

Miteinander

“WAS BEI DEN MENSCHEN UNMÖGLICH IST, DAS IST BEI GOTT MÖGLICH.”

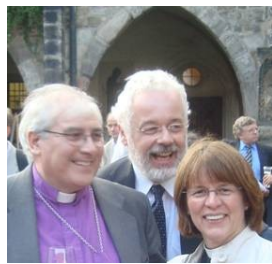
The EKD Bible text for 2009, Luke 18:27.

Newsletter #35
Oct. – Dec. 2009
ELCAWittenbergCenter@t-online.de

Rev. Steve and Dr. Jean Godsall-Myers,
ELCA Wittenberg Center Directors
www.elca.org/Wittenberg

“Bishops – Coming and Going”

We reported in the last issue how we were able to attend the Godspeed Service for outgoing Bishop Axel Noack. In August, we were able to attend the Installation Service for the first Bishop of the new EKM (Evangelical Church of Central Germany), Bishop Ilse Junkermann. One of our delightful tasks was to provide accompaniment for Bishop Ralph Jones and his wife, Pastor Sandra Jones, of Northwest Pennsylvania Synod who attended this important event in their partner church's life. The Service was held in the Magdeburg Cathedral, which is celebrating its 800th anniversary this year. The church was filled and there were some 40 Bishops from Germany and the world, representing the EKD, the Lutheran Church in Germany, the UEK and ecumenical partners. All Bishops gave an individual blessing with a Bible verse.



Bishop and Pastor Jones with Regional Bishop Kasparick at the Bishop's Reception in the Cathedral

The evening before the installation, we had dinner with the presidents of the many conferences of the EKM and were treated to a puppet show presented by one of the pastors in attendance. The next morning, the EKM provided a tour and we were able to see some of the sites of Magdeburg with the Jones.

There is a great excitement and anticipation as the new Bishop takes her office in the EKM, which is the merger of the Thuringia Lutheran Landeskirche and the United Church of the Church Province of Saxony. In her sermon, Bishop Junkermann talked (in a somewhat exaggerated style) about the way that each church thought of the other. By exposing some stereotypes, she demonstrated that even though she is an 'outsider' (she comes from southwest Germany, near Stuttgart), she has listened and has a good understanding of the new Landeskirche that she will be leading for the next 10 years.

It was wonderful that Bishop and Pastor Jones could be in attendance. Their contacts with the new Bishop and the new church will be building blocks for their Companion Synod relationship.



Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord!

At Easter, we were privileged to hear the wonderful trumpet solo from Handel's Messiah in the Castle Church – And the trumpet shall sound. On Sunday, September 6, we heard some 300 brass instruments – trumpets, coronets, trombones, tubas, etc. – in the Castle Church as part of the EKM's Brass Choir Festival. Wittenberg was treated to several chances during the weekend festival to hear the brass groups from all over the EKM serenading, leading worship, playing in local nursing homes. The closing worship for the festival included a reflection by Bishop Junkermann and a guest appearance of a Lithuanian Brass Choir. A highlight of the weekend was the Sunday afternoon stage appearance of the Wittenberg Conference Jazz Band – featuring the musical talents of Regional Bishop Siegfried Kasparick and other pastors and musicians. Brass choirs have a strong tradition in the German church – there are over 230 brass choirs with over 3,000 members in the EKM.

Jean and Steve had a personal highlight – two of the brass players from the Jena area (Neustadt) stayed with us and shared their stories. We have been invited to attend their congregation's Brass Band Christmas concert. Renate hosted 5 players!

Ida Charlotte makes up for 'lost' time

In May, Renate Skirl became a grandmother for the fourth time! Little Ida Charlotte did not 'use' her full term – instead, she made an early appearance. She was born two months early. After lots of love and care and wonderful medical attention, she is now home and growing. Renate is grateful for the many prayers for Ida – God does answer prayers!

Oberammergau Passion Play 2010

Every 10 years, the small town of Oberammergau fulfils a vow made long ago and presents the story of our Lord's Passion. To do this, they enlist many of the town's residents to take on the roles—all the men in town stop shaving beginning in Lent of the previous year. The play is presented from May through mid-October. The ELCA Wittenberg Center has worked with Christian Tours Europe and US-based program planners to develop 9 programs that include the Oberammergau Passion Play and time in Luther Land. We will be preparing special materials for these groups that will give participants a chance to reflect on how Passion Plays through the years have been a challenge for our Jewish neighbors.

There are openings in many of the programs (see list below). Please contact the Wittenberg Center if you would like more information about any of these.

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, May 30 – June 14,** Munich-Salzburg-Oberammergau-Nuremberg-Leipzig-Dresden-Buchenwald-Eisenach-Erfurt-Halle-Wittenberg-Berlin. Coordinator: Ruth Doty, Emmaus Lutheran Church, **Emmaus, PA**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, June 14 – 26,** Berlin-Wittenberg-Leipzig-Eisleben-Erfurt-Eisenach-Nuremberg-Oberammergau-Munich. Coordinator: James Hild, All Saints Lutheran Church, **Minnetonka, MN**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, June 24 - July 6,** Berlin-Wittenberg-Torgau-Leipzig-Eisleben-Erfurt-Eisenach-Nuremberg-Oberammergau-Munich. Coordinator: Leland Armbright, Comstock-Hoff Lutheran Parish, **Comstock, MN**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, July 11 - 24,** Berlin-Wittenberg-Torgau-Leipzig-Eisleben-Buchenwald-Erfurt-Eisenach-Nuremberg-Oberammergau-Munich. Coordinator: Charlie Zimmermann, First Lutheran Church, **Greensboro, NC**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, July 17 - 28,** Frankfurt-Rhine cruise - Oberammergau Nuremberg - Erfurt - Buchenwald--Eisenach-Eisleben--Wittenberg--Leipzig. Coordinator: William Hurst, First Lutheran, **Torrance, CA**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, July 18 - 31,** Berlin-Wittenberg-Torgau-Leipzig-Eisleben-Buchenwald-Erfurt-Eisenach-Nuremberg-Oberammergau-Munich. Coordinator: Palmer Clemmer, St. Timothy Lutheran, **Hendersonville, TN**

***Lutherland-Oberammergau Pilgrimage, July 29 – Aug 10,** Berlin-Wittenberg--Leipzig-Eisleben-Erfurt-Eisenach-Nuremberg-Oberammergau-Rothenburg. Coordinator: Jack White, Lutheran Theological Seminary at **Philadelphia, PA**

Germany holds national elections

On September 27, 2009, the Germans elected a new Parliament. Because Germany has a multi-party system, parties must build a coalition to govern. The party of current Chancellor, Angela Merkel (CSU/CDU), will build a new government with the FDP.

In Memoriam: L. PAUL BARTLING

The church lost a faithful servant this past August with the passing of Paul Bartling. Paul Bartling and his wife, Ruth, served as volunteers for the Center in the fall of 2007. We had the privilege of getting to know Paul and Ruth and learn of their many adventures of serving the Lord and the church in international settings – Korea, Geneva, and Bethlehem. We were continually amazed throughout that fall as guests came from



the States, from Germany, and everyone seemed to know Paul or had a connection to the Bartling family. Paul grew up in the Missouri Synod and his contacts were helpful as we learned about the Missouri Synod initiative with its German church partner SELK to establish a center in Wittenberg. Paul and Ruth were ready and willing to embark on new adventures in Luther's City—they were part of the Confirmation Event held on Reformation Eve. They helped prepare a Thanksgiving dinner for Center colleagues in the Evangelical Academy (they chopped more root vegetables than a mess hall cook!). Paul became an English tutor and 'counsellor' for a graduating high school senior who volunteered in our office. Our prayers continue to be with Ruth. We dedicate this issue of Miteinander to L. Paul Bartling.

Happy Birthday Schlosskirchen-Gemeinde!!

On August 29, the congregation (Gemeinde) of the Schlosskirche (Castle Church) of Lutherstadt Wittenberg celebrated its 60th birthday. The church building goes back to the late 1400's. First, it was the church of the castle and, later, the church of the university. As such, it did not have a congregation until 1949. The Stadtkirche (Town Church), was considered to be the Wittenberg parish church. In 1949, Propst Staemmler felt it was important for the office of the Propst in Wittenberg to be connected with a church. In addition, he wanted to insure that the Castle Church would be deemed "in use" and would not be taken by the government for another purpose (e.g. town museum).

The congregation celebrated with a special worship service and a congregational event with a circus theme that featured appropriate acts giving members, young and old, a chance to share their talents and celebrate a joyous occasion. May the Holy Spirit continue its work with this congregation.

“Now is the Time!”

Using Paul’s words from II Cor. 6:2, the EKM gathered for its first Kirchentag – Church Festival. About 8,000 folks gathered in Weimar for the 24-hour Festival that began with a special worship service on Saturday, Sept. 19. The preacher was the Bishop of the Württemberg Landeskirche that had a partnership with the former Thuringia Landeskirche that is now part of the EKM. At the service, Bishop Klatik from Slovakia also brought greetings. (The Slovakian Church of the Augsburg Confession has a partnership relationship with the EKM). One highlight of the Kirchentag was the “Markt der Möglichkeiten”, the market of possibilities, which gave church and church related organizations a chance to share their ministries and activities. Jean and Steve appreciated a workshop entitled, “searching for those searching”, a very interesting presentation with discussion and ideas about church outreach in an increasingly secularized Germany. Bishop Junkermann preached at the closing service which featured candles for every worshipper. We recalled the “Peaceful Revolution” of 20 years ago in which people left churches with candles and hastened the

end of reign of the communist states in eastern Europe.

Congratulations EKD Scholars!

The 2010 EKD stipend recipients are Professor Austra Reinis from Missouri State University and Janai Ellen Robinson, graduate student at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA. Dr. Reinis’ research project is called, “Order and Spirituality in Church, State and Household”. She will be researching the sermons of early reformer, Aegidius Hunnis, on the Small Catechism. She will be working in the archives of Wittenberg. Ms. Robinson’s project is titled: “The Media of the Reformation and the Reformation of the Media.” She will be doing her research work in Marburg in connection with the Institute for Church Architecture and Ecclesiastical Art associated with the University. She will be preparing an exhibit that will be available in the US and will be offered to the EKD to be used during the Luther Decade when the theme is Art. As always, the Center is grateful for the interest in this program that is so generously supported by one of our ELCA partners - -the EKD.

Happenings in Wittenberg ...

Juhani Holma arrived in August to become the first resident in the EKD "International Wittenberg Resident" program. Pastor Holma is a theologian and church music director from Finland. He will collaborate with the EKD Wittenberg office on various Luther Decade projects, act as host to international and ecumenical visitors, and conduct public dialogues and discussions. He will also provide information on Luther Decade events, projects and opportunities, in particular, to his home church in Finland.

EKD – “Oh, Canada!”: We had no sooner said goodbye to our 2009 EKD scholars, Kirsi Sternja, Brooks Schramm and Wanda Deifelt, then we said “hello” to the EKD scholar from Canada, Gordon Jensen. Thanks to Renate, Gordon received the wonderful “Welcome to Wittenberg” greeting and orientation with which the Center welcomes ELCA scholars from the US. Gordon is a Professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon.

Peaceful Revolution in Wittenberg: During the months of September, October and November, Wittenberg, as many cities in Germany, will remember the events leading up to the Fall of the Berlin Wall. The events have been called the “Peaceful Revolution”, a tribute to the fact that a government and a system that ruled for 40 years was overthrown without violence, with candles and prayers. The remembrances will end with a “Peace Prayer” in the Castle Church.

First Communion in Wittenberg: After several months of discussions with pastors and parents and church leaders, the churches in Wittenberg (the Castle Church and the Town Church) decided to lower the age for receiving Holy Communion. The churches had had the tradition of young people receiving the Sacrament following Confirmation. On October 4, 2009 (also Thanksgiving Day in the German Church calendar), young people, with their parents in attendance, were able to receive Holy Communion at the worship services.

Special sound installation celebrates the 95 Theses: Berlin artist, Michael Muschner, has designed an audio presentation for the Castle Church that celebrates Luther’s 95 Theses. The artist made recordings of 12 Theses and several readings of one Bible verse to accompany each of the Theses chosen. Every month, a new Thesis will be introduced and ‘heard’ in the Castle Church during visiting hours. The Theses and Bible verses were read by local church members, including Center Directors, Jean and Steve Godsall-Myers. The voice recordings will be digitally reworked and combined in ways to provide the background for the ‘hearing’ of each Thesis. There will be printed materials available as the recordings are played in the Church. The year-long installation will open on November 28. and will provide one way to remember the Theses that launched the Reformation.



NEWS BRIEFS (Germany ...)

Bishop Huber in North Korea

Trier, Germany (ENI). Germany's senior Protestant bishop has urged Christians in officially atheist North Korea to obey God "rather than man". Bishop Wolfgang Huber, the council chairperson of Germany's Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), spoke during a service in the Bongsun Church in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital. Without alluding to Kim Jong-il, who in 1997 succeeded his father as leader of North Korea, Huber quoted from the Bible's book of Acts of the Apostles (5:29), when he said, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

Bringing Christians Together in Hamburg

Trier, Germany (ENI). Eighteen Christian denominations in Hamburg have embarked on an endeavour unique in Germany to share a single church building in the northern German city's new "Harbour City" development. "It's intended to serve the inhabitants of the Harbour City development, as well as tourists and people who work here, offering a place of silence and giving them the possibility to get in touch with God," Pastor Antje Heider-Rottwilm was quoted as saying by the Hamburger Abendblatt newspaper in June.

The Peaceful Revolution Remembered

Hanover, Germany (ENI). The EKD is encouraging parishes to commemorate the "peaceful revolution" of 1989 that marked the end of communism in Eastern Europe and prepared the way for the fall of the Berlin Wall. "In various countries in central and eastern Europe the churches played an important role as a motor for change," said Bishop Wolfgang Huber, who heads the EKD, in a foreword to a collection of Internet resources for worship and commemorative events:

Bishop Kässmann tells her story

Leipzig, Germany (ENI) Margot Kässmann , bishop of the Hannover Lutheran Church, has written about her divorce and her battle against breast cancer in a new book in which she discusses themes affecting women that include beauty, aging and overcoming fear and death. In her book with the title, "In der Mitte des Lebens" (In the Middle of Life), published on September 15th, Bishop Kässmann has written of how in the middle of life, one is faced by radical changes and how even long- term relationships can fail.

GLOBAL MISSION SUPPORT

Gifts for the Wittenberg Center can be sent to ELCA Global Mission Unit c/o The Rev. Twila Schock, 8765 W. Higgins Rd Chicago, IL 60631.

NEW designation: "Global Giving-- ELCA Wittenberg Center"

Vielen Dank to our supporters!

Edward and Marilyn K. ThomasWest Chester, PA
Kay M. Erickson Amery, WI

In Honor of Diane Blahauvietz' birthday

The Rev. Mark A. G. HuffmanCockeysville, MD
Mary G. FrojenSharon, ND
The Rev. Richard and Naomi BruesehoffPark Ridge, IL

In memory of

Orville Eness, the Rev. Richard Gilbertson, Carola Boe
Mary H. BeamGastonia, NC
Elsie E. Burkle..... Eaton, OH
Geraldine W. LambertSpragueville, IA
Marion R. Swanson and Susan C. Grisko ... River Forest, IL
John W. Ressler West Chester, PA
David L. Hunsucker..... Gastonia, NC
Gladys M. RaskWoodbridge, NJ
Jean and Stephen Godsall-Myers .. Lutherstadt Wittenberg

Thank you to our new supporting congregation:

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Milton, PA

The printing of this issue of Miteinander is given by the Wittenberg staff in thanksgiving for the life and service to the Church of L. Paul Bartling. We were fortunate to have Paul and Ruth support the ministry of the Center through their volunteer service.

* * * * *

Leipzig –20 Years Later

The Center staff shared in history, spending October 9th in Leipzig on the 20th Anniversary of the Monday Peace Prayer that is considered a turning point in what would become known as the Peaceful Revolution. We arrived at the plaza of the Nicolai Church just in time to see the children launch hundreds of balloons into the blue October skies – each balloon carried a message of peace. We were present for the Press Conference announcing the formation of the Peaceful Revolution Foundation. The highlight of the day was joining the 5:00 pm Peace Prayer in the Nicolai Church. The standing-room only crowd was invited to rise and sing the opening hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God". The sermon, preached by former Thuringian Bishop Kähler was based on the Beatitudes, the text that had become a staple of the Monday peace prayers. Following the service, we left the church to become part of the crowd that filled the Old City. It was great to be on the streets of Leipzig with a new spirit 20 years later.