



Newsletter of the English Speaking United Methodist Congregation in Munich: June 2020

Faith in Corona Times

By Bishop Walter Klaiber

Sars-CoV-2 is perhaps not the most dangerous disease that has occurred recently. But it is extremely treacherous, and measures have been taken worldwide to contain it, which affect public and private life in a way that we have not seen since World War II. The outcome of the crisis is still uncertain and the consequences of the restrictions for individuals and society are not foreseeable. But many may be driven by the question of what that means for our faith. Quick answers to this are problematic. So far, I have hardly noticed any attempts to think about it publicly. I am also struggling for an answer and would therefore like to share my thoughts on this with others.

Love and selfishness

The first thing that strikes me is that it shows with impressive clarity what is in people's hearts. And that's good and bad. We are watching a wave of helpfulness. Groups of schoolchildren and students offer help for older people and organize it carefully. Others sense where emergencies could arise and search creatively for solutions. But there is also the opposite: People make nonsensical hamster purchases and leave nothing for everyday needs or steal toilet paper, soap and disinfectants in clinics where those who need them are lacking. What is the human being? Capable of love and threatened by sheer selfishness.

What is happening now also shows how vulnerable the system is on which our society is based. Global networking is not just an opportunity, it is also a danger. Much of what we take for granted is not as obvious as we thought. The question arises: What can we rely on and what do we build our lives on?

What does that mean for our faith?

This leads to the crucial question: What does this situation mean for our faith, what does it tell us about God? Some will ask: Why does God allow such a dangerous pathogen to spread? Others will see this as a sign of the end times for which the spread of epidemics is predicted. But there have been much more dangerous epidemics in human history. Still, the question remains: Did God create this virus to teach us a lesson?

Some time ago a pastor from Tübingen said a sentence regarding such questions that has accompanied me ever since. He said, "I don't think God let my daughter die to teach me a lesson. But I learned a lot from this experience, which is still important to me to this day." That deadly viruses arise is part of the interplay of life and death that God has put into his creation. Because we know that God is behind all of this, difficult experiences can become a message and a task for us.

Someone was just saying to me: "I have to think about the Tower of Babel again and again." The towers of a booming economy seem to be rising to the sky in our time - but the question of how stable their foundations are is posed to everyone and each of us.

Praying for faith, hope and love

Whom do we trust? Is it that the stock market prices are constantly rising or that our lives are safe with God? According to the Bible, the faithfulness of God and his love is not shown in the fact that everything always goes smoothly, but in the fact that even in difficult situations we can trust that God is with us and gives us strength to stand the crisis.

But where our attempts to find answers fail, we can pray and ask God:

- for *faith* and trust that he will be with us when the illness hits us or shatters much that we have relied on so far. We are safe in him; he will give help.
- for *hope* and confidence that there will be ways out of this crisis. After that, some things will be different. But perhaps the crisis also offers opportunities for new ways of working together.
- for *love* that overcomes our selfishness and blossoms unexpectedly between people because God gives love, love, that fulfills my life and that of others in giving and receiving.
- The author
Dr. Walter Klaiber is Bishop emeritus of the United Methodist Church. After his retirement, he is living in Tübingen.

Invitation to Worship at Peace Church on Pentecost Sunday

On Pentecost Sunday, 31 May 2020,
we offer a “worship service to go”.

The church is open from 12 noon to 3pm, with short services starting at 12noon, 1pm and 2 pm.

They last for 30 to 40 minutes, then music is played until the next worship part begins.

Each little worship will be exactly the same, just with different people. So, you won't miss out on anything.

The Services are prepared, and 15 people of the Peace Church had a sort of “rehearsal” meeting on Sunday 24 May. All went fine. And we think, it is safe to open the church now.
We are looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Please, let Pastor Christine know in advance if you know at which time you are planning to come and attend worship.

Thanks so much!
It makes planning much easier.

Invitation to Peace Church Worship in the weeks after Pentecost

From after Pentecost on we offer small, individual worship opportunities at different times of the week.

One on **Tuesday at 6:00 pm** on. The group meets in church one week and has an online service the other week.. Leaders are Rino, Vanda, Moses, Theo and others.

One on **Thursday at 6:00 pm** for adults only (in favour of those who don't feel safe because of their age, physical constitution and/or health issues). Babies and toddlers can be brought along, but not Kindergarten- or school children. Leaders are Pastors Christine & Reiner, Katie Gill and Sue Lawson.

One on **Saturday at 5:00 pm** for families with Kindergarten- or school children. The services will be very child-friendly all-age services, and last about 40 minutes.
Leader is Pastor Christine.

One on **Sunday evening at 6 pm** for anybody who likes a quiet evening prayer. Leaders are Rahel Pereira, Kat Wagner & Megan Bedford-Strohm.

We don't “touch” the Sunday noon time, until regulations become less restrictive again. We don't yet know when this will be.

In all this, do keep in mind: no pressure at all. If anyone feels better to stay home a little longer, this is perfectly fine. We all need to be responsible for ourselves, make sure we feel comfortable and safe with what we do.

Every weekend there will be a recording of one service on Peacecast!

Did You know that...

The last Homework Club took place on 20th March? Because churches were already closed, the kids and teachers met at Christine's home in Putzbrunn. After that day meetings were not possible anymore. Ever since the kids and youth receive individual help and support as they need it. Some of them are now in the middle of exams, some have not restarted school yet. Kindergarten and KiTa Kids are still home, too.

Since the shutdown Pastor Christine has been sending fun and activity packs to many of the church children. These envelopes make kids and parents happy, and bring some fun moments into the families.

The Kids' Club holiday project in Kundl, Austria could not take place. The borders to Austria were closed almost immediately after the shutdown. It was clear that we could not go there.

The last Kids' Club was at the beginning of March? Ever since we were not allowed to meet. The Kids' Club team is hoping to offer small projects with a limited number of children, as soon as little groups are given permission to meet again.

Sunday school has to take a long break? The materials produced for the months April to July were not used at all. We may work with them next year. Maybe Sunday School can restart before Christmas. But nobody knows.

It is unsure whether we will be able to have an African-style Harvest Festival? We hope and pray that we can... but nothing is certain yet.

Bible study groups are taking a break or meeting online? Liturgy books for services at home were produced and sent out. They can also be found on the website.

Some young people came up with the Peacecast idea? You can listen to the statements and voices of various church people on the website. They share about their faith and talk about their experiences in this weird time of Covid-19. The contributions are worth listening to. A big Thank You to the group who initiated the Peacecast!

Peace Church started a Corona Unemployment Fund? Should you be in need of money to cover everyday expenses until government support money is received, speak confidently to Pastor Christine. She can help.

In 2020 there will be no charge conference? We try and meet as a Council on Ministries, as soon as meetings are allowed again. Maybe towards the end of June or the beginning of July?

The Peace Church website and the Facebook account are worth checking? Latest pieces of information and beautiful texts, prayers, photos and other ideas can be found there.

Pastor Christine was in the church every Sunday at noon in the last few weeks? Some people who needed to meet her, did come and find legal or financial support.

We have African-style face masks? They were sewn by a dressmaker and can be handed out or sold to people who want them, on Sundays.

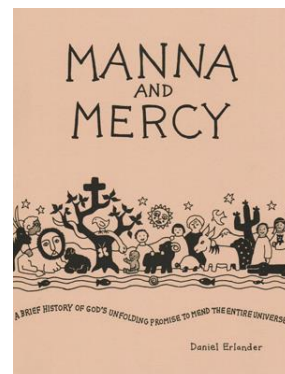
The church building is prepared for Sunday 31 May when we want to open Peace Church again? We arranged the premises according to the government regulations and hope it will work for us.

Confirmation class

A Manna & Mercy Book Reading Confirmation Class has just begun.

In the group are: Joel Talleh, Russel Bonsu, Akua Frimpong, Esther Owusu and Priscilla Nyarko.

The Confirmation of the young people will be in April 2021.



Keeping the Church Kids Happy: Greta, Vicky & Martha



Impressum

Your suggestions, comments and contributions are welcome. Deadline for the next issue is 20 July. Please include a photo if possible. (Reports may be edited.) If you would like to receive future issues by e-mail, please send a message to christine@peacechurch.de, simply type "PCN by mail" and we will add your address to the list.

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