



November 2018

“Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Hebrews 12:2

Julie Lutz, with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Office of International Mission – Papua New Guinea
Julie.Lutz@lcms.org



Dear Partners in Christ,



It’s been a long road ... but by God’s grace, He opened the door for me to return to Papua New Guinea. As of late September, I’ve been in PNG!! Though my visa and work permit are approved and the alert against me was set aside, the saga is not yet over, especially for Anton.

+Praise God for opening the door to PNG!! May the remaining visa/ deportation cloud soon dissipate.

The welcomes I continue to receive are astonishing. I got sunburned the first day home, simply from greeting friends, neighbors, and colleagues outside under the equatorial sun. It has been utterly overwhelming ... encouraging ... humbling ... but more than any of that, I’m thankful that folks recognize that it was God who opened the door. People break from their welcome-home hug and say, “We have been praying,” and “God answered our prayers.” How true!

I’ve spent time getting reacquainted with familiar trails and smells, remembering how to drive a stick shift, and catching up with the changes since I was last in PNG. There have been joyous births and sorrowful deaths, marriages and, wow, kids grew!



The bearings on the hospital’s hydroelectric power generator went out the day after I arrived. I had forgotten what it meant to be without 24- hour power.

No fridge, one battery light in the office, paying close attention to charging computers and phones. We have a back-up generator we run a few hours every few days to pump water and top up our solar / battery system. But I confess, I missed 24-hour power and the freedom to work inside after dark with sufficient light. Thankfully, Anton and a brute-force labor team from the hospital finished the hydro repairs last Friday. I do appreciate it. For those

of you new to my family, Anton is my eldest son and a fellow LCMS missionary since 2004. We share a house at Immanuel Lutheran Hospital station where our family has lived since 1986.

+ Pray that as the welcome hugs give way to the reality of daily life that I will keep in step and adjust to the trail.



Once back in the routine of life in PNG, I was again reminded -- there is no "routine." Very sadly, on 16 October 2018, the main administration building of Highlands Lutheran International School, with library, computer lab, and several classrooms, was burnt to the ground. About a week later, an attempt was made to burn down another classroom block adjoining the mess and dormitories. Fortunately, it was spotted and extinguished. We do not know who is responsible for these fires.

+ We pray that those making decisions about the school will be prayerful and wise, so the ministry of

Highlands Lutheran International School will flourish in the future, to the glory of God and Christian growth of the students.

I wish I could report that the violence against those accused of sorcery – sanguma - is diminishing. It is not. The irrational belief that an accused person has killed someone by "eating his heart, which then "justifies" inhumane torture, continues. We as a mission team partner with government agencies and other NGOs to end the violence to those accused, and to rescue and restore the survivors to their communities. As Christians, we also boldly confront the belief with God's Word. Our mission team has launched Project SANAP (STAND!!) to rally communities, church workers, teachers, and others to stand together against the violence and for Godly belief, justice, and mercy. We will focus key messages, develop teaching tools and train others. I invite you to look through the resources linked on our new Facebook page – Project Sanap. Stand with us!

+ Pray that as the call to SANAP echoes into dark corners, God's power will be trusted, Christ's compassion will be shared, fears and false beliefs will fade, and violence against those accused of sanguma will vanish.

Seventy years ago, the first LCMS missionaries brought the Good News to Enga Province. They worked with national colleagues from Siassi Island and missionaries from Australia and led the vanguard of hundreds of missionaries over the next 7 decades. To God be the glory - the Holy Spirit created faith. Beliefs in ghosts and sorcery turned to faith in Christ. The Church of God exists! And yet, as we witness arson and beliefs turn again to sorcery, it is abundantly clear - there remains much to do. I thank God I am in PNG at this time to run this race. Thank you for your support, prayers, and encouragement in that run.

+ Pray (from Hebrews 12) that we each run with perseverance the race marked out for us, throwing off all that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles – and run! Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and not grow weary and lose heart.

God bless you in the race to which He has called you!

Julie Lutz



To support the work of the LCMS by Julie Lutz, you may send a tax-deductible gift to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, PO Box 66861, St Louis, MO 63122-6861 or to Mission Central, 40718 Highway E 16, Mapleton, IA 51034.

Please make the checks payable to The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and write Julie Lutz on the Memo line. Gifts can be given online at: www.lcms.org/givenow/jlutz

Pledges and recurring gifts are useful for planning. Gifts for work "where needed most" by LCMS in Asia may be given online at: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/asia-where-needed-most>

Work email Julie.Lutz@lcms.org. Personal email Lutz.travel@gmail.com

