



English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna

November-December 2020 Newsletter



Farewell from Pastor Tom Garrison...

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is with much gratitude and thanksgiving that I have had the honor to serve as your Interim Pastor. Coming on board was expedited with the guidance of Pastor Matthew and Pastor Stefan. I have enjoyed my continued association with ESUMC. You all have always been so gracious and kind in receiving me regardless if it has been as Guest Pastor, Summer Pastor, Teacher or Interim Pastor. I thank you for that and I know your spiritual journey with Pastor John will be a blessing. This of course has been a very unusual year with the Pandemic and I have not had as much interaction as in times past, but it is my hope that my time with you has been spiritually uplifting.

I would like to thank the leaders of the congregation and all those supporting the ministry. I would also like to give a special thanks to Pastor Stefan for his leadership and friendship. My ministry is designed to be a bridge between the ministries of Pastor Matthew and Pastor John. I have gotten to know Pastor

John and I am very happy to know that you have a caring, loving pastor in John. He is a wonderful person and I can tell he is a great pastor.

I ask God's continued blessings on each of you and as the congregation moves forward.

Pastor Tom

...and greetings from Pastor John Calhoun!

Dearest sisters and brothers in Christ,

Greetings and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus! It is with a thankful and humble heart that I have received the appointment to serve as the next pastor of the English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna, effective 29 November 2020.

As many of you know, I arrived in Vienna in mid-August from Kyiv, Ukraine, where I had served for the previous four years as a United Methodist missionary and multicultural ministries leader with the UMC of Ukraine. I traveled to Austria with my 16-year-old son, Ben, who is currently an 11th grade student at the American International School of Vienna.

During this year of transition, the rest of our family has remained in Kyiv: my wife Noel, who works for the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) in Ukraine, and to whom I have been married for 29 years; and our 18-year-old son Nick, a senior in an international high school in Kyiv.



Since my arrival in August, during the interim service of Pastor Tom Garrison, I have been taking German language lessons, visiting other United Methodist congregations across Austria, and preparing for the start of my pastoral ministry later this month. In recent weeks, it has been a pleasure to meet a number of ESUMC members and families. I am grateful for their warm welcome and hospitality, and I look forward to getting to know you all in the coming weeks and months.

Over the last 20 years as a United Methodist missionary, it has been a privilege to serve as pastor of several international congregations similar to ESUMC. I've also been blessed to be a lay participant in ecumenical communities of faith outside my home country and culture. I know first-hand the value and worth of a congregation like ESUMC, a faith community where the doors are open to all, where the diversity of its people is celebrated as a gift from God, where women and men and children from all walks of life are united in their shared faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In my short time here in Vienna, I have already witnessed that at the heart of the ESUMC community is a spirit of love—love for God and love for one another. This is perhaps the greatest gift that a Christian body can offer its members, a place where each of us can come as we are, and share in God's redeeming gift of love.

Of course it is not easy, in the midst of this ongoing pandemic, for any congregation to be a welcoming and inviting community of faith. Worshipping via Zoom is a poor substitute for gathering as one body in our sanctuary. Bumping elbows to greet a Christian friend is far less meaningful than embracing in a hug.

Nonetheless, reaching out to others in love is what God has called us to do, especially in this moment of anxiety and fear. So, my new friends, I encourage you to live in faith, give thanks for all God's blessings, and love one another. And join us for worship each Sunday morning, either in person or via Zoom, to be a part of this body of Christ as together we witness and share God's love for the world.

In closing, I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to Pastor Tom for his friendship and his inspired leadership of our congregation during this interim period. He has been a rich blessing to ESUMC, not only these last months, but over many years of fellowship and service.

Pastor Tom and I invite you to join us via Zoom for a special service of installation on Sunday 29 November at 11:15, as I officially begin my new ministry as your pastor. Until then, may God bless you and your loved ones, and keep you in good health and peace.



Give thanks to the Holy One!

Yours in Christ, Pastor John

A word about Pastor John Calhoun, from the announcement of appointment by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee:

The Reverend John A. Calhoun is an ordained elder of the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and a missionary of the UMC General Board of Global Ministries. Since his commissioning as a missionary in 2000, John has served in a variety of multicultural settings worldwide: as pastor of the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, an international, interdenominational congregation in Moscow, Russia; coordinator of humanitarian relief and church development for

the Methodist Church in Kenya; convener of a peace initiative sponsored by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum of the World Council of Churches, based in Amman, Jordan; and (until August 2020) leader of multicultural ministry programs with the United Methodist Church of Ukraine.

Outside the parish setting, John served as the program manager for the 2019 session of the

Institute for Multicultural Ministry, an initiative of Global Ministries that provides training for leaders of multicultural churches in Europe impacted by migration. Additionally, in coordination with the General Secretary's office, John acts as lead organizer of annual gatherings for fellow Global Ministries missionaries serving around the world.

Prior to his commissioning as a missionary, John served as the assistant pastor of the American Church in Berlin, and as the pastor of Woodrow United Methodist Church in New York City. During his seminary studies, he completed a one-year

internship at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, John earned his undergraduate degree in Russian and economics from Georgetown University, Washington, DC, in 1990. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology in 1996. John's wife, Noel, is the Deputy Representative of the Ukraine office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). John and Noel have two sons, Nick (aged 18) and Ben (aged 16).

ESUMC Celebrates Thanksgiving Sunday

On Sunday 18 October, ESUMC celebrated a special worship service of Thanksgiving, as we gave thanks for God's blessings on our community. The service was highlighted by a thanksgiving chorus by ESUMC's Gospel Choir. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic and the need to follow health and safety guidelines, we were not been able to celebrate our traditional Harvest Festival. Nonetheless, it was a blessing to gather as a community to give thanks to God. We are grateful to Pastor Tom and all ESUMC members who created such a blessed service of Thanksgiving.



Congratulations to Our Newest Baptized Members!

We welcome into our community of faith the following children who recently were baptized in worship by District Superintendent Rev. Stephan Schröckenfuchs:



•Taiwo and Kehinde Aganga-Williams, the sons of Adetokunbo and Oluwafunmilola Aganga-Williams, baptized on Sunday 25 October 2020.

•Sophie Ann Elizabeth Lang, daughter of Patricia Lang, baptized on Sunday 1 November 2020.

Stewardship Campaign, November 2020

by Delia Viljoen, Finance Committee chairperson

Pastor Tom has spoken about “parables” during the last few Sundays. Jesus used parables not only to tell his audience a story, but also to convey a meaning and to encourage us to think about this meaning and what it might be. Is it a riddle or a simile? The answer is not given to us on a plate. We are encouraged to think and discuss, share our opinions and understandings. Parables were used as a wonderful tool by Jesus to talk about important issues.

In many of Jesus' parables he talked about money. Jesus was not one to shy from talking about our wealth and encouraging us to share it and use it wisely.

Do we dig a hole as in the "Parable of the Talents" and hide our wealth, or do we put it to work towards the Ministry of God?

As the end of the calendar year approaches we are challenged to reflect on how we've shared our wealth with our ESUMC community this year. The month of November is dedicated to our "Stewardship Campaign". We are encouraged to ask ourselves: How do we as "Active Stewards" share our money?

During the month of November, we are reminded to think about how we share our wealth, especially during such challenging times. Let us think about how we as individuals can make sure that our important work and ministries can continue in 2021. We need to have a budget available to support our Mission Projects, to cover expenses like worship and fellowship supplies, Sunday School and Youth Ministries and even to pay for things like the church building, administrative and pastoral costs.

Towards the end of this month, we will circulate by email an Estimate of Giving for 2021. We kindly ask you to pray about your financial support for the ministry of ESUMC in the coming year. Also, please remember that during this time of lockdown, you may continue to make your financial donations via bank transfer, using the following details:

English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna
Account No. (Konto): 00620161208
BLZ: 12000
BIC Code: BKAUATWW
IBAN: AT23 1200 0006 2016 1208

Additionally, you may give via credit card payment, as detailed on the Giving page of the ESUMC website at www.esumc.at/give.

Let us be "Active Stewards" and put our gifts to work and use every opportunity that may come our way to grow and prosper in our Christian faith and church community.

Thank you for your support!

ESUMC and EmK Fünfhaus Reopen the Wärmestube Ministry on 1 December

For the past seven years, ESUMC has partnered with the Fünfhaus EmK Gemeinde, the Old Catholic Heilandskirche, and other friends in the community to sponsor the Wärmestube, our ministry of warmth, hospitality, food, and care to those in our community in need. This winter, the eighth season of our Wärmestube ministry shall begin on Tuesday 1 December.

Due to current regulations related to the ongoing pandemic, changes have been made to the ministry. Rather than welcoming guests inside the church building, food and other essentials will be distributed to our guests near the church entrance every Tuesday from 11:30 to 14:30. At present we are working with our community partners to try to provide free medical and legal advice, as in previous years.

Because of the changes implemented in our program this year, the Wärmestube needs your support this winter more than ever—financial gifts, donations of food and other products, and helping hands





to distribute. Rest assured that every precaution will be taken to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both guests and volunteers of the Wärmestube.

Starting in December, you are invited to bring to Sunday worship the following items for use in the Wärmestube:

- Small cans of prepared foods (for one or two servings)
- Pocket-sized paper tissues
- Small bottles of hand sanitizers and liquid hand soap
- Bananas and mandarins

All who are interested in supporting the Wärmestube this winter, please contact ESUMC's Lay Leader Doreen Ighama at queendee69@hotmail.com or our Pastor John Calhoun at john.calhoun@emk.at. As always, we thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Join Pastor Tom and Pastor John for Weekly Study and Fellowship

During the month of November, as we continue through the lockdown period, there are two opportunities for online study and fellowship:

- Pastor Tom continues to host the **Bible study** series, "Discovering the Bible, 2 Corinthians," every Thursday evening at 19:00.
- Pastor Tom and Pastor John invite members of the congregation to join them for open **conversation and fellowship**, every Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 11:00.

Both events shall be hosted via Zoom, and available by following the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89198841751?pwd=ejVHcEVYS2xKaC8xNkFpRVo4TmRUUT09>
Meeting ID: 891 9884 1751
Password: 023015

Worship During the November 2020 Lockdown

As you are aware, due to the provisions of the current lockdown, the ESUMC sanctuary and church office are closed to the public. Thus throughout the month of November, there shall be no in-person worship service in the sanctuary.

Instead, we invite you to join us each Sunday online for a worship service featuring live music, hymn singing, Scripture reading, a sermon, and prayer.

The details for online worship via Zoom are the same each week:

Connect by computer or smartphone, click:
<https://zoom.us/j/91289841537?pwd=OEIzVjIuOW5WVIZpZzhURWxCVWVPZz09>
or connect by telephone, dial +43 12 535 501 or +43 670 309 0165
Meeting ID: 912 8984 1537
Password: 816778

*"I sought the Lord, and the Lord answered me
and delivered me from all my fears"
Psalm 34:4.*



**Worship Service Schedule for November (Zoom only)
and December (in person in ESUMC sanctuary and Zoom, subject to change)**

All Sunday services begin at 11:15 am (except for Christmas Eve, time to be announced).

1 November All Saints Sunday	Pastor Tom Garrison preaching
8 November 23rd Sunday after Pentecost	Pastor Tom Garrison preaching
15 November 24th Sunday after Pentecost	Pastor Tom Garrison preaching
22 November 25th Sunday after Pentecost (The Reign of Christ)	Pastor Tom Garrison preaching
29 November 1st Sunday of Advent	Pastor John Calhoun preaching Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37
6 December 2nd Sunday of Advent	Pastor John Calhoun preaching Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8
13 December 3rd Sunday of Advent	Pastor John Calhoun preaching Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; John 1:6-8,19-28
20 December 4th Sunday of Advent	Service of Lessons and Carols
24 December Christmas Eve	Pastor John Calhoun preaching Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-14
27 December First Sunday after Christmas	Pastor John Calhoun preaching Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Luke 2:22-40

For more information about the ministry of ESUMC, please contact:

- *Pastor Tom at tmaxgarr@yahoo.com (through November 28)*
- *Pastor John at john.calhoun@emk.at (from November 29)*
- *the church office at esumc@emk.at, or visit our website at www.esumc.at.*

+

The English-Speaking United Methodist Church
Sechshauser Straße 56
Vienna 1150 Austria
www.esumc.at / esumc@emk.at