

# Pew News

January 2020

## St John's Lutheran Church

### Refuge

"For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble; He will conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will lift me high upon a rock." Psalm 27:5

Refuge. We all need refuge. Refuge from the cold nights and the scorching heat. Refuge from the torrential downpour and the snowy blizzard. Refuge from our enemies and sometimes well meaning friends. Refuge from work and maybe even a vacation. Refuge from our addictions and temptations. Refuge from sin and death. We all need refuge.

His name is Jesus. He is our refuge. On January 1st the church celebrates the circumcision of Jesus. There is our Savior from sin and death already shedding his blood for us. There is our Savior from sin and death keeping the Law for us. So that we can always find refuge under his blood shed for us.

That's the truth that King David celebrates in Psalm 27. It's Jesus who hides us in the shelter of his blood in the day of trouble. When Satan points his accusing finger at us Jesus hides us in the shelter of his blood. When the guilt of what we've done overwhelms us Jesus conceals us under the cover of his blood. We could not ask for a better refuge. When John sees the church gathered around God's throne wearing white robes he is told, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:14) The blood of the Lamb washes away all sins so that we can stand before God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. There is no better refuge. That's why we rejoice to be a refuge for our neighbors. Just as our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ so we rejoice to forgive the sins of our neighbors. Just as God is taking care of us so we rejoice to be God's instruments to take care of the world around us. Listen to God describe this. "Thus says the Lord God: 'I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest.'" (Ezekiel 17:22-23) Jesus is that sprig that was planted on a high and lofty mountain. The tender shoot that was planted on the mountain height of Israel. He was planted on Mt Calvary where his blood ran down the cross and brought new life to you and I through the forgiveness of sins. We are the branches growing from the vine that produce fruit. God's plan has always been that His church would be a noble cedar which provides refuge to every kind of bird - His refuge. This truth is found in the Proper Preface for Holy Week that the church has used for hundreds of years. "It is truly, good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who accomplished the salvation of mankind by the tree of the cross that, where death arose, there life also might rise again and that the serpent who overcame by the tree of the garden might likewise by the tree of the cross be overcome." Jesus' cross is a tree of life and we are the branches growing from it providing refuge to our neighbors.

Our new logo, which was developed by the Design Lab at Longwood University, depicts these ideas. The tree of the cross is prominently displayed from which we receive forgiveness and life. The tree of the cross under which we find refuge. From that cross we receive life so that we grow the branches and leaves of God's church that share His refuge with our neighbors.



The leaves can only share refuge as long as they receive sustenance from the stem. So the logo depicts the leaf's veins receiving sustenance from the tree of the cross.

As we begin to use this new logo throughout the church may it remind you that we find our refuge under the tree of the cross so that we can be a refuge!

God's Peace,  
Pastor Matt Sorenson

### **Applying Bible Principles**

We've all heard the expression, "Money talks." That's true. Money does talk. Oh, not in words or phrases that constitute a language, but money talks. Because it is valuable to us, how we use it communicates volumes to those about us. People tend to spend their money on things that are important to them. With the exception perhaps of taxes, all of us vote with the contents of our purses, wallets and checkbooks concerning what means the most to us.

In fact, we could even go so far as to say that a person who does not spend money on something which is supposedly very important in his or her life really does not place much value on that item or activity. Suppose for a moment that you think "little league" baseball for kids is very important. You talk about it wherever you go. You attend the games. You enroll your own children in the program. But when someone calls you to ask you to be a sponsor of a team, or when someone "passes the hat" at a game to pay for equipment, you refuse to participate.

Would you not agree that an impartial observer of such behavior would conclude correctly that little league baseball really does not mean much to you? Your lack of financial support would outweigh the other positive aspects of your attendance, enthusiasm and participation.

The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. It is one thing to talk about Christianity. It is yet another to demonstrate our faith by how we use the money which God has entrusted to us. And that is especially true in our support of the ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church. As someone said recently in one church just before the offering was received, "Lord, in spite of all we say and do, this is what we think of you."

Or as the Lord Jesus put it, ". . . let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

## Mission of the Month

Our Mission of the Month for January are the LCMS Missionaries in Belize, Central America. Rev. Herbert and Markie Burch serve much of Central America from their location in Belize. Most recently they lead a mission team in Peru where they worked with local pastors to tell the story of God's love in Jesus Christ. Rev. Burch served as an officer in the U.S. Army for 24 years before going to the seminary. Markie has a Master's degree in library science and has served around the world in various capacities. Learn more about the Burch's and their work on the bulletin board in the hallway. Please remember the Burch's in your prayers. If you would like to support them financially put a check in a MOM envelope and leave it in the plate.

## Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)

We thank the Lord for all the blessings of 2019, including the generous support of our St. John's family and the community for our annual Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale. God provided the funds for us to support various projects including a seminarian training to be a pastor in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. May God continue to guide us in the New Year to make God-honoring choices in how we will "Serve the Lord with Gladness".

### ATTENTION: ALL LADIES!

You are invited to come to the monthly meetings of the LWML! We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:00a.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a Bible study and prayers followed by a business meeting. All women of the church are considered part of the LWML, so come when you can. Our next meeting will be January 14<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please call or text Mabelle Bloker at (434) 808-2518 or email [mabellebloker@hotmail.com](mailto:mabellebloker@hotmail.com).

## November Treasurer's Report

	Nov-19		2019 Year thus far
<b>Total Collections &amp; Savings</b>	<b>US\$18,112.</b>	<b>Total Collections &amp; Savings</b>	<b>US\$255,070.30</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>US\$16,812.</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>US\$250,940.34</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>US\$1,299.7</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>US\$4,129.96</b>
<b>Total Savings Used</b>	<b>US\$3,000.0</b>	<b>Total Savings Used</b>	<b>US\$19,800.00</b>
<b>MOM Mission Match</b>	<b>US\$10.00</b>	<b>MOM Mission Match</b>	<b>US\$211.55</b>

## Special Gift Designations

A Stained Glass Window Fund has been established and an initial gift has been received. Council agreed to contact the stained glass window company when we had received enough money to complete the set of 3 windows behind the organ. The estimate is \$61,000 for the whole set of 6 windows in the sanctuary. At present we have received more than 1/5 of this. If you wish to give to this project, please note "WINDOWS" on the memo line or include a note specifying your wishes.

If you wish to help pay down the mortgage with extra principal payments, please also note "Mortgage" or "Building" on the memo line or include a note specifying your wishes. We have made several extra payments towards the mortgage this year.

Thanks to all those generous givers!



# Wedding Invitation

Because you have shared in our lives by your friendship and love, we, Merry and Josh, invite you to share the beginning of our new life together when we exchange marriage vows.

Saturday, January 18, 2020

3:00 PM

St. John's Lutheran Church