



December 2020

"May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace
as you trust in him..."

Romans 15:8



Julie Lutz, LCMS in Papua New Guinea

God's peace - and joy - be yours,

This short note has been started several times. But then, overwhelmed by what I envisioned you were encountering around the world, I set this letter aside to catch my breath. It brings to mind the days when our kids were in boarding school. Every evening we would talk on the radio and they would regale us with their antics of the day. When we signed off, I would be exhausted. Steve and I came to call the exhaustion "Proximal Fatigue Syndrome" - a malady contracted by listening to the stresses / activities of someone else.

I bring this up, because I have had Proximal Fatigue Syndrome this year. COVID-19. Lockdowns. Protests. Hurricanes. Derecho. Fires. Election. It all has been funneled through varied communications into my psyche. I haven't lived any of those closely. Yet, I am fatigued. What you all must be feeling who have experienced these first-hand!! I do not blithely say, "My prayers are with you...", for truly they are.

Here in Papua New Guinea - by God's grace and not because we have followed any health precautions - we have had fewer than 800 test positive cases of COVID-19 with eight deaths. Anton and I remain vigilant, which makes us obvious anomalies in the community. PNG hasn't had protests or dramatic weather or fire events. Yet, we aren't without our troubles, with divisive "politics" in the church, and violence within families and communities being among my prayer concerns.

Into this dismal world-wide scene, hope dares to cast a glimmer of light. A Vaccine. 1 January 2021 pulling us out of 2020. A "turn of the page" in politics. Maybe, just maybe it will be better...

But there's a much more trustworthy hope -- the God of hope dares to send His Son into this world to be the Light! That's the God who comforts us in our loneliness and grief. He will "calm you with His love" (Zeph 3:17). He will "fill us with joy and peace as we trust in Him." Who knows if the vaccine or a new year or a shift in politics will bring the relief we hope it might. But in Jesus, the Christ child, we Can place our trust.

Meanwhile in Papua New Guinea:

Three of the Bible Schools of the Gutnius Lutheran Church and Timothy Lutheran Seminary were able to complete their school years in the past month. We are even more grateful, for this was accomplished as local support for the schools stepped up, when LCMS funding diminished due to the coronavirus in the US. Nine new pastors and seven vicars will be serving the church in 2021!



And with the family ...

What a delight to be with son David and Tabby and their daughters several times over the past months. The girls and Grandma can get up to quite the mischief! They live in Goroka, PNG, about 6 hours down the road. Tabby has been able to resume teaching Tang Soo Do and David's work with Rural Airstrip Agency is picking up again. ---->



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Laura and Nathan Hall enjoy all the wonders of living in Maine

though Nathan prefers the ski-able snow season and Laura, the growing- garden season. Both Stephen's schooling and worship in the congregation at which Nathan is pastor are done remotely.



Paul and Rebecca's family in Pennsylvania was blessed to add Persephone to the clan, born in May! Welcome! The older five attend in-person school - carefully. Paul has been able to work through the pandemic and Rebecca, pandemic or not, with her family responsibilities hasn't had time to wonder what to do! ---->

Eldest son Anton and I live together -- that is, when he is around. His work to counter sorcery accusation violence often takes him away for a spell. More recently, he was possibly exposed to COVID and he self-isolated for two weeks in thoughtfulness of his more vulnerable-due-to-age mother: Me! Good Kid!



I have been spending time looking back at archival mission papers and now forwards to plan for effective upcoming ministry in PNG. What a cherished perspective each task brings: to recall what God has been doing, and, in faith, catch a glimpse of what He may be doing next. Thank you for your part in that mission! Your prayers, financial support, and encouraging words popping up in myriad online modes have been a blessing.

May our God of hope, in sending Jesus, bring you peace and joy today and in the year to come!

Julie Lutz



The missionary service of Julie Lutz can be supported with a monthly, quarterly, or yearly giving plan or with a one-time gift. Visit lcms.org/lutz or call LCMS Mission Advancement at (888) 843-5267.

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