



English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna

January/
February 2018

2018 New Year's Greeting By Bishop Bruce Ough

Grace and peace to you as we embrace the New Year.

The joy of Christmas and the gift of Emmanuel – God with us – gives us the confidence to face the future with hope. This hope is born of our faith in the Living God. Thus, as we enter the New Year we affirm that God who started a good thing in us will see it to fruition.

As United Methodists, we are at a precipitous moment, uncertain about our denomination's future. Yet, we do know that we have been raised up as a people to share in God's mission by spreading scriptural holiness across the globe. And, we know that God knows what form this mission will take in the future.

As a Council of Bishops, we have been in unceasing prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to discern what God would have us do to lead our global movement. We thank you for your earnest prayers and invite you to continue to pray for the Commission on a Way Forward and the Council as our work continues and we prepare for the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference.

Likewise, every part of the world where our United Methodist Connection is present is in the throes of dramatic upheaval, conflict, poverty, migrations or natural disasters. As we enter 2018, let us resolve to be tireless in our efforts to bring health, healing, recovery and transformation to a broken world.

Let us be unflagging in our commission to reach new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us be fully available to grow in our love of God and neighbor. Let us renew our commitment to always and everywhere practice our Rule of Life – do no harm, do good, attend to the ordinances of God.

The New Year is a time for renewing the covenant. John Wesley clearly understood that covenant cannot be manufactured or maintained by structural, administrative or compulsory means. He knew that covenant-making and covenant-keeping were spiritual matters—a function of offering one's life to God and to God's purposes above all else.

The first celebration of the Covenant Service in the Methodist movement was held on Monday, August 11, 1755. In short order, covenant renewal services were being held on New Year's Day in class meetings and societies of the Methodist revival movement. Many United Methodist churches utilize this service in their own Watch Night or New Year's Day worship. Many United Methodists can recite all or portions of Wesley's invitation to his Covenant Service as deftly as they can recite the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed or Psalm 23.

The words are powerful and provocative. I believe they may hold the key to our seeking a way forward. They invite a measure of humility, integrity, denial and surrender that is often discomfiting and disorienting to our pre-conceived, siloed positions.

They clearly remind us that we belong to Christ, and that to give ourselves to Christ in all things is the heart and soul of all covenantal relationships within our great United Methodist Church. So, as we enter into 2018 and trust that God will provide a future with hope, I invite all United Methodists to renew our covenant with God and one another, as we join Methodist people throughout the ages in praying the Covenant Prayer, which in part reads:

Lord, make me what you will
put myself fully into your hands;
put me to doing, put me to suffering,
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for
you,
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and with willing
heart
give it all to your pleasure
and disposal. Amen.

May God add God's blessing to our journey together as a covenant people and grant us a blessed New Year.

Bishop Bruce Ough is the resident bishop the Dakotas-Minnesota Area and the president of the Council of Bishops.



Past Happenings and Community News

Funds Appropriated for Street Visibility Project

The ESUMC-Fünfhaus UMC joint board for property and finance initiated a special project to increase visibility of the church building, install new signage, and engage more passers-by. The project includes painting, replacing signage, installing new LED monitors, and rewiring the cross above the door. The ESUMC and Fünfhaus church councils have also approved the project and agreed to provide funding. The Austrian Methodist property management company and the superintendent's office are contributing €30,000 to the project. The joint board is supplementing the fund with €10,000 from existing funds accrued through church rentals/usage. Another €5,000 is coming from ESUMC and €5,000 from Fünfhaus UMC. Final plans will be approved in February with work to be started in April.

Birth Announcements

- Congratulations to Benny and Efosa Osifo on the birth of their daughter Ayomide Eosa Osifo on the 14 December 2017. She weighed 2980 grams and was 47 cm long.
- Congratulations to Edom and Georgina Amanour on the birth of twins Panyin and Kakra Amanor on 2 January 2018. They weighed 3.3kg and 3.1kg respectively.
- Congratulations to Albert and Evelyn Dadson on the birth of their son Angelo Dadson. He was born on 10 January 2018, weighing 2968 grams. Evelyn is the daughter of ESUMC member Betty Asomaning.



ESUMC members Farzad Janfeshan and Sadaf Ilbeki Taher with Pastor Matthew on Christmas Eve, 24 December 2017

Retirement

Congratulations to Maria Tobler-Kudaya on her recent retirement from teaching after 40 years!

Looking Ahead

Ecumenical Youth Program Organized

This year Pastor Matthew has organized a special project for ESUMC youth and youth from other English-speaking churches in Vienna. The program includes 5 visits to different churches in Vienna for worship, education and discussion time with each congregation's clergy and key lay leaders, and fellowship. The program is designed to help youth grow in their understanding of Christian faith and increase their exposure to the breadth of our various confessions. The group will worship with five congregations (Methodist, Lutheran, Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox) on Sundays in Lent. All are international congregations in Vienna. The program is open to all youth from confirmation age (~13) to age 20. Participants should speak conversational English. Participants can come from any congregation - Austrian or international. You can invite your friends. Contact Pastor Matthew for more information.

Gospel Choir Rehearsals

The Vienna International Gospel Choir rehearses every Friday evening beginning at 18:30 at ESUMC. The choir is a ministry of ESUMC.

Special Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent (the season of preparation for Good Friday and Easter). There will be a special service on Wednesday, February 14 at 19:00.

Wednesday Evening Lenten Study

The Wednesday Evening Bible Study returns with a special Lenten series entitled "A Fresh Look at the Gospels – Seeing Jesus in Four Distinct Visions". The study begins on Wednesday, February 21 at 18:30 and runs through Lent. The Rev. Dr. Tom M. Garrison will be leading the study. You can invite your friends.

Notice of Annual Congregational Meeting

The ESUMC annual congregational meeting (charge conference) will be Saturday, March 17th at 10:00 in the ESUMC fellowship area. The charge conference will receive ministry reports, elect 2018-2019 church leaders, adopt the 2018 church budget, set goals, and receive the financial audit. All ESUMC professing members may vote at the meeting. Superintendent Stefan Schröckenfuchs will chair the meeting.

Fellowship Breakfast on Feb. 3

The Fellowship Breakfast group will meet on Saturday, February 3rd. The group will hear a presentation by ESUMC DDr. Elisangela Valente on her recent medical research entitled "*Genetic Investigation of Primary Immunodeficiencies*". Elisangela is a pediatrician and medical researcher. The breakfast begins at 09:00 with the presentation at 09:45.

Women's Fellowship Meeting Feb. 17

The ESUMC Women's Fellowship will meet on Saturday, February 17 from 18:00-20:00 at the church. The group is open to all women in the congregation. The February meeting topic will be on worship, led by ESUMC church leader Doreen Ighama. Childcare is available but needs to be arranged in advance by sending an email to Rachel Allen at allenrachel@gmail.com.

Annual Talent Show is February 24

Attention all children, youth and adults! Everyone is cordially invited to participate in our annual Talent Show on Saturday, February 24, starting at 17:00. Come and share your talents - it will be great fun! Please contact Marilyn Brandl or Deborah Koll-Petty to sign up. Mark the date!

Teachers Needed!

We are looking for new Sunday School teachers and assistants. If you are interested in helping, please contact Tinu Aganga-Williams at atinukeaganga_williams@hotmail.com.

Do you have something you want published in the church newsletter? Email the church office at office@esumc.at.

2018 Mission and Outreach Projects

Each year ESUMC selects several mission projects (domestic and foreign) to support through our church Christmas giving program. This year we are asking for your help in selecting projects! We want your mission project suggestions! We have a church full of people and 7,500 Euros to commit to these mission projects. The mission team along with Pastor Matthew will select the final projects to be supported in 2018.

What is mission and outreach? God invites all creation into God's plan of redemption and renewal. Through mission and outreach the Church shares God's love by serving others, sharing the Good News of Christ, and caring for all of creation. United Methodist Global Ministries says "the Church experiences and engages in God's mission as it pours itself out for others, ready to cross every boundary to call for true human dignity among all peoples, especially among those regarded as the least of God's children, all the while making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world."

What are criteria for our mission/outreach projects? We have two basic requirements

1. The project shares the Good News of Christ through feeding the poor, clothing the naked, assisting people on society's margins, sharing God's love, and/or evangelism.
2. We can be involved in the project both by financial giving AND direct hands-on participation. We want to give more than money!

How can you submit a project? Write a 2-3 sentence description of the project as well as ways ESUMC can be involved with the project. Tell us if they have a website or Facebook page. Send an email Pastor Matthew at matthew.laferty@emk.at with your ideas.

Winter Daytime Shelter Continues in February and March

The "Wärmestube" program (winter daytime shelter) is a joint mission project between ESUMC and Fünfhaus UMC. The church opens our doors every Tuesday from December through March to provide a warm place, hearty meals, and radical hospitality to our neighbors.

How can you help?

- Volunteer your time: volunteers are needed every Tuesday who can serve food, wash dishes, and welcome our guests
- Buy food items: milk; bread (no sandwich bread please); fresh fruits like tangerines, mandarin oranges, and bananas; sliced cheese; sliced deli meats; and butter. Please check the expiration date on items before purchasing.
- Make food: casseroles, pasta dishes, potato goulash, stews, Letscho with rice, ham and potatoes – pretty much anything is acceptable
- Bring sweets: cakes, strudels, pies. Items can be store bought.
- Purchase non-perishable items: tissues (large packs of individual tissues), napkins, coffee, black tea, fruit teas, and sugar

If you decide to make soup or a main dish or want to volunteer, contact Christa Murtinger (christa.mtf@gmail.com).

No Families Meeting in February

The Families Fellowship Group will not be meeting in February.

English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna
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