

Greetings to my sponsoring churches! It's still hot in India and we are back to power cuts. The power is off from 6-8 a.m. which is bad for me. In my room it's okay because I have a fan that runs on batteries, but I like to eat breakfast in dining room with my colleagues and since they don't feel the heat (they've lived with it all their lives), the windows are closed and there is no air moving. But that's life and it is much better than Liberia where there is no power all day at home. With the monsoons, it should cool off a bit but with the heat I have to really work at being motivated.

Three of us - a chaplain, a nun, and I - went to Ernakulam in Kerala which is south of Vellore to do some training with a church based palliative care program. The train trip was supposed to take 9 ½ hours, but there was a 4 ½ hour delay due to the track being blocked by an express train that derailed after hitting two elephants - a mother and her calf. It ended up being a very long time on the train but we had bunks where we could sleep and we could walk around and even get off the train when it stopped at a station for a few minutes. We did some home visits with the volunteer team. They are non-medical team but they are very dedicated and are able to do a lot for the patients including helping them financially.

In an effort to motivate myself, I started working on a project that I have been considering for a long time. My idea is to look at grief and bereavement from the perspective of the Way of the Cross. An artist friend would do paintings to illustrate it and it would be interactive. I'm going to call it "Dying to be Healed."

We did a 24 hour retreat for part of the palliative care team and I was leading it so I decided to show the movie "The Bucket List" and tie that into the idea of making lists of what we want to do as a team and as a program and as individuals. The volume would not crank up enough so we couldn't hear it very well and subtitles would have been nice. We stopped at one point and I sort of summarized what was happening.

Everyone got the gist of it and the point I wanted to make. We all made Bucket Lists for Palliative Care and for ourselves. Our Sunday morning service was simple as was my message. I talked about Jesus crying when he heard of the death of his friend Lazarus and how that gives us permission to express our emotions.

"Don't cry" is not valid in the light of Jesus' message.

I took a few days off to go to Hyderabad to spend time with a good friend. We did some touristy things like visiting a famous and historic place called Charminar where there is a tower that was built as a charm to ward off a deadly epidemic back in the 16th century. We also went to the Salar Jung Museum which houses art objects from all around the world, all collected in the early 20th century by one man - Salar Jung III. From there we came back into the 21st century with an IMAX 3D movie and lunch at McDonalds.

On Fathers' Day, I got to do a baby blessing for the new daughter of two chaplain friends of mine. This blessing is done before baptism, and I mentioned to the congregation that I did a lot of baby blessings in Liberia but this was only the second one I had done in five years at Christ Lutheran - my church in Vellore. I suggested that they "get busy" - but with this congregation, it is more likely to be grandchildren!

I am still working on finding professors with PhDs who will volunteer to teach in a Masters program for Nursing Education in Liberia. I am using emails and phone calls now and then I'll be in US to try to recruit these nurse-professors but will not be able to visit my sponsoring churches on this visit - that will happen next year. Until then, please keep me in your prayers along with the people I work with and for. I really do depend on your prayer support to keep me going.

Rev. John Lunn