

Fall 2018, Issue No. 3

# ANASTASIS

ανασταση - Greek for Resurrection or Rising Up



Our theme this quarter is Renewed and Renewal. Throughout this newsletter you'll read stories about people being renewed through encounters. Renewal is the work of Jesus and God invites us to participate in this renewing work. Jesus renews us first so that we can go and be a part of God renewing action in the world. There are great changes happening in the church at large - renewing changes. Likewise, locally, we have a unique opportunity to discern how Jesus is inviting us to participate in His renewing work here in Central Cumberland County.

Renewing is not just about surviving. It's about a thriving life. It's about death and resurrection. In order to experience resurrection, something must die. As we move into the fall, we are invited to discern how Jesus is calling us to let go of some things and to embrace other things and people. This can be scary for many people though. Many want to continue to do things "the way we've always done it." But Jesus calls us into a new and renewed life so that the Gospel can continue to be spread to more people.

Renewal is a work in progress. For us individually, for our congregation, and for the world that God so loves. The best part is that we don't go it alone.

- Pr. Matthew

## A quarterly newsletter of St. Stephen Lutheran Church



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Worship times:  
8:00 & 10:45 AM  
Sundays

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# Encounter with Ms. Mary

by Paulette Krewson

My day was ending. As I came under the 81 underpass, a woman with luggage and bags of "stuff" caught my eye. The lady was midway between one pile of stuff and heading toward the other pile of stuff. What is this lady trying to do? A U turn was made and I pulled off the highway. Questions back and forth as to what she was trying to do. Her response: I'm going to Alabama. Question: How are you going to get there? She wasn't sure but she was going to Alabama.



Well, Mary, help me get your things into my car and I will take you as far as the Maryland line. We proceed to stuff her stuff into my vehicle. Question: Mary are you hungry, would you like to get something to eat? Mary replied: No. I need to get to Alabama. It was rather difficult to talk with Mary as she rambled about so many things all at one time.

We arrived at the Maryland line and I suggested that now we get something to eat because I was hungry. We stopped at Hardee's and Mary was very particular about her food; how she wanted it; how her sandwich was to be put together; are the onion rings fresh; etc. Mary hardly ate but a bite of her sandwich and a few fries. She packed her food items into the bag as she had asked for her food to go. I say to Mary, it is time to make a decision about where you want me to take you. Do you want to spend the night in a motel where you can shower and have a good night's sleep or do you want me to take you some other place where you will be safe for the night? Mary asked if we can travel down 81 just a few exits.



Off we go to a TA truck stop. Mary did not want to spend the night there. Back up 81 to exit 5 and I said there is a Super 8 motel and we are going to see what they have to offer. I spoke with the lady at the front desk, showed her a St. Stephen Lutheran Church business card and explained the situation as best I could. I would like to have a room for Mary for one night so she can be fresh to continue her journey to Alabama in the morning. A room was offered at a very reasonable rate and so Mary would be safe for the night. It was explained to Mary that breakfast would be available in the lobby the next morning. Mary and I said a prayer for each other as she travels to Alabama and as I traveled home.

# The Mission Field

by Diane Adams

We pull up to the curb across from the entrance, grateful for a close parking space. The three of us—Margie, Ginger and myself—take time to review names, descriptions, and background stories of the young women we are about to see. We are excited for this monthly visit. We pray for a quiet atmosphere, meaningful conversation, and Jesus's love to shine through us in our imminent encounters tonight, gratefully knowing there is a team of pray-ers backing us up. We need it, as the enemy prowls openly here.

Ginger passes potted flowers to each of us, gifts of love for each woman. In the past the monthly gifts have been nail polish, homemade cupcakes, crazy socks, hand lotions, fleece blankets, and gift cards. As we exit the car and head to the entrance door, we are grateful that no sound is coming from inside. Once that music starts blaring, conversation inside will be nearly impossible.

Margie opens the door and we enter the darkened room, pass the lit stage, and head to the back where the strippers congregate around the bar. We are now in our mission field—a strip club in Columbia, PA.

“Hey, ladies! How's it going?” we energetically call out to them. Our smiles are broad and genuine. We love these girls. They look up and display various reactions. Of the six young women, two light up with smiles, one feigns indifference but is smiling slightly, one comes forward excitedly to exchange hugs, and the other two quietly watch the proceedings. They are the new dancers, and we quickly introduce ourselves. “They've told us about you,” they say with a smile.

We cheerfully give each girl a potted flower, and they happily compare and trade gifts based on color or container type, and even laugh about the flurry of activity. For a few moments, they are fun-loving girls again, with the kind of carefree laughter and silliness an 18-25-year-old woman should display.

We ask about about their children, boyfriends, food preferences. Taxes, legal troubles, church experiences. Exercise, diets, kids' birthday parties. Not all these topics are discussed each month. Sometimes they want to open up and talk a lot, and at other times they are too high or too tired or too worried about their circumstances to want to talk much at all. No matter what their situation, we aim to build relationships with the girls and show them love, support and encouragement. We know Christ loves and values them, and we desire to make sure they know that, too.

We once frowned in disgust at the presence of this strip club in our community. Now we know better. God changed our hearts and He made us see the dancers through His eyes. Each girl has a story to tell. Most did not have the good fortune of supportive, loving adults in their lives as they grew up, so they made bad decisions and now they're paying for it. We see and hear their sadness and despair concerning their lives. But we also serve a God who knows and cares about them, and loves them regardless of what they've done or their current circumstances. We'll keep coming back to the strip club each month, offering gifts and love and hope. We dream of the girls taking us up on offers to help them get different jobs, education—whatever help they need to get out of their situations.



# The Mission Field (Cont.)

A customer enters the club and pays the cover charge. Music begins blaring from the speakers, and the first girl heads to the dance floor to begin her night of work. We leave cards with our contact information, say our good-byes, and head out the door. We pray that seeds were planted, and that these women will find their fulfillment in Christ.



RENEWAL

## **Opportunity for Renewal in St. Stephen's Sunday Church School** by Greg John

A few weeks ago, with texts from Ephesians and Mark, that Sunday's sermon stressed that in God's eyes we are all "us". That being said, through the ages humankind has viewed the world through an "us-versus-them"/"in-versus-out" lens -- of course with the "winning" side being the "us"/"in" -crowd. That focus along the pastor's words found an intersection with the subject of renewal as it relates to Sunday Church School .

But how? On an extremely good day, when we seem to be singing "Kumbaya" with our fellows near and far, the concept of "us" resonates. On most days, however, "us-versus-them" prevails -- 'part of the human experience (original sin?). We need renewal opportunities to hear other voices that might help to break down the "us-versus-them" wall(s), to reflect on their messages in an open, Christian environment, one in which we remove ourselves from the center of the circle and recognize that we all have the same center -- God. Listening to other voices -- ones that express opinions and concerns different from our own -- in a nonjudgmental fashion and from a holy perspective can go far in breaking down the "us-versus-them" barriers. Engagement in Sunday Church School programs offer such opportunities -- each and every week.

Each of our Sunday Church School classes offers opportunities for young and old alike to hear those other voices in the context of our common center. Who knows, as we renew and expand our knowledge of God in the center of our multi-voice experiences and open our ears to other voices near, we might also further open our ears and hearts to voices further away.

# A NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH RECENTLY BUILT IN EL SALVADOR

By Caroline Sheaffer

As we North American Lutheran churches find ourselves often re-defining our roles and ministries to reflect community needs, Lutheran churches around the world continue to grow and flourish.

On our last trip to El Salvador we visited a newly-built Lutheran church high on a volcano in a campesino community. Its sanctuary is complete, but work continues in its office/storage area and education room. Toilets are installed awaiting plumbing.



By helping to support a scholarship program operating out of this new church, we are blessed to be part of this community's re-newed pledge of koinonia (serving something greater than ourselves). We share in the excitement of this new ministry with Advent Lutheran of New York City as well as Christians United of Ohio who helped fund the land and purchase of materials to build the church.

# One Story of Homelessness

By Le Ewell

Homelessness. It's Ugly. It's Dirty. It's Stinky.

Jadam said to me, "Grammy, why do you go to Flying J to help those people? Why don't they just get a job?"

I smiled, in embarrassment, and asked God to forgive me. You see, Jadam has those attitudes because those are the attitudes I have held on to, very strongly, up until recently. I passed those attitudes on to my children, and obviously, my grandchildren have inherited them, as well.

From discussions I have had with all kinds of people, Christians and non-Christians, all over the country, I am not alone in my harsh beliefs. It seems that many of us feel that homelessness is caused by laziness, where drugs and alcohol, most certainly play a part. Mental illness may also have a part in the homelessness, but they could take their meds. Besides, we can't help everybody! "I would rather help a Veteran", I would say.

I used to work on 2nd Street, down town Harrisburg, and when Levi was a younger, he didn't like to stay home, alone, all day. He would chew everything, because he was lonely and bored. So, I took him to work with me! At least once a day, we would go for a walk – generally to the bank to deposit that day's cash. We'd go along the walk path by the River, in case he had to relieve himself. The walk path is interesting, in the middle of the afternoon. You have people jogging, people walking, people playing with their kids, and squirrels – yes, lots of squirrels... and there was an abundance of homeless folks, Levi and I met mostly men.

If you haven't met Levi, he is a 130 pound white (with some spots) Lab/Pitt mix - he is the friendliest people dog one could ever encounter. I say "Levi and I met mostly men", loosely, because I had no choice. Levi is truly a people lover, he wags his tail, he gets excited, and he loves to lick (which I strongly discourage).



Levi is very gifted in making eye contact with people, and he can tell when there is a person who likes dogs... because he WILL go to them for love. He gives and he receives. Freely, without limitations.

The first few days, this was quite aggravating because Levi would run up to these people that "we" do not like – that "we" have issues with. They are dirty, they stink, and they are probably drug addicts, child molesters and rapist! And they are touching MY dog!!! I was disgusted.

# One Story of Homelessness (Cont.)

They would ask me questions about Levi, and I would answer. There was one man... he was tall, and dark, he was dirty, and he was stinky... but his words were soft. He told me that he once had a dog, a Pitt, who was as gentle as could be. But when he lost his house, his wife, and his kids, he also lost his dog. I asked him what had happened (sarcastically, because of course, I assumed that he lost everything because he was a bum and his wife kicked him out). His eyes teared up as he said, "there was a fire". He told me his story... and my heart ached for this man. I asked him if he would join me for lunch, after I took Levi back to the office. Ray was my first homeless friend. As it turned out, this fire happened 30 years ago, down in Georgia or Alabama... I don't remember. The dog dragged all 3 children out of the house, but by the time the fire department got there, the kids had already gone to heaven. The dog was still alive, badly burned and not breathing well, but died shortly afterwards, while trying to get back into the house – Ray figures he was going in after his wife. Ray was working, and blames himself for taking that night job, that paid 50 cents more an hour. He acknowledged that he "has never been right, since", but couldn't remember the names of his kids when he took the medication, so he quit.

I would meet Ray daily, for our walk, and for lunch, and we would meet new people, and I would learn more names and more stories. I learned that a lot of these men, more than half, were Veterans – the group I profess to "have a heart for", but yet... wouldn't give them the time of day because they were dirty and stinky. I learned that these people had names: Ray, John, Paul, Tim, Matt, Dick, Bo-Bo, Duey... They are people, and they have names, and they have stories. Not one of them was a practicing alcoholic or a drug addict – they all shared a story of loss.

That was God's Ministry, Carried out by Levi, that I participated in.

Fast forward about 3 years – a Flying J Ministry – it's a no-brainer that I am involved. "Why?" Jadam asked, "Grammy, why do you go to Flying J to help those people" "Because, buddy, I believe that is what God calls me to do. Let me tell you a story..."



# CALL TO ACTION

**God's Work, Our Hands Sunday**— sign up at St. Stephen for service opportunities. **Sept. 9**  
All service projects start at 2pm. Projects will include - PET project, Singing at nursing home, & LWR kit packing

Help the homeless through our **Flying J ministry**. We assist the homeless the first and third Thursday each month beginning at 7pm. Call the church office for more information.

Come to **Dinner with Friends** - a community meal open to all. Food, entertainment, and prayer offered. Every third Saturday each month starting at 5pm - St. Stephen Lutheran Church, New Kingstown

Come to the **St. Stephen Lutheran Church Harvest Festival - Sept. 15**, starting at 9am. Enjoy food, entertainment and vendors too. All proceeds are used to support local families in need.

Come join in the conversation at **Tapology** - Sunday **Oct.7** and **Nov. 4**, starting at 5pm. Desperate Times Brewery, Carlisle. We eat, drink, and talk about important topics. All are welcome.

Come to the St. Stephen Fall Bible Study. We'll be opening up the book of Daniel – Wednesdays 10:30am in church parlor and 7pm @ Wegmans cafe. Bible Study begins Sept. 12. Contact church office for more details.

Interested in more discipleship & ministry opportunities? Contact us...