



Late Winter 2019

“But you, O God, are my king from of old ...you made both summer and winter.”

Psalm 74:12,17



Julie Lutz, with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Papua New Guinea

Greetings, dear friends who wait for the spring light!



I have seen astonishing photos of snowy blasts and read incredible weather reports on Facebook (my peek into the world) coming from the northern hemisphere. What a winter you’re having! No, I am not jealous. Frigid temps. School closures. Icy roads. Hours at the snowblower or shovel. No, not envious at all. Last winter I relished the icy joys of a US winter. This year I am well content to weather the “Soggy Wet Season” of Papua New Guinea with temperatures comfortable enough for bare, wet feet.

+ Thank God, yes, thank Him for winter with its change of pace, the delights of snowy nature, the promise of a new start, come spring. But also pray for safety for those who travel hazardous roads and for comfort for those who struggle to stay warm and cheery.

So, what does one do without a winter? I will vouch that this year, I am experiencing some aspects of winter – like darkness!

Our darkness, however, isn’t from a lack of sun. It’s from a broken hydro-electric power plant which provides power for our home and Immanuel Lutheran Hospital. The turbine, seen as the cockeyed hunk of flanged metal in the picture, should be level. Thankfully, the shaft was repaired after four weeks – but sadly, the power is off again. The new problem is burned out wiring in the alternator. It may take six weeks to fix. Coupled with gimpy internet, the challenge to be up-beat and productive in the dark is considerable.



+ Thank God for light – the sun and man-made light, for conditions which lead to productivity. Pray for patience when things aren't ideal, and stick-to-itiveness to get the tasks done even when they're difficult.

One might also say we’ve had a PNG “winter,” thinking of winter as a time to prepare for what lies ahead – like ordering seeds for the spring garden. Our team recently submitted ministry projects which, when approved, will be funded through gracious gifts from LCMS members. We also had the pleasure of hosting the LCMS Communications Team who came to learn more about the work God is doing in PNG through the Church. Look for LCMS articles on PNG and for mission projects to assist the Church here!

+ Pray that the preparations of this “winter” will yield a joyous season of service and ministry. Thank God that He moves people, like you, to share His blessings with the LCMS Office of International Mission for missionary needs and mission projects around the world.

Some of you may have heard of “Sorcery Accusation Related Violence,” or SARV. It refers to a person who is tortured after being accused of sorcery; more specifically, being accused of “sanguma” which is allegedly killing someone by “eating his heart.” In SARV, the accused person, often a woman, is tortured, ostensibly to have her restore the heart of the deceased (and thus to live again!) or to reveal accomplices. Many of these tortured women have died. This heinous practice is conducted by mobs, often on the accusation of a “glasman” (an acknowledged, alleged sorcerer for hire), and has spread to areas which never had this belief before.



Anton, my LCMS missionary colleague and eldest son, is on the front line in speaking out against SARV and beliefs of sanguma in local and national forums, and in acting against this atrocity by rescuing survivors of SARV and contacting police so they can intervene. I am working with Anton, our mission team, and others, to prepare materials which will be used in churches and schools to combat sorcery accusation related violence and beliefs in sanguma. You can see some of these resources on the Facebook page “Project SANAP.” Take a look! “Sanap” is the Melanesian Pidgin word for STAND. We are calling for people to stand for critical thinking, the law, reason, human dignity, and above all, Christian faith and acts to bring this abomination to an end.

+ Pray that the idolatrous beliefs about “sanguma” and the violence against those accused of “sanguma” will cease. Pray that we develop effective materials which will call people to faith and just, caring action. Pray for the women who have survived the torture, for the families of those who have been murdered, and for the affected communities as they determine what kind of life they will foster in their midst. Pray that the Church will stand as a Light, reflecting Jesus, in this darkness.

May the Light of Christ shine in you so others see God’s glory.

Coming soon:
Spring



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.

Alternatively, you can send checks payable to the LCMS with “PNG/Lutz” on the Memo Line to:
LCMS Mission Advancement
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63122-7226

You may also visit our dear friends at missioncentralus or send your gifts to:
Mission Central
40718 Highway E-16
Mapleton, IA 51034

Soon to come, additional approved projects which can be supported for ministry in Papua New Guinea