



# HEARTBREAK, AND THEN JOY, FROM HAITI

BY JULIE MARTINEZ

When I am not able to come to Scottsdale to attend Redeemer services, I have been joining a mission startup congregation in Durango. This is a small group that meets once a month under the auspices of Christ the Rock Lutheran Church, a WELS congregation in Farmington, New Mexico. This just started last fall, and we have been meeting at the home of Michael and Susan Blumhardt once a month.

At our January meeting, Susan was expressing to me some of the frustrations they were experiencing in their attempts to adopt two orphans in Haiti. While the adoptions had been approved and all the papers were signed, the Haitian government was still delaying the release of these children. This had been going on for two years, and both Susan and Michael had traveled to Haiti to visit them several times.

Witson, a 2 year old boy who had been abandoned by his mother in a state of near starvation, was in an orphanage in the north of the country, while Louvencia, a 1 year old girl whose mother had died, was in an orphanage in Port Au Prince.



Witson, Michael, and Louvencia in Port Au Prince

Susan and Michael are both physicians, and became involved with Haiti through a series of medical relief missions over the years. They have two small children of their own, but over the time they were in Haiti, they both came to the conclusion that they had room in their hearts and their home for these two children as well. The entire family has been excited

about welcoming them home.

However, their road home has been strewn with obstacles, the most recent of which being the massive earthquake that struck Haiti two days after our January church service. This was not the worst, however, as this family was put on an emotional roller coaster, as time and again hope turned to despair as one more door was closed in their faces.

Finally, Michael had the opportunity to join a medical mission to Haiti, with a planeload of supplies donated by

Mercy Medical Center, where he is an Intensivist in the ICU. He spent four grueling days in Haiti, sleeping on the tarmac at the airport, while Susan was at a private airport in Fort Lauderdale, making the requisite phone calls to Ken Salazar and Mark Udall, who were finally instrumental in helping to facilitate Michael's efforts in Haiti.

Michael managed to get a helicopter flight to Witson's orphanage and bring him to Port Au Prince, and after some difficulty, to find Louvencia sleeping on the streets, with her orphanage directors, after that orphanage had been destroyed. Even with all the paperwork in order, he was turned away from the American Embassy several times before he was permitted to enter and get the visas for the children to fly them to the US. He had very little food and water during this time, and, on top of that, he had become quite ill with a bacterial illness and lost a lot of weight.



Susan and Louvencia at home in Durango

They eventually got their children home, almost a week later. While they were gone, Susan's father had had a major heart attack and subsequent coronary artery bypass surgery, as if they hadn't been through enough! He too is now home and doing fine.

A more detailed account and additional photos of their very touching story may be found at the following link to a local newspaper article, and I would encourage you to read it!

[http://www.durangoherald.com/sections/Haiti/2010/02/14/To\\_Haiti\\_and\\_back/](http://www.durangoherald.com/sections/Haiti/2010/02/14/To_Haiti_and_back/)

Even when they were back home, their security was once again threatened. Louvencia spent her first week in the U.S. in the ICU being treated for a serious viral infection that undoubtedly would have killed her had she remained in Haiti for even a few more days.

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*(Continued from page 1)*

We, too, say “blessed is he,” and not “cursed is he,” when Jesus comes among us to accomplish God’s will and to fulfill God’s purposes. In our Liturgy these are, in fact, the exact words that we chant when we are preparing for the encounter that we will have with Jesus in the Lord’s Supper, as he comes to us miraculously in his body and blood: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Even if we do not fully understand why he instituted this sacrament in the way that he did, and even if we cannot fully grasp how the miracle of his Real Presence in the consecrated bread and wine works, we nevertheless express our agreement with his good and gracious will for us, and receive in faith what Jesus offers and gives.

And when Jesus also says in the Words of his Supper, “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me,” we likewise accept this invitation, and participate often in the sacred meal that he has instituted for us. We may not fully grasp what his reason is for wanting us to go to the time and effort of celebrating this sacrament on an ongoing basis through-

out the year, and throughout our lives. We might ask, “Why doesn’t he command us to celebrate Holy Communion once per year – as with the Jewish Passover? Wouldn’t that be good enough?” But it would not be “good enough.”

*Why* is it not good enough to commune once per year? I don’t know for sure. But Jesus has a reason for wanting us to participate in this Holy Mystery more often than that, and so we submit to his wisdom. We don’t need to know why. We just need to know that this is what Jesus wants for us. And if it’s what he wants, then it’s what we want. Therefore we join the crowds on Palm Sunday in saying an “amen” to his will, to his gift, and to his appearance among us for the sake of our salvation. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Amen.

-- Pastor Webber



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Those of us in Redeemer’s Internet Study Group have been keeping this family in our group and private prayers since the earthquake struck, and you may also remember praying for them in our Sunday morning services. These are incredibly special people, and yet, they become embarrassed when anyone points to their absolute heroic behavior in rescuing these children.

I was honored to be in attendance that Sunday for our monthly worship service when Louvencia was baptized into the Christian faith at the home of the Blumhardts. (Witson had previously been baptized when his adoption was completed in Haiti.) I have to say I was in tears during this baptism, and I was not alone in this!

Susan and Michael saved her life, but even more poignantly, they immediately brought her to the font of Holy Baptism for God’s gifts to her of faith and eternal salvation. And

thanks be to God for caring for all of them, and bringing them all safely home!



From Left: Susan, Matthew, Michael, Amy, Witson, Louvencia, and Pastor Thomas Glende



## MARTIN LUTHER ON THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

*“Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken through the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion.”*

The Evangelist introduces (this verse) that we may see how Christ has come not for the sake of our merits, but for the sake of God’s truth. For he was prophesied long ago before we, to whom he comes, had a being. God out of pure grace has fulfilled the promises of the Gospel to demonstrate the truth that he keeps his promises in order to stir us confidently to trust in his promise, for he will fulfill it. And this is one of the passages, where the Gospel is promised, of which Paul speaks in Romans 1:2: “Which he promised afore through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus Christ,” etc. We have heard how in this verse the Gospel, Christ and faith are preached most distinctly and consolingly. “And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments, and he sat thereon, (and they set him thereon.)”



These are the ministers who by the Gospel have freed the consciences from the law and its works

and led them to the works of grace, who made real saints out of hypocrites, so that Christ henceforth rides upon them.

The question arises here, whether Christ rode upon both animals. Matthew speaks as if the disciples put him on both, while Mark, Luke and John mention only the colt. Some think he sat first on the colt and, because it was too wanton and untamed, he then sat on its mother. These are fables and dreams. We take it that he rode only on the colt.

What does it signify that the apostles, without command, put their garments on the colt? No doubt again not all the disciples laid on their garments, nor were all their garments put on, perhaps only a coat of one disciple. But it is written for the spiritual meaning, as if all the garments of all the disciples were used. It was a poor saddle and ornaments, but rich in meaning. ... Paul says in one of his epistles, we shall put on Christ, by which he doubtless wishes to show that good works are the garments of the Christians, by which Christ is honored and glorified before all people.

Martin Luther, Sermon on first Sunday of Advent (excerpts), as found at: [http://www.godrules.net/library/luther/129luther\\_a1.htm](http://www.godrules.net/library/luther/129luther_a1.htm)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Choir Rehearsals for Easter

Rehearsals will take place by the organ at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays in March, in preparation for singing in the Easter service. Singers in all voice parts are welcome. If possible, try to arrive at church prior to 8:30, so we can begin the rehearsals on schedule.

### Easter Lilies

Anyone who wishes to purchase an Easter Lily for the Church Altar can do so by signing the poster located at the back of the church. The cost is \$15.00 per Lilly, and any extra funds collected will be donated to the General Church fund. Checks can be made payable to: Redeemer Ladies Guild. Lily donations in memory of a loved one are also welcome.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

MARCH 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 6-6:30 Soup Supper (S) 7:00 Lenten Vespers Service (S)	4 7:30 pm Internet Study Group at Pastor's residence	5 10:00 am Bible Study at the Calvin residence	6
<b>7 Lent 3 Divine Service</b> 8:30 Choir Rehearsal (S) 9:00am DS (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) Church cleaning after the Bible Class 4:00pm DS (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	8	9 7:00pm Church Council	10 6-6:30 Soup Supper (S) 7:00 Lenten Vespers Service (S)	11 7:30 pm Internet Study Group at Pastor's residence	12 10:00 am Bible Study at the Calvin residence	13
<b>14 Lent 4 Service of the Word</b> 8:30 Choir Rehearsal (S) 9:00am SW with spoken Communion (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) 4:00pm SW with spoken Communion (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	15	16	17 6-6:30 Soup Supper (S) 7:00 Lenten Vespers Service (S)	18 6:30 pm Internet Study Group at Pastor's residence (Note Time change for Arizona participants only)	19 10:00 am Bible Study at the Calvin residence	20
<b>21 Lent 5 Divine Service</b> 8:30 Choir Rehearsal (S) 9:00am DS (S) Ladies Guild after the service (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) 4:00pm DS (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	22 Pastor Webber away at Doctrine Committee Meeting and personal time 3/22 thru 3/27	23 Pastor Webber away at Doctrine Committee Meeting and personal time 3/22 thru 3/27	24 6-6:30 Soup Supper (S) 7:00 Lenten Vespers Service (S) - Guest preacher and worship leader Rev. Kermit Habben) +	25 No Internet Study Group Pastor Webber away at Doctrine Committee Meeting and personal time 3/22 thru 3/27	26 No Bible Study Pastor Webber away at Doctrine Committee Meeting and personal time 3/22 thru 3/27	27
<b>28 Palm Sunday Service of the Word</b> 8:30 Choir Rehearsal (S) 9:00am SW with spoken Communion (S) 10:30am SS/AC (S) Elders Meeting after the Bible Class (S) 4:00pm SW with spoken Communion (Q) 5:15pm SS/AC (Q)	29	30				

Abbreviations:

DS—Divine Service (SW) Service of the Word SS/AC = Sunday School / Adult Bible Class

(S) = Scottsdale (Refreshments in Scottsdale immediately follow the morning Service) (Q) = Queen Creek

**Divine Service**—Full Word and Sacrament Service with Communion on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays

**Service of the Word**—a brief spoken order of Holy Communion follows the public service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

+ Pastor Webber will be away for Doctrine Committee meeting in MN and for family activities in MN and MI. Rev. Kermit Habben will be the guest preacher and worship leader for the Lent Vespers Service

**Redeemer Lutheran Church**

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**Sun of Righteousness Church**

Meeting in the "Multi-Purpose"  
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**Notice!**

Audio recordings of  
Pastor Webber's sermons are  
posted on the Internet  
weekly and are available  
through both church web-  
sites above, and  
published courtesy of  
[lutheransource.net](http://lutheransource.net)



## ABOUT REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our mission is to preach the Word of God, both Law and Gospel, faithfully in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; correctly to administer the Holy Sacraments for the forgiveness of sins; and to reach out to those who have not yet come to faith in Christ Jesus.

