



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



Psalm 65

You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas. You formed the mountains by your power and armed yourself with mighty strength. You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves and silenced the shouting of the nations. Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders. From where the sun rises to where it sets, you inspire shouts of joy.

You take care of the earth and water it, making it rich and fertile. The river of God has plenty of water; it provides a bountiful harvest of grain, for you have ordered it so. You drench the plowed ground with rain, melting the clods and leveling the ridges. You soften the earth with showers and bless its abundant crops. You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness become a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy. The meadows are clothed with flocks of sheep, and the valleys are carpeted with grain. They all shout and sing for joy!

Harvest Is One of the Most Beautiful Times of the Church Year Meditation on Psalm 65

Harvest is one of the most beautiful times of celebration in the church year. We all are dressed in colourful clothes. We all are cheerful and excited. We thank for God's goodness and care, and we see the fruits of the earth as an image for all that God has given to us throughout the past year. We give thanks for all that helps us live day by day, and we ask God to crown our lives with his grace and abundance.

Yet, this year shows us more than the years of the past that we are not in control. Covid-19 and with it the Corona crisis came into our lives, almost unnoticed in its beginning – and then like a whirlwind that put our lives completely upside down. Everything changed. Church life too.

The words of Psalm 65 remind us that Harvest Festival celebrations are as old as humankind is. People have been celebrating the harvest over the centuries. We are in one long line of tradition with people all over the planet. Here in the psalm is King David, the great poet of Israel, writing words for the director of music. Our God is an amazing God, says King David. God is a God of real abundance. He lavishes us with good things. Picture the scene the poet is building up. You may see carts overflowing with good things as they roll home in the warm evening sunshine. The tired workers sitting on the top of the corn or the vegetables. Beautiful landscape, fertile soil, flocks of sheep on a hill. King David writes of creation shouting for joy and singing. That's what we are thanking God for today. We cannot but praise him for it all. And thank him for our very lives.

Psalm 65 is positive – through and through. That's what attracted me when I first read it. It holds a beauty of words and images which is almost overwhelming. High mountains, roaring seas, crowds of happy people, morning light and evening sun, splashing water and golden grain, tender rain showers and the steady growth of plants, green pastures with flocks of sheep, hills & meadows, valleys and rivers.

As the climax of it all there is the sentence that God crowns the year with bounty: The work of the people is crowned by God's blessing. Who could ask more?

Psalm 65 is full of praise and joy, goodness and satisfaction. It begins with a God who listens and forgives, who provides a home and feeds. The people celebrate and praise God who created the earth not as an outsider but from within it. "You," says the poet, "You, God" visit and water, provide and prepare. God is in there with his people! God is in the middle of earthly life and cares not only with the most necessary things but with richness and abundance. God is a rain-giver, a gardener, a guardian of a good and beautiful world. God is a lover: A lover of life and a lover of humanity. No matter who we are and what we have done, God's grace is always embracing us. God wants us happy, healthy, full of love, wonder and awe. We are invited to trust that God is in all things, and we shall see the creator in every creature. Nothing is separating us from God.

The universe is the body of God, earthly life and the divine spirit are knit together and in constant interaction. In all this, nature is shouting and singing for joy. What a beauty! And what hope that lies in such beauty. "You are the hope of all ends of the earth." (v5)

On days when the newspaper gives us the latest Covid-19 infection numbers, and tells us of political & racial conflict across the ocean, when social media publish messages of political leaders denying the ecological and medical dangers with which humankind has to deal this year, when the television shows us the desolate faces of hungry and hopeless people in Greek refugee camps, when we fear for our job and are threatened with a second lockdown, when our kids have to do home schooling again, and public places are closed down for the second time this year, it is hard to feel that hope. An overload of bad news can weigh heavily on our hearts and make us numb.

As a way of remaining faithful to God, of remaining hopeful, let us emphasize God's undying love for the world. Let us remember that he wanted us to be his partners. God wants us to care for this world with its stunning beauty. He assures us that deep down where all life began **there is a power and a will to persist and survive, to recreate and transform that no pandemic can stop.**

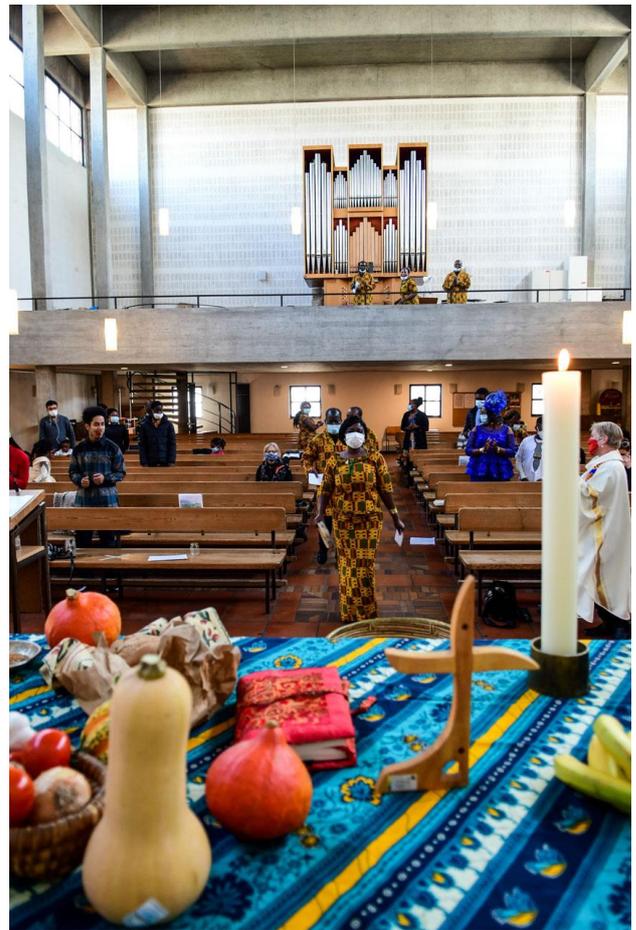
What an image of hope in a chaotic and restless world of crisis and fear! And we are meant to be in the centre of the hope-picture: we are the protagonists, those who transport God's hope to others. We are those with a godly task to heal and transform.

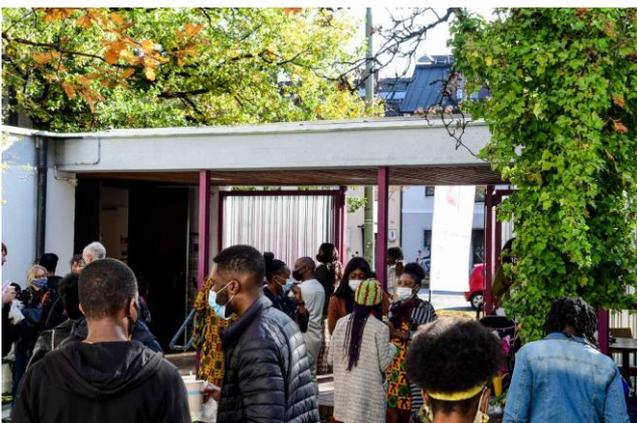
God's hands are full of healing stuff. He wants to shower the earth with it. He wants to equip us with it. It will help us sing and dance in our life's chaos and have hope in the future of our planet. The earth is waiting for us, the undying flow of creation will help us move, and the beauty of grace will embrace us when we work for God. Be blessed and have a beautiful November. Yours, Pastor Christine.

African-style Harvest Festival – Photo Gallery

We had an African-style Harvest Festival at Peace Church on Sunday 25 October 2020. We celebrated a small and careful Harvest Festival service with about 60 people present.

There was singing & dancing. But we did wear masks. We did not present fruit or food as harvest gifts – only envelopes with our money offerings. We raised 1475,47€, & are really proud of that. After the service there was time to meet in the yard. We had coffee and finger food and wore our masks. All did their very best to make this day a happy one. A big thank you to all who came and especially to the African Choir who sang for us!





Peace Church Calendar November 2020

Sunday 1 November 12 noon All-age Worship
6 pm Quiet Evening Prayer

2-6 November Holiday Pastor Christine

Tuesday 3 November Online Prayer Group

Sunday 8 November 12 noon All-age Worship
6 pm Quiet Evening Prayer

Tuesday 10 November Online Prayer Group

Thursday 12 November 9 am – 1 pm Open Office

Friday 13 November Homework Club

Sunday 15 November 12 noon All-age Worship
6 pm Quiet Evening Prayer

Tuesday 17 November Online Prayer Group

Wednesday 18 November Council on Ministries

Thursday 19 November 9am – 1pm Open Office

Friday 20 November Homework Club

Sunday 22 November 12 noon All-age Worship
6 pm Quiet Evening Prayer

Tuesday 24 November Online Prayer Group

Thursday 26 November 9am – 1pm Open Office

Friday 27 November Homework Club

1st Advent Sunday 29 Nov 12 noon All-age Worship
6 pm Quiet Evening Prayer

You are welcome to visit the Peace Church website www.peacechurch.de and watch our Harvest Festival Video Message.

Impressum

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