

The Anschließend

A NEWSLETTER OF THE REV. DR. KRISTA S. GIVENS

CONNECTING CHRISTIANS THROUGH MISSION SERVICE

March 2011



My Cup Runneth Over!

Christmas blessings greeted me throughout the first quarter of 2011 as I received four generous care packages from my friends at Aiea UMC in Hawaii! All kinds of treasures were packed into those four boxes including candles and soaps, macadamia nuts and kisses, Macaroni and cheese, salsa and vegetarian refried beans!

Thank you so much for your kindness and your kind wishes, friends at Aiea UMC! You are great! I was also the recipient of 52 birthday cards for my birthday in February - wishes from all over the United States: North and South Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Alabama, Texas, Colorado, New York, Georgia, Virginia, Arkansas, Illinois, Oregon, Missouri, Maryland, Mississippi, and my friends in my home conference of California-Pacific. Thanks for all the well-wishes on my birthday. That makes 2011 a special year! Thank you! Thank you!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HAMBURG?

As the Spring approaches, Hamburg's International United Methodist Church is busy with the activities of Lent. While parents are busy juggling kids during school holidays, our church opens its doors to new families and new opportunities.

HIUMC offers varied worship services this season, along with our bible study, fellowship and small group opportunities. Our Lenten season culminates with a wonderful Palm/Passion Sunday service in which the children wave their palm branches, we all sing our "hosannas" and our dramatic reading of the last days of Christ highlight the sacrificial love of our Lord. We will greet Easter morning with a family-style worship, an Easter Egg hunt and a potluck Easter brunch. After Easter we will begin our first confirmation class with the intent of a Pentecost membership

celebration. With the Spring, and the resurrection, our church community is reborn again - as we welcome new people into our midst and say "farewell" to others. But through all our

transitions, God is with us, gathering us together from all over the world into this one place. We are indeed blessed to be a part of this eclectic, diverse family of God.

FOCUS ON A FAMILY:

When South African Babs and German-born Stefan met, little did they know what the future would bring. They now live in Hamburg with teenagers Amanda and Sinazo, and little ones Noah and Tando. How did this happen? Babs explains: "We moved here because Stefan comes from Hamburg, to be close to Grandparents and because Hamburg is my favorite German city." Being a multi-cultural family who will remain here indefinitely, they face some challenges. "In the beginning," Babs said, "there were cultural clashes. But now since I speak good German there are no major challenges. My family is partly German so I have the advantage compared to other families." The family speaks three languages : Xhosa, English and German at home, but the children use German at school and the adults

The Thurow and Saul Family

use German at work and in the town. Hamburg's International UMC became their church family and we have been blessed by their musical gifts, their warmth and vitality. "At first we were just looking for a English speaking Church but HIUMC turned out

to be more than just that. People are friendly and warm. It feels like a big family." We are blessed to have Babs, Stefan, Amanda, Sinazo, Tando and Noah in our church family!



The Thurow and Saul family: Center - Stefan and Babalwa, Left: Noah, Top right: Tando, Bottom right: Sinazo and Amanda

Krista



THE FAMILY OF GOD

International Congregations of the United Methodist Church Leadership Conference, January 2011

We gathered in Berlin as the body of Christ, from all over Europe, to share in community, fellowship and support in our work with international-, migrant- and language-ministries of the Methodist church in Europe. Our mission: to connect with clergy and lay leaders from the growing family of migrant churches in Europe; to develop our leadership skills in the ever-changing, transformative work of Jesus Christ in the international setting; and to confront the challenges and peculiar dynamics of the multi-cultural, generational, and international churches in the Methodist family. The four-day conference was organized and led by Rev. Carol Ann Seckel, a missionary with the Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, who is serving as the Coordinator of English Language Ministries and International Congregations Ministries with the United Methodist Church in Germany. Sarah Heaner Lancaster, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio (USA), served as our keynote lecturer and Stephen Bryant from the General Board of Discipleship served as our Bible Study leader.

We were a community of about 50 including: 5 GBGM missionaries serving in Europe; many Ghanaians working in Ghanaian-language ministries in Germany, Italy, Denmark and the UK; Zimbabweans working with Zimbabwean-language ministries in the UK; Britons working in Germany and the UK; Germans working in German-speaking, bilingual and in English-speaking International congregations; Congolese leaders working in French-speaking Congolese ministries in Belgium; and a small group of Americans, Ghanaians, and Russians working in English-speaking International congregations in Germany, Russia and Austria.

We are people living between the cultures of our homelands and the culture of our "host" countries. We are people living on the margins between the cultures of our parents and the developing cultures of our children. We are people living in the matrix of many cultures, trying to bridge our differences and embrace a vision of the church as a family of God.

Our ministries are not about what makes us different - we know that, we are reminded of that as we live in foreign cultures. Our ministries are focused on what makes us the same. And beyond our common languages, what unites us is the love of God: the love God shows to us and the love we share with one another. Eighteenth century German poet and philosopher Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller said, "It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons." [and I add, mothers and daughters.] The love of our one God binds us together in Europe, in the Methodist family and as the body of Christ in this diverse world.



Above: Rev. Laura Trent, pastor of the English-Speaking UMC of Vienna and Bridget, a Zimbabwean lay preacher working in the UK.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- For our church and its ministries, that it may be a community of Jesus' love incarnate.
- For immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in Hamburg, that they might find connection in community.
- For continued joy in my work and gratitude for the gifts of God in our community.



CONTACT ME

KRISTA S. GIVENS

Missionary Number: 15184Z

OFFICE

Carl-Petersen-Straße 59A
20535 Hamburg
Germany

PHONE

Home /Office: +49 (0)40 562255
Skype: +1 909 532-8087
Mobile: +49 (0)151 50603321

EMAIL

ksgivens@me.com

WEB

www.hamburg-church.de



*We wish you a
blessed Easter!*

*Wir wünschen Ihnen ein
gesegnetes Osterfest!*

