

# Pastor Janneke's Page

Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD  
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## Persecuted for the Gospel

The first Lutherans were known as “Evangelicals,” that is, people of the Gospel—Good News Christians. Isn't it ironic that people bearing such *Good News* are frequently subject to such harsh treatment and persecution? However, the Good News of Christ is perceived as a threat, not only by Satan, but also by those who wish to hang on to this world's sinful ways or false beliefs.

This weekend we celebrate the 499<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Lutheran Reformation. As Martin Luther and other reformers of the Church proclaimed the Good News of salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ alone, it came at a cost. Luther spent decades of his life threatened with capture or execution from those who opposed him.

For many years, Christians in Western countries have been largely spared from persecution. However, societal trends are revealing that this “safe” time for the Church is coming to an end. It's a much different story for Christians in other countries where persecution is a fact of life. *The Voice of the Martyrs* organization reports that 68 countries are reported as Restricted (countries with anti-Christian laws and violence), Hostile (countries where Christians are persecuted by neighbors or other opponents), or Monitored (countries that are trending toward persecution).

Millions of our Christian family members around the world are either currently experiencing or are at risk of facing persecution. These are real people and families, much like ours. What can we do for them? First and foremost, we can remember them in prayer. Second, we can empathize with them, realizing that we could be in a similar situation one day. Third, we can support the work of sending Bibles, cards, care packages, etc. to persecuted or displaced Christians.

Consider attending the prayer event on Nov. 5 at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (see reverse side). Also, visit [persecution.com](http://persecution.com) (*The Voice of the Martyrs* website) for information about persecuted believers, those in need of prayer, and other ways you can help. Also visit [lcms.org/socialissues/persecution](http://lcms.org/socialissues/persecution) for information from our Synod.

There's good news, too. Even in places of radical persecution, Christians continue to share the love of Jesus. The Holy Spirit can and does work through this life-saving message to transform the hearts even of some modern-day Sauls (Acts 9:4). If and when we face persecution, whether slight or severe, we have the same Good News to confess, and we continue to trust our Lord's promise: “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Peace in Christ,

*Pastor Kory Janneke*