



Newsletter of the English-Speaking United Methodist Congregation in Munich: December 2020

Dear friends of Peace Church,

here comes the Peace Church Advent and Christmas Newsletter. Enjoy the beautiful piece of devotions, which Katie wrote for us. And take notice of the attempts we are making to reach out to you all despite the manifold Corona restrictions. Let me greet you with my favourite call to worship for Advent.

**Now is the time of watching and waiting.
The time of pregnant expectation of new life.
Now is the season of hope unfolding.
The dark winter season
when hope is waiting to be born.
Let us come before God
with receptive and willing spirits.
May our soul magnify God's name
and may our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour!
Rejoice!
God comes to bring the birthday
of life and hope.**

May this hope fill your Advent days. We know that many people find it hard and unsafe to come to church. We still have the church open and offer simple and short services. See the extra adverts.

We want to reach you online too. You will find an Advent Calendar Peace Cast, Christmas and New Year's Eve video messages on the Peace Church website. A liturgy book will go to all the church households to support you have services in your homes. These liturgies can be found on the website too. They are there as a PDF for you to download.

Enjoy the offers we make and use them, enjoy the Christmas days, be happy with friends and family, and be safe in your home.

I send you blessings with a lovely Advent blessing:

**Live in peace
to love and serve the world.
And may your waiting be in hope,
each day be lived in faith
and the light of Christmas be moving toward
you. Amen.**

May the magic of the Advent and Christmas season fill your hearts and homes wherever you are and live on in you when life seems too complicated and unsure. Lots of love, Pastor Christine

Advent 2020

By Katie Gill

Advent is upon us once more. This year the celebration comes after a period of almost 10 months during which, as never before, our world has experienced uncertainty and disruption. For many the loss and deep anxiety, the enforced separation within families and the closing down of our usual networks has highlighted what social beings we are, and it has been uncomfortable to bear. The global pandemic has affected us all in so many different ways so that we hardly know which way is up!
The overturning of our lives, both in a private and a public sense, happens and continues to do so as events beyond our control emerge around the next 'corner'. Depending on its nature, this is sometimes welcomed, though often not and there is pain.

I am fairly sure that the arrival of Jesus in the Palestine of his day resulted in more than a few ripples within the order and leadership of the Jewish community. From the manner of his birth, to his life and teaching, his death and resurrection, all these events impacted upon the life of the Jews in a

way no-one could have predicted, except of course the prophets. Jesus himself (Luke 4) at the beginning of his ministry referred to the portion in Isaiah that describes the nature of the coming Messiah.

‘The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

As we read the Gospels, we see this lived out in the manner Jesus taught and acted. How would we have felt as a Jew, living in first Century Palestine – in an occupied country and bearing the heavy burdens of religious laws? Would we not have longed for a deliverer – for someone to save us as described by Isaiah? Jesus came, declaring a new Kingdom with passion and conviction and yet as a servant, not to subjugate or subdue, but to invite those who would hear and receive his message to follow him. He came with a righteous fire to burn against hypocrisy and the misuse of power, focussing with compassion upon the poor and marginalised. He spent time with those who were exploited, the powerless and the sick but also amongst those who were blinded by their own need of deeper healing, giving them a new vision, hope and acceptance. He came as the light of the world to expose the sometimes confused and distorted images of a God who will not intervene, an absent God who wants nothing of us. He challenged the misconceptions, resolutely declaring the kingdom of God as one of love.

Advent.

Jesus still comes.

In our fragility and fallibility, we are drawn, enticed, by a loving Lord into an unequal partnership with him to be lights in the world, co-creating the Kingdom of God here and now through the grace and work of the Holy Spirit, building community. Jesus reconnects us to the God of love and to each other.

Uncertainty and disruption – yes, we are experiencing a splintering of ‘normality’. May we have the courage to light a candle rather than curse the darkness. Maybe that means a telephone call or a letter in the post; support for the unemployed or help with childcare. There are any number of possibilities.

You will know!

A Meditation from the Northumbrian Community.

Go peaceful in gentleness through the violence of these days.

Give freely. Show tenderness in all your ways.

Through darkness, in troubled times let holiness be your aim.

Seek wisdom. Let faithfulness burn like a flame.

God speed you! God lead you, and keep you wrapped around His heart!

May you be known by love.

Be righteous. Speak truthfully in a world of greed and lies.

Show kindness. See everyone through heaven’s eyes.

God hold you, enfold you, and keep you wrapped around His heart.

May you be known by love.

Paul Field

Some of us from Peace Church will be lighting a candle in our homes at 6pm on the four Sundays in Advent. If you would like to, light a candle and join us in saying the grace together at this time. May God bless you all.

News from the Council on Ministries

By Pastor Christine

The Council on Ministries had a meeting at church on 18 November. Seven of us were present. We started with prayer and devotions and gave each other a chance to review the past few weeks.

We stated that we are very happy with the way the harvest season went. The two options of having a small and careful **Harvest Festival** service in church and putting a Harvest Video Message on the Peace Church Website was a really good idea. Way over 200 households watched the video. Many people let us know how happy they were with it, and that they talked about what they saw as they sat together watching the film.

The **Homework Club** is running on a weekly basis and mostly attended by secondary school children. Currently it’s a smaller group, and flexible towards the changes of the Corona regulations. Cathy is supporting the Homework Club by delivering delicious lunch bags for each individual kid and teacher.

The Sunday evening services run as scheduled. The number of partakers is now smaller because some of the people who came on the evenings are now attending the noon time all-age service.

The Tuesday evening online prayer group is still running and becoming more popular – maybe also due to the second lockdown. **The Sunday all-age worship** at 12 noon is attended by between 30 and 50 people per Sunday. So, all in all, we seem to reach 60 to 70 people with our worship offers. This is a reasonable outcome.

Some people have not at all started to come to church again. The second lockdown does not make the situation any better. It was suggested that we start a daily **Peace Cast** again. Izzy and Nico volunteered technical support.

Reflections and discussions on Advent, Christmas and New Year brought the following results: We will have all-age **Advent services** at 12 noon on all the Advent Sundays. On 4th Advent we will try a very spontaneous pop-up nativity play which Christine will moderate with the help of some volunteers.

We will continue the evening services but have a break with them on Sundays 20 and 27 December and 3 January. The restart in the New Year will be on Sunday 10 January.

On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve we will have short prayer services in the church yard. Planning the services outdoors makes us independent from any alterations of the Corona rules for churches.

We will produce **video messages for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve**. Pastor Christine will write the liturgies and as many Council members as possible are asked to partake in the filming. Izzy, Nico and Reiner are responsible for the technical part. Katie will sort the music.

Nico is happy to organize a daily **Advent Calendar Peace Cast** which can be heard on the website throughout the Advent season. There will be one contribution by a church member from 1 to 25 December.

Greeting cards will go out to every church household. Cathy will write them. Parcels with **Christmas presents** will be sent to the church kids. Katie and Sue volunteered to do them.

A beautiful liturgy book for Advent and Christmas with sermons, prayers, blessings, poems provided by Pastor Christine has been put together

by Kat. The booklet has over fifty pages and contains lovely photos of Peace Church people and events of the past. It will also be available on the church website as a PDF.



**Advent Services
at Peace Church**

Sunday 29 November
12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Sunday 6 December
12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Sunday 13 December
12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Sunday 20 December
12 noon Pop-up Nativity Play
no evening prayer

The image shows a list of Advent services at Peace Church, overlaid on a photograph of a lit Advent wreath with four red candles and red ribbons.



**Christmas and New Year
at Peace Church**

Thursday 24 December 5 pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Prayer
in the church yard
(please bring a candle in a jar.)

Sunday 27 December 12 noon
All-age Service

Thursday 31 December 7 pm
New Year's Eve Prayer round a
Fire Bowl in the church yard.

Sunday 3 January 12 noon
All-age Communion Service

The image shows a list of Christmas and New Year services at Peace Church, overlaid on a photograph of a large, illuminated Christmas tree in a churchyard at night.

www.peacechurch.de...

...is our Peace Church Website. From 1st December on you will find a link on the start page for our....



Peace Church Calendar December 2020

Sunday 29 November

12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Tuesday 1 December

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Wednesday 2 December

Women's Bible Study

Friday 4 December Homework Club

Sunday 6 December

12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Tuesday 8 December

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Friday 11 December Homework Club

Sunday 13 December

12 noon All-age Advent Service
6 pm Advent Evening Prayer

Tuesday 15 December

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Friday 18 December Homework Club

Sunday 20 December

12 noon Pop-up Nativity Play
no evening prayer

Tuesday 22 December

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Thursday 24 December

5 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Prayer
in the church yard

Sunday 27 December

12 noon All-age Service
no evening prayer

Tuesday 29 December

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Thursday 31 December

7 pm New Year's Eve Prayer round a Fire
Bowl in the church yard.

Sunday 3 January 2021

12 noon All-age Communion Service
no evening prayer

Tuesday 5 January

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Sunday 10 January

12 noon All-age service
6 pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday 12 January

6 pm Online Prayer Meeting

Impressum

Your suggestions, comments and contributions are welcome. Deadline for January issue is 3 January 2021. Please include a photo if possible. (Reports may be edited.)

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