

Peace Church News

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



ISSUE Pathway to Easter

FEB. - APR. 2023

Dear sisters and brothers,

It's a relatively short period in the calendar between Christmas and Easter and somehow, due to the spacing of our church festivals, we must travel quickly from Jesus birth to his death and resurrection. But there is a great deal of life that happens inbetween!

As we journey towards Easter, we travel with Jesus through the highs and lows of his final days: the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the night of desperation in Gethsemane, the arduous trials and pain-ridden hours until death, and eventually glorious resurrection and reunion with friends.

In our Peace Church community we have also experienced much activity, celebration and sorrow in recent months: beautiful worship services (like the gospel service with Gospel'n'Soul), new experiences (like the ecumencial service at St Matthäus), and receiving news of loved ones who are sick.

So in this special time of Lent and Holy Week, I pray that you may you know the love of the Father, the risen power of the Son and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Kat Wagner
Pastoral Assistant, 6 February 2023



Peace Church United Methodist
Munich, Germany

Pathway to Easter

Thoughts by Pastor Alex von Wascinski

We called this issue of our Peace Church News 'Pathway to Easter'. As I write, it will be Ash Wednesday in two weeks time—the start to the season of Lent. At Peace Church we will begin a new worship series called "Learning to Live Inside Out".

Learning to Live Inside Out

United Methodist Discipleship Ministries introduce this theme as follows: "Lent is a bi-directional season. Or at least it should be. That isn't how we usually experience the season, however."

They explain, "Too often, we see the Lenten journey simply as a journey inward. It is a self-reflective time, an inward self-examination guided by the question Methodists have asked since the beginnings of the movement: 'How is it with your soul?' A powerful and important question, to be sure, and Lent is the perfect time to take this inward journey and to spend some time in solitude and reflection."

And here comes the bit about the outward journey. The explanation continues: "While that is a great start or an important component to a powerful Lenten experience, it can't be the whole story. Examining your soul is more than just looking inward; it is also considering the state of your soul as it walks about in the world. How goes your soul – which is saying, 'How do you live in the world around you? How do you impact, or better, how does your faith impact your community, your church, your family?'"

Finally, the theme 'Learning to Live Inside Out' is in-line with the traditional teachings of the church over the years. UM Discipleship Ministries conclude: "This isn't new. Historically, the church has talked about the spiritual disciplines in two directions. There were works of piety or what we might call the inward attention to ourselves, and there were works of charity or the outward living and working in the world around us. Like the great commandment, these two sides of the same coin cannot ultimately be separated. That is why this series is about doing both – looking inward and moving outward. We are learning to live inside out."

(See <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/learning-to-live-inside-out>, 2023-02-10)

The journey of Lent

Lent is about a journey. Actually, according to the Gospel of Luke, lent began with Jesus turning his face

to Jerusalem: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51, NRSV). Reading this, we have only reached chapter 9 of Luke's Gospel. There are another 14 chapters until the crucifixion as the tragic climax and the appearance of the resurrected Jesus, when lent turns into Easter. It is a time full of teachings, in parables, prophecies and sermons; a time full of healing, deliverances and miracles. And it was a time full of learning for the disciples, being taught unexpected and surprising acts and preachings of Jesus.

A few months ago we have introduced the song "Open to You"; we sing this song on the transition from the 'arriving' part to the 'listening' part of the worship service; the time when the young ones go to Sunday School or Confirmation Class, and the other part of the congregation is about to listen to the biblical readings and the sermon or meditation. We sing this song in order to be ready for God's spirit to work within us, to influence our thinking and our acting:

"My eyes be open to Your presence,
my ears to hear Your call.
My heart be open to Your love,
and in Your arms to fall.
My mind be open to Your word,
my soul to heaven's cure.
That I be open to You Lord,
this day and evermore."

On our pathway to Easter, we are on a special journey to encounter God's unexpected and surprising acting and teaching. We are to be open to unexpected and surprising ways in which God influences and persuades his creatures and the whole of his creation to become what it is designed to be, and what God saw in it right at the beginning: "And God saw that it was good" (Gen 1:10, NRSV).

Lent in a time of war

Now this upcoming Eastertime is the second one since war in the Ukraine was unleashed by Russia. And there seems to be no way, no means of political acting, which could in fact stop this war. In Germany, this war in the Ukraine is 'the' war. But there are so many more raging wars in this world with people dying and being hurt—in Myanmar, Ethiopia, Colombia and Venezuela, Afghanistan, Somalia and Kenya, DR Congo and Uganda, the insurgency in the Maghreb (spreading out to Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Niger, Tunisia, Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, and Ghana)... No, this list is far from comprehensive. And

we don't seem to find answers to the question: How can wars be ended? Some of these conflicts date back more than 50 years! It would be even better if we could find answers to the question: How can wars not be started at all? I don't have an answer to that question.

Those who attended the ecumenical worship service at St. Matthäuskirche on 18. January this year heard Cardinal Marx preach exactly on these questions. He also said: "I have no answers to these questions. But right now, with respect to the war in the Ukraine, the only answer sadly seems to be "delivering more weapons"."

This reasoning, which Cardinal Marx questioned, suggests that the only way to achieve, maybe not peace, but at least a cease of the killing is to work towards a balance of the military powers. I personally do not trust this logic. I personally think that instruments of fighting and killing will not achieve peace. I believe that peace will be achieved by people who refuse to fight or engage in warfare. But I also understand that under circumstances where lives are threatened—your own or the lives of loved ones—it is close to, if not absolutely, inhuman not to fight back.

This week in our worship service at Peace Church we will hear about Jesus words, the antithesis, "BUT I SAY...". Jesus teaches his disciples to not follow the

logic of fighting, to not follow the logic of balancing the powers. Fighting starts with a small conflict between two people. And right on this level, Jesus teaches his disciples to not take on the fight, but even act to the welfare of the adversary. He teaches his disciples to take the fight out of the conflict—and to insert working towards the good of the adversary.

Yes, I can already hear all the voices speaking about how unrealistic this is on the stage of global politics. Nevertheless, I want to use this pathway to Easter to learn from the One I follow.

Following Jesus on the difficult path

I want to see and hear Jesus' unexpected and surprising actions and learn from him. I want to learn to be a messenger and do-er of peace. I want to learn to be ready to accept that this pathway may also mean to go through suffering. But I will also learn to have full faith that in the end the pathway of peace and love will prevail. And I want to learn to live this inside out, so that—maybe not the whole world—but at least the people around me, and hopefully even beyond, will see that there is a different way. And I hope and wish that we walk together on this pathway to Easter, following Jesus Christ, leading us.

Let us be open to him...



Easter Blessing

**I send you out into the world
in the power of the Spirit of Christ
to walk through the darkness and uncertainty
towards the joy of Easter Day.**

Go in peace.

Amen

Did You Know That...

...there's a solution to the lack of heating in church? As Philippuskirche will not be heating the sanctuary during the colder months (due to rising energy prices), the Council of Ministries has decided that we will meet for Worship Services in the Fellowship Hall until Easter. We will meet in the Sanctuary for special services which require more space.

...there will be a one-off choir to sing at the Easter service? If you would like to take part, Vanda would love to hear from you!

...the next 'Peace Church Special' will be a Pancake Fun Day? Pancake Day is a tradition in some countries to start Lent. Come along on Saturday 18 February 2-5pm to eat pancakes, play games and enjoy time together. All ages welcome.



...Pastor Christine Erb-Kanzleiter has published a new book? Her second book, 'More Women in the Bible', is a collection of her sermons and meditations. The Women's Bible Study group is now using the book for their meetings. You can purchase a copy for €15 at church (half of the amount goes to Peace Church).

...in January there was a meeting of the leaders of the UMC international and migrant churches in Germany? Pastor Alex, Rino and Kat attended the meeting, along with Bishop Harald Rückert and 50+ other church leaders. It was an encouraging time, sharing our traditions, challenges and joys. We had special workshops and training on finances, how to share our faith, intercultural communication and discrimination in churches.



...there is an initiative for young adults among the Methodist churches in Munich? Every two weeks there is a shared meal plus a formal and informal programme. If you are a young adult (20+) and would like to find out more, speak to Pastor Alex.

...Alex and Kat have changed their contracts? Alex now has a 75% contract and Kat is now working 25%. You will see this reflected in Sunday services (Alex will lead 3 Sundays in a month, Kat takes 1). You should always be able to reach one or both of them.

...there is a Social Media team? They have been refreshing our engagement on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Stay tuned for more content, and please share posts with your friends!

...we have an Invitation flyer? This is designed for anyone interested in Peace Church. Please take flyers to give to your friends and neighbours!

...there are Contact Cards in church and on the website? These are for anyone who needs to update their contact details or for people new to the church.

...Peace Church has its own App? The App is the best way to find out what's happening in the Peace Church community. Just search for "Peace Church UM" in the app store. You'll need to sign-up with your email-address if you want to send messages or join groups.

...the World Day of Prayer is on Friday 3 March? Each year, women from the english-speaking Munich churches gather together for a special prayer service. This year the prayer materials have been prepared by women in Taiwan. Check the App for details.



...Peace Church took part in the ACK ecumenical 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' service on 18 January? Superintendent Markus Jung, Pastor Alex, Becky Yebuah, Kat Wagner and the African Choir all had leading roles in the service, alongside colleagues from many other churches and Christian denominations in the city. There's an interview with Grace Boadi about it on the next page. You can watch the whole service here: <https://youtu.be/shxipME6Ozc>



Interview with Grace Boadi

on singing with the African Choir at the ecumenical service at St Matthäus

Which songs did you sing and why?

We sang three songs: 1) 'Asem papa bia ma te' because we wanted to embrace the African culture by singing a song in a native language; 2) 'Master the Tempest is raging' was a peaceful prayer of hope for the world to overcome its current situation; 3) 'We will celebrate' was chosen to celebrate God together with the different church communities present.

Did you receive any feedback after the service?

The positive feedbacks were beyond our expectations. So we were very proud and blessed to represent Peace Church.

Which parts of the service were particularly memorable?

I loved how the church representatives gathered at the front and collectively held the service together. It really warmed my heart and I felt united.

Has the African Choir sung outside Peace Church before?

No we haven't!



How long have you been part of the African Choir?

I have been part of the African Choir since 2006.

What is special about the African Choir?

I see the choir as a family where all the different voices come together and become one melody of Christ. I also love our weekly meetings after church and how we support each other in good and rough times.

How does music help you to worship God?

I've always loved music. I turn to it, in good and bad times, because it comforts me and brings me joy. I feel more connected to God through singing.

Welcome interview with Jeremy Hamer

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family...

I moved to Munich in 1984 from Coventry in the UK as I had already met my wife and we wanted to live in the same country! Sounds familiar? I took a job at Siemens in Munich and have stayed here ever since. We have two grown up daughters - Claire lives in Munich and Sally is in Oxford, UK.

How do you like to spend your free time?

Having recently retired, I thought I would have lots of free time. It doesn't seem to work like that! I play the guitar and my passion is astronomy. I have a small telescope and love looking at the heavens. I also like walking and Munich is great to access the beautiful countryside of southern Bavaria.

Are you a coffee person or a tea person?

I am possibly the only British person in the world who is actually allergic to tea. So coffee, coffee, coffee.

What do you like about Peace Church?

The sermons, children's addresses, the music... But what I really see is integrity, honesty and lack of anyone wanting to seem important for its own sake. I think this is hugely important and very attractive.



How can we pray for you?

The world seems to have so much war, corruption and inequality that it is hard to stay positive. Please pray for me to accept what I've been hearing each week at Peace Church, i.e. that the best response to war is to search for peace, and that the best response to poverty is to work for more equality and justice.

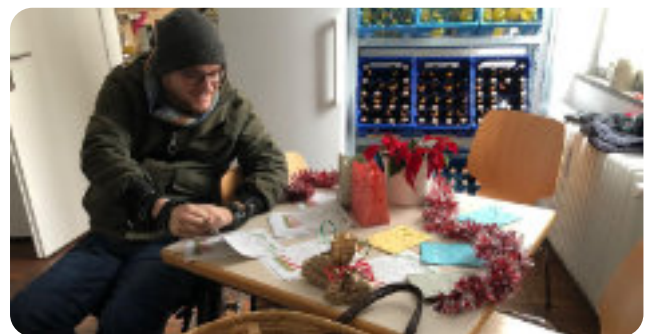
Thanksgiving meal

On Saturday 26 November 2022, we enjoyed a Thanksgiving meal in the Fellowship Hall. We sang songs, shared delicious food, and gave thanks to God for his goodness.



Advent Open Church

Sunday 11th December was 3rd Advent and a special Advent Open Church event. Everyone was invited to join different workshops, including colouring the Nativity banner, making stars, prayer station, music, refreshments and short Bible reflections.



Nativity Sunday

The 4th Sunday of Advent (18 December) was the Nativity service, prepared and presented by the Sunday School. It was also an opportunity to thank Cathy Williams and all the Sunday school teachers for their dedication throughout the year.



Christmas Eve

On 24th December, a special candle-light service was held. The Light of Christ coming into the world, which we celebrate at Christmas, was represented by candle light, passed from one person to another. There was also an opportunity to write prayers and burn them in a fire pit.



God's Call

A reflection on 'calling' by Kat Wagner

In many churches it is traditional at the start of a new year to reflect on and renew our commitment to God.

Many people refer to a sense of God "calling" them. I have recently been reflecting on my own sense of calling, and I hope these thoughts are helpful as you consider your own faith journey.

We are all called by God

I believe we are all called by God: called to receive God's love, to follow Jesus Christ and be his disciples sharing God's love with the world.

God's call is also personal. Jesus called each of his disciples by name, knowing their personal circumstances, abilities and fears. Our Creator God knows each of us better than we know ourselves.

And sometimes God calls us to a specific role for a particular time. There are many varied roles in the Church (and outside the church!) where we can use our God-given gifts to serve others.

Hearing the call

Sometimes God's voice shouts loud and clear; sometimes we really have to strain to hear it. God's call may give us a feeling of excitement, warmth, of being in the right place, or of uneasiness of staying in our current situation.

My personal sense of calling

I offer you now my story in the hope that this will inspire you to believe that God is calling to you, too, in unique ways:

A few years ago I gradually sensed a call. At the time, I was in a very settled phase of life. I was living in my hometown of Reading, UK, where I had grown up, with good friends and family close by; I had a stimulating job, my own apartment, and I was happily single. But I felt uneasy, like I was too comfortable. I felt that maybe now was a time for something new. I just didn't know what that 'something' was! To be honest, it was the gentle (and sometimes not-so-gentle) words of a friend who really encouraged me to do something about it.

Earlier that year, I had gone on a weekend retreat. There I encountered people with whom I could really



Kat with the Scargill Community in 2019 (3rd from left on bottom row)

open up to. I felt welcomed, understood, accepted and loved. And when they said they were looking for new people to join the Community, it struck a chord. So, I applied and committed one year to the Scargill Movement.

However, joining this Community meant some considerable actions needed to be taken. I had to sell my apartment and store or give away belongings. Then I had to resign my job, quit my roles at church, and say farewell to my friends. It really did feel that I was pulling up all my roots with the expectation that I would not be moving back to Reading.

I think the main achievement for me was that I actually (eventually) did something! I took a risk (after much thought, advice and research). For me, it was an act of courage and of trust: trusting that God would gently lead me into the unknown. And step-by-step, I was walking in it. It was not always a comfortable feeling. The year at Scargill was brilliant and exhausting, life-giving and energy-draining, full of enjoyment and frustrations. But it was there that I discovered a love for liturgical worship, for Taizé music, for leading Bible meditations, for laughter.

There were no lightning bolts from heaven telling me what to do next, but a way emerged with the perfect timing. Shortly before I joined the Scargill Community, I had met Christian and fell in love. After my year at Scargill, I moved to be with him in Munich.

So I arrived in Germany in January 2020 having already made many of the hard decisions about leaving my 'home' and was ready to explore this 'something new'.

Having found Peace Church, I launched myself into everything that the church had to offer: meeting people, trying out groups and making friends. I had that feeling again of being 'at home': welcomed, understood, accepted and loved. Two months later, Corona had become a global emergency and all the usual meeting and serving opportunities had changed. But God's call was still at work. My new-found appreciation for liturgy and preaching found expression in the evening worship services we set up at Peace Church during the pandemic. My enthusiasm eventually translated into a job, first working alongside Pastor Christine and now Pastor Alex.

Three years ago, I could not have imagined that I would be living in Munich and working for a church. But this is where God has led me so far. My challenge now is to keep listening for God's call, keep trusting and keep courageously stepping forward.

My prayer for you is that you may sense God's personal call once again and, in response, take those small, courageous steps hand-in-hand with God. Amen

The Methodist Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

Easter Prayer

Where Christ walks,
We will follow.

Where Christ stumbles,
We will stop.

Where Christ cries,
We will listen.

Where Christ suffers,
We will hurt.

When Christ dies,
We will bow our heads in sorrow.

When Christ rises again in glory,
We will share his endless joy.

There is no other way;
He is the only way.

'Where Christ Walks' Lent Response
from 'Stages on the Way' © 1998 WGRG, Iona Community,



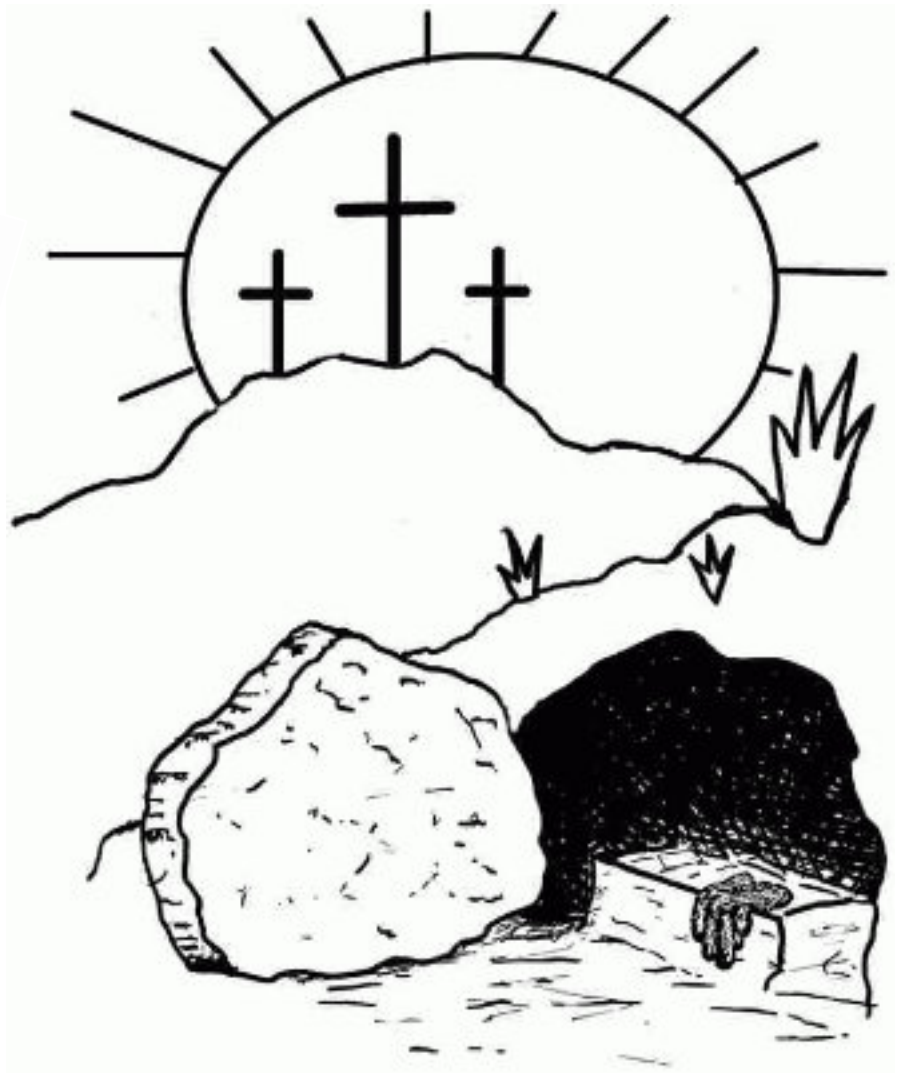
Mark Cazalet, 'Fool of God (Christ in the Garden)'
from the Methodist Modern Art Collection, The Methodist Church in Britain
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Easter Activity Page

Wordsearch

Can you find the names and characters from the Easter story?:

Angel
Roman
Guard
Mary
Magdalene
Peter
Thomas



Peace Church Calendar

Thursday 16 February	6pm Women's Bible Study
Saturday 18 February	2-5pm Pancake Fun Day
Sunday 19 February	12 noon Sunday Worship
Tuesday 21 February	6pm Online Prayer Meeting
Thursday 23 February	6pm Young Adults Night 7pm Bible Study Group
Sunday 26 February (1 st Sunday of Lent)	12 noon Sunday Worship with The Peace Band
Friday 3 March	2pm Homework Club World Day of Prayer
Sunday 5 March	12 noon Sunday Worship with Communion
Wednesday 8 March	7.30pm Council on Ministries meeting (online)
Thursday 9 March	6pm Young Adults Night 7pm Bible Study Group
Sunday 12 March	12 noon Sunday Worship
16-19 March	Forum e (UMC conference on evangelism)
Sunday 19 March	12 noon Sunday Worship
Tuesday 21 March	6pm Online Prayer Meeting
Thursday 23 March	6pm Young Adults Night 7pm Bible Study Group
Sunday 26 March	12 noon Sunday Worship
Sunday 2 April (Palm Sunday)	12 noon Sunday Worship with Communion
Friday 7 April (Good Friday)	12 noon Good Friday Worship
Sunday 9 April (Easter Day)	12 noon Easter Sunday Worship
Sunday 16 April	12 noon Sunday Worship
Sunday 23 April	12 noon Sunday Worship & Confirmation Service
Sunday 30 April	12 noon Sunday Worship



Gospel'n'Soul were part of the Gospel Worship service on Sunday 29 January 2023



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
Enabling 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

Your suggestions, comments and contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. The deadline for the next issue is 10 April 2023. If you would like to receive future issues by email, please contact Pastor Alex. The deadline for this issue was 6 February 2023.