

Peace Church News

The Newsletter of the English-speaking United Methodist congregation in Munich



ISSUE Back to School

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2023

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Peace Church United Methodist
Munich, Germany

“Back to...”

Thoughts by Pastor Alex von Wascinski

This is the ‘back to school’ edition of Peace Church News. I have learned that “back to school”, especially in the USA, is an important season for marketing and sales—not only because you need new pens, pencils, exercise books, etc. It is also a season for new clothing, a new apparel. Actually, “back to” is only half of what is going on. It is also about moving “on to”... the next grade, maybe a new class, a new school, new classmates, new teaching staff, new parents to get to know, etc... The point of view about “back to school” differs very much according to which party in the game you belong—students, teachers, parents, school janitor, etc. However, “back to school” always indicates a new setting in a given cycle of events.

In church, “back to school” seems to mark the beginning of the road that leads to Christmas, via a stop called Thanksgiving, aka Harvest Festival.

I sense that for Peace Church this “back to school” is very different. As individuals and as a congregation we may experience it as an exceptional waymark. The last months and the summer have been something like a roller-coaster time, with ups and downs, tears of joy and tears of pain and grief, joyfully applauding and silently crying. In May 2022 Pastor Christine had her farewell celebration. And it was planned that after a break of about a ½ year she would go “back to” being a team member in Sunday School, confirmation class, and maybe some other voluntary ministries, rid of the task of being the responsible lead pastor, with the possibility of just focusing on things she loves so much but often did not have the time to focus on as much as she would have liked to. This never happened. Instead, after only

being able to come back to Peace Church a few times (if not only once) she was diagnosed with cancer. And this marked the beginning of a time of hoping, praying, disappointment, anger, helplessness... finally a time of farewell, too soon, too brutal, too incomprehensible.



There was never a planned “back to” Peace Church for Pastor Christine, and there is no more “good to have you ‘back to’ the Peace Church community” for us. Especially, the upcoming weekend 9/10 September marks a turning point so symbolic for the path we are on right now: Farewell and remembrance, the ‘Celebration of Life’ for Pastor Christine on the 9th, and joyfully celebrating worship, sharing and playing, enjoying life, looking at the beginning of the new school year at our Special Open-Air All-Age Sunday Service in the park on September 10th.

I personally am not a huge fan of the *necessary biblical turning point* in church newsletters. But it seems like this time I am forced to it since I read the *Herrenhuter Losung* for today (08 September 2023—which also tells you what kind of a last-minute article writer I am). The Losung for today 8th September 2023 is: “Deine Toten werden leben.” (Jesaja 26,19 LUT), “Your dead shall live.” (Isaiah 26:19 NRSV). It is part of “Judah’s Song of Victory”. Reading it, I would refer to it as a song of thanksgiving for salvation, victory and the gift of a free life worth living. In this song we hear that God acts to restore life. And in Jesus Christ we receive this message in persona. And it has power directed in two directions. God acts through the Holy Spirit to restore life for people suffering, mourning, crying, bringing them *back to* life worth living—actually acting so for the whole of creation and all creatures. But God also acts leading into a new life beyond—beyond all crying, all tears, all mourning, beyond all suffering and even death. He leads to a life in which all creators and the whole of creation is summoned and dwells in God’s presence.





In knowing, believing, or even struggling with this message, we have to realize that we can never actually go *back to* a status quo in our life. Everything moves forward, changes and develops, grows or diminishes constantly—with every new perception and every decision being taken. So, even if it might look like going *back to* something we're actually moving *on to* something new. Because things have already changed, and we have already changed. As a student, after the holidays you will have had so many new experiences during these holidays which have let you grown in your wisdom of life. As a teacher, you may have reflected on the past school year and decided to do some things differently maybe for your students, maybe for yourself. As a parent you might have realized that some discussions with your children and their needs this summer have changed since last year. As people not concerned with the idea of summer holidays at all you

realize that some topics in the news have become less important while others are new to every day's agenda. I have to admit that sometimes change is hard to spot. Some things seem to have adjusted to the speed of evolution—like the building site at Sendlinger Tor. But once we get to a certain waymark, we see what change had actually really been going on.

As Peace Church we have just arrived at such a waymark—with our loss of Pastor Christine. It is so important that we reflect on and remember her life, and the preciousness of her ministry. And nothing of it will be lost. But we know that the waymark we are at now indeed is a waymark. Our way will go on, needs to go on. But we, the Peace Church pilgrims know that we do it in the light of our God's love in whom nothing is ever lost and everything is to be summoned to full life in his presence. This truly is God's Amazing Grace...

Back to School Prayer

Eternal God, your wisdom is greater than our minds can attain, and your truth enlightens our learning. To those who study, give curiosity, imagination, and patience to wait and work for insight. Fill their learning with joy. Help them to doubt with courage. And hold all their days in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

From the Book of Common Worship

Pastor Christine



Photo: Christine's farewell service in May 2022

On the afternoon of Friday 4 August, our long serving senior pastor of Peace Church, Christine Erb-Kanzleiter, passed away.

Nine months ago she was diagnosed with cancer—and despite all treatment, all prayers and all care—her body continually got weaker and even more fragile, caused by the spreading cancer.

We are utterly sad, and our thoughts and prayers are with her family—especially Reiner, Nico and Jacob—all of her close friends, and all who now lost a companion in their journey of life.

We pray that you find comfort in the faith that her life is now completed through the Mother and Father of all creation, the Good God who is the beginning and the end. Nevertheless, we are deeply sad and in grief.

Sheera built both Lower and Upper Beth-Horon, and Uzzan-Sheera. (1 Chronicle 7: 24)

Christine Erb-Kanzleiter

21.09.1962 – 04.08.2023

Pastor, God's feminist daughter, exceptionally gifted with the biggest heart for refugees, especially women, full of empathy, generosity and creativity, resistant and shaped in thoughts, words and deeds, always looking for justice...

We are sharing the love, the pain and the pride of God!



Reiner Kanzleiter, Jacob and Nicolas
Friedlinde Erb and family
Ulrich Erb and Tanja Konstantin

Address: Perlacher Str.100, 81539 München

The „Celebration of Life“ will take place on Saturday 9 September 2023, 1:30 p.m. in the Lutheran Philippuskirche, Chiemgaustr.7, München
Please don't come in black clothes!

Bank account for donations: Ev.-meth. Kirche, Peace Church,
Kreissparkasse München-Starnberg-Ebersberg
IBAN: DE47 7025 0150 0009 0883 94
BIC: BYLADEM33KMS (München)

Christine's grave is at Ostfriedhof, Entrance St.-Martins-Platz (Tram 18), section 62 next to the bench

Worship Series

Kat Wagner reflects on our recent worship series and introduces our next themes...

Since Pentecost, our worship services have been following a series on the theme of discipleship called 'The Path of the Disciple'.



We started by looking at our **calling** as disciples. Just like the other Rabbis of his time, Jesus called people to follow him. But many of Jesus' disciples were not the 'best of the best' fresh out of religion lesson; they were simple folk, a mixed bunch; people who Jesus chose to be like he was and do what he did. And we are part of that wonderful calling too!



Having accepted the call to become a disciple and to help others become disciples, we now begin to understand what we don't know. Or rather we embrace what we have to **learn**. Serving and loving and working for justice may be hard, and we may mess up at times, or lose focus, but we're learning and we're growing. It's a lifelong process. Wesley called it sanctification, this process of becoming more like Christ, and acknowledged that it is a journey.



There is optimism to the disciple's path, a destination always in mind and heart as we move through the world. We have a certainty that the church is still a force for good in the world, that justice is still within reach, and that there is a God who will bring the new reality into being in and through us and sometimes despite us. It all begins with the ability to **imagine a new reality**.

During August, we took a break from the lectionary.

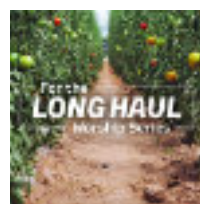
We spent time quietly reflecting after the news of Pastor Christine's death; we celebrated a baptism and reaffirmed our faith; and we marked the 60 year anniversary of the Civil Rights March to Washington.

Recently, we've been following the worship series 'The Journey Begins'.



We were confronted with Jesus' question to his disciples: "Who do you say I am?" and we were inspired by Simon Peter's clear response, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God". After contemplating God's awesomeness as he blazes with holiness through the burning bush we, like Moses, humbly respond, "Who am I?". And so the journey begins...

The Sundays after Pentecost can seem to drag on and on. This is where we learn again that our faith journey is a marathon and not a sprint. The next upcoming worship series is therefore called 'The Long Haul'!



We won't get too far in our discipleship journey on enthusiasm alone. There will be times when we hit a dry spell, or when we find ourselves in a desert. It takes commitment and will to keep putting one foot in front of another. But we are not alone! We have the ever-present Spirit of God who sustains and enlivens; and there is a community of faith that encourages us, mentors us, learns with us. The only way we can make it for the long haul is together.

For the final five weeks leading up to Advent we will have a series of 'Mission Sundays' where we explore the mission of Peace Church.

Have you ever noticed our mission statement on the back cover of the bulletins? Have you ever wondered what your part in it could be?

P roclaiming the Good News of Christ
E ncouraging spiritual growth through Bible-reading and prayer
A ccepting all-comers from all nations
C elebrating God and each other
E nabling all to use their gifts in mutual service

Each week we will take one line of the mission statement, starting with "P", and ending with a special 'find your place at Peace Church' ministry fair.

Did You Know That...

...we celebrated our first African-Style Pentecost Celebration on 28 May? The service included a special offering which raised €1.162,82 + USD 200 for Peace Church.



...the 'Kids help Kids' worship service was a great success? The service on 18 June was led magnificently by the Sunday School and raised €996,56 to support a project helping child-headed households in Soweto, South Africa.



...the Sunday School is starting again after a summer break? The groups will be using materials developed by Pastor Christine in 2020, which couldn't be used at the time due to the pandemic. It will be a lovely tribute to her work. We're always looking for new leaders, so do speak to Cathy Williams if you'd like to help.

...there is another choir project? The choir is rehearsing and will perform on 19 November.

...the Bible Study Group is restarting on Thursday 14 September? Over the next few weeks we'll be studying the Old Testament character of David. The group meets on Thursday evenings every two weeks in-person and online. New members welcome!

...a new Confirmation Class will start soon? If you haven't already signed-up, speak to Pastor Alex!

...some people have already signed-up to become 'Friends of Peace Church'?

The Friends of Peace Church scheme was launched a few months ago for anyone who was previously a member or attender of Peace Church. You can find out more here: <https://www.peacechurch.eu/support-us-1/friends-of-peace-church/>



...we are still looking for musicians and singers to join our 'music groups' on Sundays? With the help of musicians and song leaders we want to make our services a celebration of worship for all. If you would like to be part of a small group helping to lead worship, please speak with Katie.

...we have been experimenting with introducing some german language elements into the all-age stories and activities in our worship services? We recognised that some of our younger members understand german better than english and we want them to understand and feel included. If you have any feedback on what worked well, please let us know.

...you can raise money for Peace Church by donating your used stamps? Simply tear the stamps off with the corner of the envelope and 'post' your used stamps into the box at the Welcome Desk at church.

Did You Know That...

...we are looking into using a projector in worship services? This would replace our paper bulletins and therefore save on printing costs. A projector also gives us more flexibility (e.g. for song choices beyond the books) and creativity (e.g. ability to show images and videos). We would need a technical team to support this new area of ministry. Could you help with this?

...there was a Fun Day in the Park on 12 August? Fun Days are a lovely opportunity to spend time together, share food and play games. All ages welcome! The next one is planned for Saturday 7 October.



...there was a baptism? Greta Wagner, Siya's daughter, was baptised on Sunday 13 August. The service was also a Faith Reaffirmation and Baptism Remembrance service. We had a pool in the church yard, and everyone was invited to make an action with water to remember their own baptism.

...the EmK has its own publishing house? Take a look at what www.blessings4you.de has on offer. If you read german, you may want to consider ordering "Wort für heute" or "Frauen Wege".



Coffee&More

Coffee&more is a wonderful community project of Peace Church which ran from 2018/19 until we had to close due to the pandemic in 2020. What was it all about, and what made it so special?

Kat Wagner asks Nico Kanzleiter and Julia Neubauer about their experiences of being on the team.



When I (Kat) first came along to Coffee&more in January 2020, it was a welcoming and bustling space of conversations with a never-ending supply of pizza. But how did Coffee&more start?

Nico: Coffee&more originated from a Wednesday morning coffee meet for moms and kids. As attendance dropped the idea arose to move the date to Monday afternoon and include the people who visit the Tafel. We started with just coffee, but the ideas kept on coming and soon there was also cake and pizza, a play area for the kids, a crafts table, a table for homework. All for free. It started very small, but with every Monday more and more people came.

Julia: Over time, people got to know each other and started looking forward to meeting up. We even had a table of regulars who sat together and looked out for one another while they enjoyed a coffee or two.



Coffee&more is a project run by the church for the wider community. If someone were to come along, who would they meet there?

Nico: All sorts of people. Men and women with children, old, young, some with disabilities, some who were unemployed or had nowhere else to go, Christians, Muslims, atheists... people from Peace Church and Philippus and sometimes people who just walked by and got curious.

Julia: There were people on low income who would first need to stand in line to collect their free food weekly supplies. In winter they waited outside in the cold and afterwards a hot drink and a friendly face was very welcome. Some of these people had had good jobs but because of illness they were unable to work and ended up on the bread line. I often thought, it could happen to anyone.



Offering a simple, welcoming space seems to have made a big difference. How did you see God working through Coffee&more?

Nico: You could see people slowly changing and getting more into contact with each other. They started giving each other nicknames and warmly greet everyone. They approached each other for advice. Some even started helping in the kitchen. Surprisingly, most people had never quite realized that the building was actually a church and some even started attending the Sunday services.

Julia: Some people began caring better for themselves and wearing smarter clothes. I think they did this because it gave them something to look forward to.

Can you share an encouraging story from Coffee&more?

Nico: One woman, who regularly came with her two daughters, told us how much it helped her with her family. Because of Coffee&more, she didn't have to explain anymore why they had to stand in line waiting their turn at the Tafel. She'd just tell them 'Let's go have pizza!'. It made her feel better about herself and there were fewer fights with her kids.

Do you have a favourite moment from helping at Coffee&more?

Nico: It was a very proud moment for me when one of our young people joined the team. It gave us a chance to get to know each other even better and work together. He even beat me at chess once...

There are no hymns or sermons at Coffee&more. In your opinion, how does a project like Coffee&more fit with the mission of Peace Church?

Julia: I think Coffee&more fits in well with Peace Church as our church is about love. (Love your neighbour as yourself). It is a good way to reach out and help people who aren't really seen and are often overlooked.

Nico: It connects people. It gives them a place to go to, to interact, to spend time with others and their children. It is a beautiful way of showing the social idea behind Methodism.

There's the possibility that Coffee&more could restart! Some people might be thinking about getting involved. What kinds of gifts/skills are needed on the Coffee&more team?

Julia: The good news is that anyone can come and help out, whether it's making coffee, bringing cakes or socializing. All you really need is a willing heart and a smile.

Nico: Patience, communication, but most of all an open heart and ear for everyone.



We thank God for the good work done through Coffee&more! Conversations are ongoing about the possibility of re-starting. Please would you pray with us about this. If you are inspired to be part of the team, speak to Pastor Alex or Kat.

Peace Church Calendar

Saturday 9 September	1:30pm Celebration of Life service for Christine Erb-Kanzleiter
Sunday 10 September	12-4pm Open Air Worship Service in the Park
Thursday 14 September	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 15 September	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 17 September	12pm 'Back to School' All-Age Blessing Service
Tuesday 19 September	6pm Online Prayer
Thursday 21 September	6pm Women's Bible Study
Friday 22 September	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 24 September	12pm Worship Service & Sunday School
Tuesday 26 September	7pm Council on Ministries meeting
Thursday 28 September	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 29 September	2pm Homework Club @Philippuskirche
Sunday 1 October	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School with Communion
Wednesday 4 October	7:30pm Charge Conference
Friday 6 October	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Friday 6 October	7:30pm Sing & Connect worship night
Saturday 7 October	2pm Fun Day 'Picnic in the Park'
Sunday 8 October	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School
Thursday 12 October	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 13 October	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 15 October	12pm African-Style Harvest Festival
Tuesday 17 October	6pm Online Prayer

Peace Church Calendar cont.

Friday 20 October	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 22 October	11am Regional Methodist Worship Service @ Erlöserkirche Note: There will be no 12pm Peace Church service! Come instead to the joint bilingual service at 11am at Erlöserkirche, Hanauer Str. 54
Tuesday 24 October	7pm Council on Ministries meeting
Thursday 26 October	7pm Bible Study Group
Sunday 29 October	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School Mission Sunday "P"
Saturday 4 November	Council on Ministries 'Retreat'
Sunday 5 November	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School with Communion Mission Sunday "E"
Tuesday 7 November	6pm Women's Bible Study
Thursday 9 November	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 10 November	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 12 November	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School Mission Sunday "A"
Tuesday 14 - Thursday 16 November	EMK SJK District Gathering
Friday 17 November	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 19 November	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School Mission Sunday "C"
Tuesday 21 November	6pm Online Prayer
Thursday 23 November	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 24 November	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Saturday 25 November	5pm Peace Church Thanksgiving Special
Sunday 26 November	12pm Sunday Worship Service & Sunday School Mission Sunday "E"

Support Peace Church Collect stamps



You may put stamps that you cut out of your personal correspondence or your employer's business mail— or which you might find somewhere at the very back of the shelf or in the attic—in this stamp collection box. There are only a few things to be aware of:

- Please cut the stamps with min. ½ cm margin (do not damage the prongs!).
- If the stamp is on a historical postcard (older than 30 years), please hand in the whole card.
- Whole collections can also be "monetised" - you can also give them to Pastor Alex directly.

Thank you for your support!!!



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

Our Mission

Proclaiming the Good News of Christ
Encouraging spiritual growth through Bible-reading and prayer
Accepting all-comers from all nations
Celebrating God and each other
Enable all to use their gifts in mutual service

Giving

Peace Church is financed through the tithes and offerings of its members and attenders.
You can give money in the offering during Sunday services or by bank transfer: KSK München Starnberg,
IBAN: DE47 7025 0150 0009 0883 94 | BIC: BYLADEM1KMS

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<http://peacechurch.de>

Impressum

This issue of PCN was edited by Kat Wagner. The deadline for this issue was 27 August 2023. Your suggestions, comments and contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. The deadline for the next issue is 12 November 2023. If you would like to receive future issues by email, please contact Pastor Alex.