – 1pm
25-27 September	<b>English Seminar</b> – Lutheran Understanding of the Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts and Fruit - Venue- Luther Centre (LCM) – PJ
10-14 November	Mekong Mission Forum – Bangkok
18-22 November	FELCMS Visit to BCCM Sabah
27-29 November	PCS – Assistant Pastors/Evangelist Training ( <b>Certificate in Lutheran Ministry Course Module 5</b> ) – Kudat

## Lutheran Study Centre – Recently Concluded Activities



Anniversary of the Zion (ELCM) Congregation (30<sup>th</sup> November 2024)



Leaders of Batak Lutheran Churches in Indonesia attending a Lutheran Identity program conducted by Lutheran Study Centre at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (23 -24 January 2025)



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia Pastors/Workers Conference



27 Pastors, Church workers and deaconesses participated in the conference which focused on the “RECONCILIATION”

LSC was given two sessions to reinforce the Lutheran identity; namely: “Office of the Keys” and “Confession”

The conference was held at the LaSalle Centre in Ipoh Perak.

The LSC has been invited to do a similar Lutheran Identity program for the ELCM Northern district Churches on 15-17 August 2025



Dr Wilfred addressing the participants of the Asia Lutheran Internation Conference which was organised by ELCA in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah from 14-21 January 2025



The ALIC Conference Delegates visiting MARI-MARI Village for cultural exposure

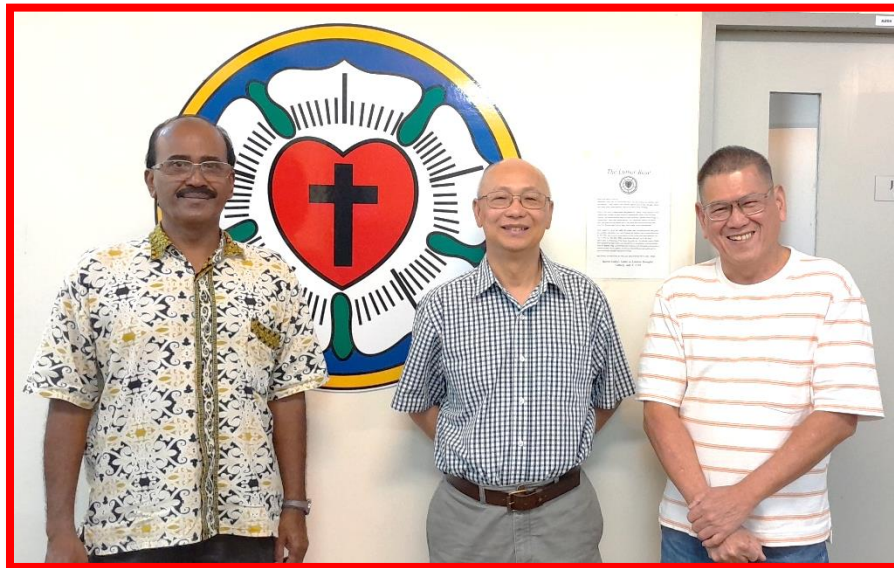
**INSTALLATION OF REV CHRISTOPHER OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN SABAH AS THE BISHOP OF THE CHURCH ON 8 MARCH 2025**



## Visitors to Lutheran Study Centre



Rev Jan and wife from Myanmar 17 January 2025 \* Lukas from ELCB visited LSC on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025



Bro Tony from Canada and Bro Lawrence from Sabah Anglican Church

**Sabah Theological Seminary First Year Students from the English, Mandarin and Bahasa Malaysia Departments visited Lutheran study Centre on 7 January 2025**



## PROPOSED LUTHER STUDY VISIT TO GERMANY (19-30 MAY 2025)

The Lutheran Study Centre will be organizing a Luther Study Visit to the Reformation land. The objective of the study visit is to help the PCS, BCCM, ELCM and other denominational churches involved actively in indigenous ministry and seminaries to help understand the Protestant Reformation and Theology as they visit the Reformation sites and participate in some seminars. The Study Visit is sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Mission OneWorld). We take this opportunity to thank Rev Thomas Paulsteiner for helping the indigenous Pastors, lecturers and leaders in Malaysia to participate in this Study Trip. A total of 25 participants will be involved in the study program.



St Augustine's monastery – Erfurt



Wartburg Castle



Luther's House in Wittenberg



Castle Church – Wittenberg



ELCB Mission OneWorld Office



Wittenberg



# LUTHERAN STUDY CENTRE - FELCMS

## VISION

TO ENHANCE LUTHERAN BIBLICAL CONFSSIONAL IDENTITY AND CHRIST CENTERED FOLLOWERSHIP

## MISSION

TO EMPOWER THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE, BELIEF AND MISSIONAL APPLICATION OF THE LUTHERAN BIBLICAL DOCTRINES CONTEXTUALLY.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To serve the Lutheran Churches in Southeast Asia by training pastors, lay members and other non-program students for service in their churches and in community.
2. To provide a center for research and for post-graduate studies in Lutheran Theology for graduate students.
3. To provide library resources, translation and publication of relevant Lutheran study material for use in the local churches and research purposes.
4. To network with other regional and international mission partners, Lutheran Theological institutions and Lutheran Study Centers to share publications, resources, ideas and technology.

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