

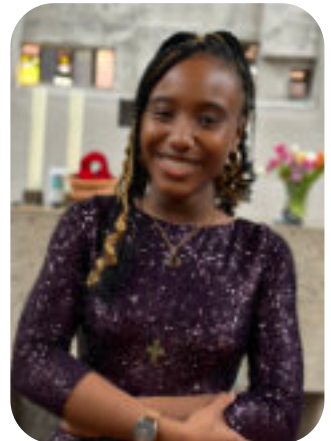
# Peace Church News

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



## ISSUE Pentecost to Summer

MAY - AUGUST 2023



**Peace Church United Methodist**  
Munich, Germany

# ‘A Fresh Breeze’

## Thoughts on Pentecost by Pastor Alex von Wascinski

As I write down these thoughts I am sitting outside. I feel a fresh breeze. Of course, I don't see it, but I do feel it. And I can see how the wind is moving the trees around me, and the leaves on the windmill palm trembling in the breeze.



The Spirit of God is depicted as the blowing of the wind in the bible. Acts 2:2 (NRSV): “And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.”

The image of the wind for God's acting through his Holy Spirit is remarkable. It describes how we as humans experience the effect of God's Spirit, the Holy spirit in our lives. You don't see the wind itself, but you see its effects. It is a power that moves us. And even as you can't see it you can hear the noise it causes—shaking the trees and flowers, moving objects around. The sound of the wind is the sound of the things it moves around or how it whistles around corners, blowing dust and trash away. If you meet the wind in the right way, catch it well, then you can also make good use of it—as humans have learned when they invented windmills. On the other hand, there is no way for you to really force the wind to do something. Compared to what the wind and the storm is capable of, our fans and even turbines are comparatively small artificial winds.

The other image used in Acts, is fire, divided tongues of fire. Acts 2:3–4 (NRSV): “3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” The fire, as the wind, has always been a marker for divine presence, the presence of God. Fire

warms people up. Fire is contagious. Fire draws people together. And as the wind, it has destructive power. With more and more bushfires, we exactly know what this means. On the other hand, for ages the Australian Aboriginal people have laid small fires to cleanse out the bush of rampant brushwood in order to erase food for large and raging bushfires. We do not know what exactly is meant by the ‘divided tongues of fire’. But interestingly, the logo of the UMC ‘cross and flame’ shows exactly this.



But we can well read what the effects of the Holy Spirit is. People suddenly hear the disciples speaking in their mother tongue. And, walls suddenly disappear. In Acts 2:1+2 (NRSV) the scene is set to “one place”, which is “a house”. But when the Spirit had come down, it seems like the walls disappear and all “the devout Jews” around in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5), people from all nations under heaven gathered. People from all nations can suddenly understand. They all can now hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God, who was born and lived among us, was crucified and died, resurrected and ascended into heaven.

It is Pentecost 2023. And Peace Church celebrates its birthday / anniversary right on that day. This year for the 39th time. And me, I have the honor of serving this wonderful church as its Lead Pastor now for almost exactly one year. I see so much of this Pentecost happening right at the DNA of Peace Church. Entering Peace Church, which is not a description of a certain church building, is like entering a community where you can feel the Holy Spirit around like a fresh breeze. For me, this perception comes with the people from so many nations and of all ages, of most various backgrounds and life stories around. And as you come in and enter the community, you can feel a real welcoming spirit around. And although Peace Church's central language is English, many languages are spoken at Peace

Church. And I hope that we foster and continue for example praying the Lord's Prayer in the language of our hearts—it might be your mother tongue or some other. Our Methodist heritage provides that we celebrate Holy Communion open to all people who desire to come to Christ's table—again, no matter if you are baptized or not, no matter what denomination you belong to (or none at all), no matter how worthy or unworthy you feel to come to the Lord's table, if you wish to come, come! And the spirit of preaching at Peace Church is never forcing people into believing or doing something but opening

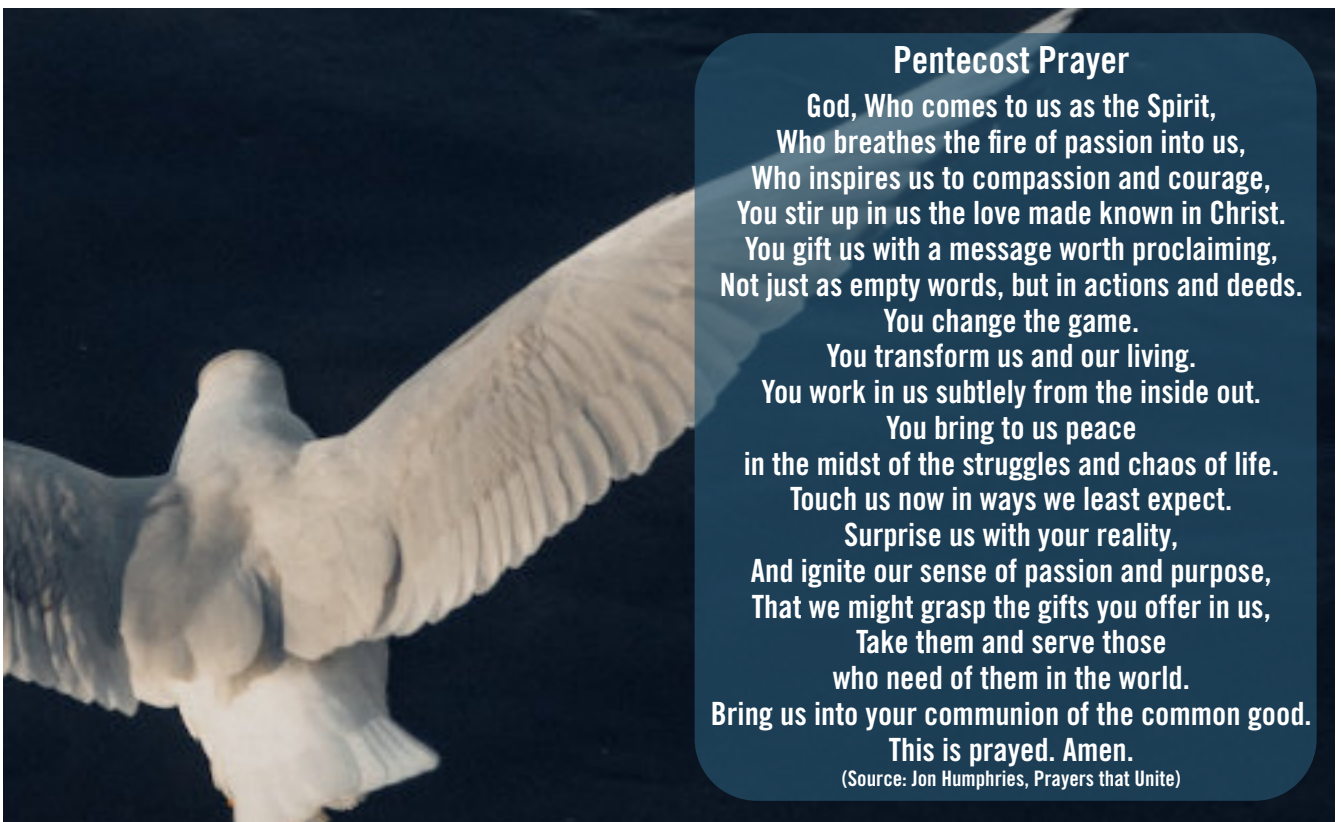
doors, minds and hearts for the acting of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of our preaching and teaching is not forcing but inviting people to follow Christ on the path of love, peace and justice. And although we as congregation gather in 'one place' it is not the gathering space defining the community, but it is the community gathered which fills the space and defines the place as a place of Christ acting through us for peace of hearts, minds and the whole world. And as said in the UMC's brand promise, we do not define our fellowship by the walls in which we are gathered but by the doors we open(!). And as much as we enjoy to focus on God's word, the gathering around Christ's table and the acting of the Spirit in our community of believers and seekers, we also enjoy to open the doors, walk out gather in the open space or spread out to be examples and followers of Christ wherever we are or live.

So, as we celebrate Peace Church's birthday at Pentecost, we are reminded to follow this acting of the Holy Spirit among us—to feel it like a fresh breeze constantly moving us. We are reminded to open up our hearts to the needs of the people around us. We are reminded to open up our minds to live together in a spirit of love and mutual respect, whatever background we have. And, we are reminded to always open up our doors that we will always move out to the people in this world and to be always welcoming to everyone who comes in—as Christ always welcomed everyone to his table with arms wide open.



Open Hearts.  
Open Minds.  
Open Doors.

**The people  
of The United  
Methodist  
Church®**



### **Pentecost Prayer**

**God, Who comes to us as the Spirit,  
Who breathes the fire of passion into us,  
Who inspires us to compassion and courage,  
You stir up in us the love made known in Christ.  
You gift us with a message worth proclaiming,  
Not just as empty words, but in actions and deeds.  
You change the game.  
You transform us and our living.  
You work in us subtly from the inside out.  
You bring to us peace  
in the midst of the struggles and chaos of life.  
Touch us now in ways we least expect.  
Surprise us with your reality,  
And ignite our sense of passion and purpose,  
That we might grasp the gifts you offer in us,  
Take them and serve those  
who need of them in the world.  
Bring us into your communion of the common good.  
This is prayed. Amen.**

(Source: Jon Humphries, Prayers that Unite)



# Did You Know That...

**...the Social Media team is actively promoting content about Peace Church online?** As of April, our Instagram account had 72 followers (quite good for a church in Germany) and over 1,300 people had viewed our videos. The aim is to raise awareness about Peace Church especially among English speakers in the local Giesing area.

**...the Bible Study Group is studying Revelation?** In this six-session study, we are looking at Revelation chapters 1-3, which includes the letters to the seven churches. The group continues to meet both in-person and online.

**...the Women's Bible Study is reading Pastor Christine's book 'More Women of the Bible'?** At each monthly meeting we take a chapter of Christine's book and study the relevant Bible passages. There is serious discussion, laughter, friendship and food.

**...Homework Club has 6-9 kids regularly attending?** Please keep them in your prayers, especially during the exam season.



**...seven young people completed Confirmation Class?** A special confirmation service was celebrated on 23 April.

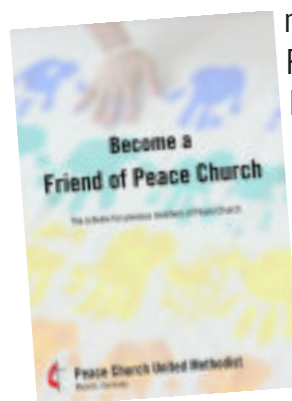
**...we have 14 new members?** All seven Confirmands, plus seven others took promises to become full members of Peace Church on Sunday 30 April.

**...the financial figures for 2022 are out?** In 2022, Peace Church had an annual income of €66.044 and an annual expenditure of €73.043. Thank you for all your generous support!

**...there is a new leaflet all about finances?** If you have questions about finances at Peace Church, this is the leaflet for you! Pick up a leaflet from the Welcome Desk at church, or take a look at the digital version here: <http://finance-info.peacechurch.de>



**... we have a new 'Friends of Peace Church' scheme?** This is for anyone who was previously a member or attender of Peace Church. We'd love to keep in contact with people after they move on, and we know many people remain interested and committed to supporting the life and ministry of Peace Church. We are therefore inviting all such people to become a Friend of Peace Church. You can find out more here: <https://www.peacechurch.eu/support-us-1/friends-of-peace-church/>



**...we are planning an open air service in the park?** In partnership with the Tent Mission, we are planning an open air service followed by inflatable games in the park. It will be a great way for us to enjoy God's creation as we worship, and for people in the park to see who we are as Peace Church. We want to give the local community a fun time, and hopefully make contact and connection with people. We had hoped to do this in May, but as the permissions hadn't yet come through, we will plan this for later in the summer.

# Did You Know That...

**...there was a joint Ascension Day service and BBQ with the Philippus congregation?** The bilingual service was followed by a barbecue.

**...the Sunday school has grown?** There were less than ten children at the beginning of the year and now we're sometimes over twenty, so big that we've outgrown our room! It's great to have so many children and we've started splitting up the classes again.

**...there will be a special worship service led by the Sunday School on 18 June?** The service is based on the EMK's 'Kids help kids' initiative, focussing this year on the situation of children in Soweto, South Africa, under the theme 'You are not alone'. The offering during this service will support a project helping child-headed households in Soweto. After the service we will have a cake buffet!



**...we have a fantastic team of Sunday school leaders which has been supplemented by some of our recently confirmed new members?** We're always looking for new leaders, so do speak to Cathy Williams if you'd like to help.

**...there is a tent camp for 7-14 year-olds this summer?** UMC Erlöserkirche is offering a one-week camp in Pegnitz in the first week of the summer holidays (29 July- 5 August). Kids can expect a fun and creative programme, singing round the camp fire, and lots more. Children should be registered by 30 June. See the App for more details.

**...we have collected a database of over 100 hymns/songs that we know and love to sing?** We record when song each is used in the services so that neither is one song sung too often nor are any of the beautiful but less well-known songs overlooked.

**...we are going to introduce new songs every so often to keep our music in church fresh, vibrant and relevant to today's world?** 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 Pastor Alex, Kat, Graham or Katie.

**...we keep praying for and supporting those who are seriously ill?** Over these last few months we have been praying for several dear members of our church family who have been unwell. We thank God for Randy's and Frederick's improved health. And we keep praying for Pastor Christine, Johnbull, Rose and others: "God, have mercy. Be their healing and their peace."

**...two babies were baptised in May?** Grace Rothut (daughter to Hannah and Matthias) and Samuel Nguyen (son to Rebecca and Minh) were baptised on Sunday 14 May.





# Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday, we reflected on Jesus' triumphant yet humble entry into Jerusalem. The African Choir processed into church, palm crosses were given out and the Sunday School performed a song.



# Easter Sunday

We celebrated Easter with a flowering cross and lots of joyful singing. Happy Easter! He is risen!



# Confirmation Service

On Sunday 23 April we celebrated the completion of Confirmation Class with Brian Archer, Abena Nyarko Frimpong, Jonathan Hutapea, Josephine Hutapea, Ruth Igiebor, Gideon Newman and Joel Talleh. The service was designed and led by these seven wonderful young people, who shared on the theme of 'My Life - In Church'.



# Welcoming new members

All those who finished Confirmation Class plus Benjamin K. Asamoah, Daniel Asamoah, Florence Asamoah, Jeremy Hamer, Laura Marquardt, Oliver Marquardt and Christian Schreiber were received into full membership on Sunday 30 April 2023. Each made promises and the congregation prayed for them.





# Interview with Laura & Oliver Marquardt

Hi! We are Oliver and Laura and we have been coming to Peace Church for one year now.

## Tell us a bit about yourselves...

Oliver used to live in Berlin for 20 years, that's where we met almost five years ago. I (Laura) lived in Paris. We got married three weeks before the Corona pandemic started. Then I moved to Berlin. In 2021, Oliver found this nice job in Munich, so we moved here.

## What do you like to do in your free time?

We like food, music, movies, travelling - and enjoying the mountains and lakes around Munich.

## If you could live in anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Oliver: Istanbul.

Laura: Stockholm.

## How did you first hear about Peace Church?

I (Oliver) got to know about it through a speech that one of the members gave at a church conference and I was very curious to get to know this church.



## What were your first impressions of Peace Church?

Laura and I came and we liked it very much! The people are very nice; it's very international; and people are open to each other. We have a great time here. That's why we are here every Sunday.

## How have you got involved in the life of the church?

When you come to Peace Church you will find me (Oliver) at the Welcome Desk. I started being a steward around five months ago and it's very nice to be a small part of the service.

Me (Laura), I'm singing in the African choir and I also enjoy being part of the Women's Bible study group.

## What is your favourite Bible verse / character?

Laura: Psalm 37.4 / King David

Oliver: The sermon on the mount / Jesus

*Take delight in the Lord,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart*

*(Psalm 37:4)*



# Change Process in the UMC

In November 2022, the UMC South Germany Annual Conference (Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche, Süddeutsche Jährliche Konferenz, EMK-SJK) launched a 'change process' in order for the United Methodist Church in Southern Germany to be fit for the future.

## The current challenges

In Germany, fewer people are engaging with church. And yet, in the face of many challenges and crises, many people are searching for meaning, support and direction.

## The vision

The EMK-SJK sees a realistic future with:

- churches that focus on relationship and becoming a spiritual home for many people.
- appealing, up-to-date services that address the current issues of our time and penetrate spiritually. People can recharge their batteries and go changed and enriched into their everyday lives.
- congregations that are well supported and accompanied in their challenges.
- changed structures that form viable units for the future.
- multi-professional full-time teams that are give-oriented.
- stable finances that do not rely exclusively on donations.
- motivated volunteers who enjoy working with us.
- professional, appealing public relations that represent what we can offer.

## The way forward

The practical implications to make such a vision a reality are currently being worked out.



Bishop Harald Rückert writes: "Our main purpose remains the same: To bear witness to the message of the Gospel with deeds and words. Our structures should serve this purpose."

This might look like new forms and expressions of church. It might involve streamlining administrative functions in order for pastors to dedicate more time and energy to the people around them.

Bishop Harald adds, "We need renewed thinking: forward-looking, risk-taking, fault-tolerant, trusting and flexible."

## What does this mean for Peace Church?

Peace Church UM is currently one Charge within the UMC South Germany Annual Conference (SJK). The new plan is by 2025 to make one large Charge out of several churches.

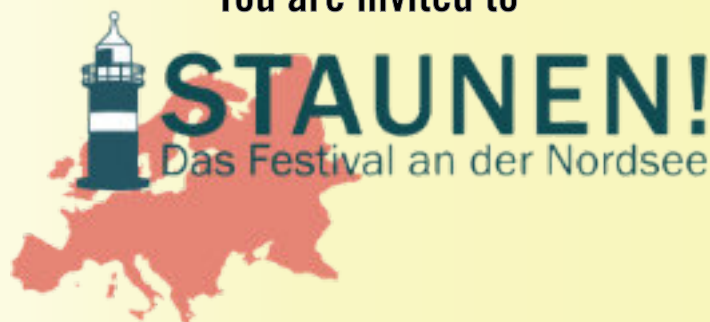
Church leaders and lay people in Munich, Augsburg and Rosenheim are starting to meet to discuss what this could look like. Peace Church UM is taking part in these discussions. We will keep you informed of the progress, ideas and any decisions which are taken.

If you are interesting in engaging in these online consultations, or if you have any ideas or questions, please speak to Pastor Alex.

You can find out more about the SJK Change Process here:

<https://www.emk-sjk-change.de/>

You are invited to



**Date:** 22.-24. September

**The theme:** walking on water

**What is offered?** Live together for a whole weekend, believe with a laugh, hope, sing, pray and just have time with each other and with God. (If there are enough english-speaking participants, interpretation to english will be provided.)

**Location:** The Sunderhof in Seevetal (close to Hamburg).

**Travel:** It's 2.5 km to the next train station, 10 km to the ICE train station Hamburg-Harburg and 4 km to the motorway.

**Cost:** Prices start at €100 for adults (including accommodation, full board and conference fee), €55 for young people, trainees and students, and €40 for children.

**Are you in?** If you're interested, please contact Pastor Alex, as it may be possible to arrange joint transportation.

<https://staunen.net/>

## Peace Church Calendar

Sunday 28 May	12pm African-style Pentecost celebration & 39 <sup>th</sup> Birthday of Peace Church
Sunday 4 June	12pm Communion Service & Sunday School
Thursday 8 June	7pm Bible Study Group
Sunday 11 June	12pm Sunday Worship & Sunday School
Wednesday 14 June	7pm Council on Ministries meeting
Thursday 15 June	6pm Young Adults Night @ Friedenskirche
Friday 16 June	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
Sunday 18 June	12pm All-Age 'Kids Help Kids' Worship Service
Tuesday 20 June	6pm Online Prayer



# Peace Church Calendar cont.

Wednesday 21 June - Sunday 25 June	South Germany Annual Conference (SJK 2023), Fürth
Thursday 22 June	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 23 June	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
<b>Sunday 25 June</b>	<b>12pm Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
Wednesday 28 June	6pm Women's Bible Study
Thursday 29 June	6pm Young Adults Night @ Erlöserkirche
Friday 30 June	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
<b>Sunday 2 July</b>	<b>12pm Baptism Reaffirmation &amp; Communion Service</b>
Thursday 6 July	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 7 July	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
<b>Sunday 9 July</b>	<b>12pm Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
Thursday 13 July	6pm Young Adults Night @ Friedenskirche
Friday 14 July	2pm Homework Club @Philippuskirche
<b>Sunday 16 July</b>	<b>12pm Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
Tuesday 18 July	6pm Online Prayer
Thursday 20 July	7pm Bible Study Group
Friday 21 July	2pm Homework Club @ Philippuskirche
<b>Sunday 23 July</b>	<b>12pm Sunday Worship Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
Saturday 29 July - Saturday 5 August	Tent Camp for Children & Teenagers (7-14 years), Pegnitz
<b>Sunday 30 July</b>	<b>12pm All-Age Worship</b>
<b>Sunday 6 August</b>	<b>12pm All-Age Communion Service</b>
<b>Sunday 13 August</b>	<b>12pm All-Age Worship</b>
<b>Sunday 20 August</b>	<b>12pm All-Age Worship</b>
<b>Sunday 27 August</b>	<b>12pm All-Age Worship</b>



The African Choir sing during the Confirmation service, 23 April 2023



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

### **Our Mission**

**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

### **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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### **Impressum**

This issue of PCN was edited by Kat Wagner. The deadline for this issue was 23 May 2023. Your suggestions, comments and contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. The deadline for the next issue is 27 August 2023. If you would like to receive future issues by email, please contact Pastor Alex.