



## Merry Christmas, Feliz Navidad, Joyeux Noël and Sheng dan jei kuai le!

Many thanks for the prayers and support you have all offered our family in our time of grief. My dad, Denis, fell asleep in Christ at home next to my mom and his wife of 52 years on December 7. I was asked to deliver a few words about him before the service, and included the following:

We will hear the sweet Gospel promises of Christ in a few moments. But it is not altogether wrong to say Denis' life was a sermon in itself. It was a living picture of how faith gets to work, doesn't complain when things go bad, and doesn't get too excited when things go well. Jesus said, "so you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'" Dad just worked the problem. He served those given him to serve. He loved those given him to love. That's what faith is all about, Charlie Brown. Or, in the words of Luther himself: "It is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them."

It is Christmas time once again, when we remember how God's Son wrapped himself up in our flesh to save us from our sins. Death is that constant reminder of the wages of sin. What a joy, then, to celebrate next week the one who has undone the string of death forever. This is the Good News we proclaim to the world.

This year has seen sorrows but also many joys. The new ministry centre in Kingston continues to take shape. We have a new ministry and disaster response centre in Ponce. New Christians have joined the flocks in Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Montreal. Our first FORO in Montreal has led to a deaconess intern, Lord willing, joining our ministry team in June of next year. A generous donation is making possible a new sign for Ascension that will proclaim, through changeable messages, the hope we have in Christ in multiple languages.

A new decade will be upon us in a few short days. May we continue to make use of the time given to us to proclaim the Christ born to save us the world.

## Mission Moment

Ascension had her last English outreach class of the year on Monday. We played "two truths, one not" with the students who braved the winter cold and snow to attend. Our teacher had us guess where she had and hadn't lived, but I then had the chance to have students guess two things about Christmas that were true (and one that is probably not).

We talked about the birth of Christ, what day it may (or may not) have been, and the origins of Santa Claus in the 4<sup>th</sup> century Turkish pastor Nicholas. In a reminder never to take anything for granted, though, one African attendee asked: "And who is Jesus?"

In our rush to answer the big questions, sometimes it is the simplest ones that need to be answered first. Who is Jesus? The son of Mary, adopted son of Joseph, and the Son of God come to save the world from sin and death.



## 2019 in Pictures



*Clockwise from Top Left: Lindsay's baptism, a few months after I baptized and confirmed the faith of her mom; teaching about the Reformation at Sophia's school; teaching bible class for the tweens and teens of our Chinese congregation; confirming Isaiah's faith; celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ascension; at the opening of Parade Gardens Basic Lutheran School in Kingston, Jamaica.*

## Prayer Concerns

For our family as we grieve the loss of Denis St-Onge, a husband, father and grandfather,

For Stephanie Wilde, the new deaconess intern arriving in January in Puerto Rico, that her time in Ponce would be one of joy and learning,

For our ministry in the Cayman Islands, that the Lord would give us wisdom in our service to the flock whom Christ Jesus has called their to himself.

## Support this Work

You can donate online at [lcms.org/givenow/stonge](https://lcms.org/givenow/stonge). Or you may send a cheque, payable to **The LCMS**, to the addresses below. Include **St-Onge – LAC** in the memo line.

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