



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

Reflection on Wholeness

This reflection on wholeness was presented to a small Sunday evening community at Peace Church. The text was read by Rahel Pereira, Lily Owusu & Nicolas Kanzleiter. I felt the text touched my soul and all the pains I was bearing that day. It touched my worries about friendships, relationships, political situations, the future of us all. It touched me and made me whole – at least for a bit. I publish the text in this newsletter in the hope that you can feel its healing touch too. The meditation was written by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, for the Sixth Assembly Theme of the World Council of Churches in 1983. It is as true today as it was then. I hope you like it. Yours, Pastor Christine.

Busy, normal people: the world is here.
Can you hear it wailing, crying, whispering?
Listen: the world is here.
Don't you hear it,
praying and sighing and groaning for wholeness?
Sighing and whispering: wholeness,
wholeness, wholeness?
An arduous, tiresome, difficult journey
towards wholeness.
God, who gives us strength of
body, make us whole.

What is wholeness for you?

Wholeness of persons: well-being of individuals.
The cry for bodily health and spiritual
strength is echoed from person to
person, from patient to doctor.
It goes out from a soul to its pastor.
We, busy, 'normal' people: we are sick.
We yearn to experience wholeness in
our innermost being:
In health and prosperity, we continue
to feel un-well, un-fulfilled, or half-filled.

There is a hollowness in our pretended
well-being:
Our spirits cry out for the well-being of
the whole human family.

What gives you a feeling of restlessness? Socially, politically or in your day to day life?

We pride ourselves in our traditional
communal ideology, our extended family.
The beggars and the mad people in our streets:
Where are their relatives?
Who is their father? Where is their mother?
We cry for the wholeness of humanity.
But the litany of brokenness is without end.
Black and white;
Rich and poor;
Hausa and Yoruba;
Presbyterian and Roman Catholic:
We are all parts of each other,
we yearn to be folded into the fullness
of life – together.
Life, together with the outcast,
the prisoner, the mad woman,
the abandoned child;
our wholeness is intertwined with their hurt.

Wholeness means healing the hurt,
working with Christ to heal the hurt,
seeing and feeling the suffering of others,
standing alongside them.
Their loss of dignity is not their loss:
It is the loss of our human dignity,
we busy, 'normal' people.
The person next to you: with a different
language and culture,
with a different skin or hair colour –
it is God's diversity, making an unbroken
rainbow circle –
our covenant of peace with God, encircling
the whole of humanity.

Christians have to re-enact the miracle of Good Friday:

The torn veil, the broken walls, the bridge over the chasm, the broken wall of hostility between the Jew and the Gentile.

The wall between sacred and secular?

What walls do you experience in your life and in society?

There is no wall.

There is only God at work in the whole;

heal the sores on the feet;

salvage the disintegrated personality;

bind the person back into the whole.

For without that one, we do not have a whole.

Even if there are ninety-nine:

Without that one, we do not have a whole.

God, who gives us strength of

body, make us whole.

News from Peace Church Life

Online Prayer Worship

By Vanda Augustine

To cater the needs of Peace Church members who are still taking precautions of traveling outside and being expose with too many people, Peace Church provide an online Prayer and Worship, complementing together with the other all-age service on Saturday and a quiet evening prayer on Sunday.

What we do in this online Prayer and worship is we meet every Tuesday with people from various background, race and nationalities to sing/listen songs, a piece of devotion, and lift up prayers. To align with Peace Church overall direction, we are using the same devotion / meditation reading prepared by Pastor Christine for the week. Along with meditations and readings, we are supporting each other through prayer, especially those prayer requests pinned at the Prayer Wall in Peace Church.

We will keep improving on how we could facilitate online prayer evening and we hope it will be easier (i.e. one-click) for people to join while not compromising with the voice or video quality.

We would like to welcome you to send your prayer requests, struggles, burdens, and also sharing your joy to Pastor Christine, and she will pass to the online prayer and worship team. Together with Moses, Ronald, Theo, Vivian, Kat, Vanda and Rino we would like to invite anyone of you to join our online prayer evening.

Invitation to Peace Church Worship in July, August & September

Due to the Corona regulations and our wish to keep each other safe and protect each other, we offer small, individual worship opportunities at different times of the week.

One on Tuesday at 6:00 pm

on. The group has an online service. Leaders are Rino, Vanda, Moses, Theo and others.

One on Saturday at 5:00 pm

for families with Kindergarten- or school children. The services will be very child-friendly all-age services, and last about 40 minutes. Leader is Pastor Christine.

One on Sunday at 6:00 pm

for anybody who likes a quiet evening prayer. Leaders are Rahel Pereira, Kat Wagner & Megan Bedford-Strohm.

We don't "touch" the Sunday noon time, until regulations become less restrictive again. We don't yet know when this will be.

Do check the website regularly: there are always latest news, meditation texts and prayers for you to read!

Finding God in the Storms of Life and Discovering Jesus' Secret of Happiness

All-age Worship on Saturdays

By Pastor Christine

The all-age services on Saturdays had a hard start. The first 2 weeks nobody showed up, and the team stood there alone. They had a time of music and prayer and went home again.

In week 3 the first few families showed up. Christine had a story and activity embedded into a nice and child-friendly liturgy. With the story of Jesus stilling the storm kids and parents were told that Jesus is stilling our storms in life, but also: that God is with us in those storms which cannot be stilled. The kids helped creating a stormy sea from blue pieces of cloth. And everybody folded little boats to place them in the sea. The Prayer Wall which is a sign of our togetherness in prayer was used by many people. They shared their needs and joys, in these often so unreal times of Corona.

In week 4 we all learned about God's dream for his children. God's dream for his children is happiness, and Jesus can teach us how to be happy and how to make others happy. Paper plates were turned into happy faces and collected on a colourful piece of cloth in front of the altar.



We had to wear masks when we entered and left the church and when we sang. In between we are now allowed

to take the masks off and breathe freely – as long as we stick to the distance of 1,50 metres between people. The children and the parents were very cautious not to break the rules, and payed really loving attention to each other and to what the others were doing.

For these all-age worship services, we use Desmond Tutu's beautiful children's Bible "Children of God". And we meet every Saturday at 5pm. We will probably offer this extra service for families until schools work normally again, and until we can offer Sunday School again later in the year.

Philippuskirche is a big building. Even if all the church families showed up on one Saturday, we could place them all in "safe" spaces and have real fun together. So, do know that you are all so very welcome to come and join us!

"So, tell me, why are we here?
We come together to seek God's presence."

By Kat Wagner

These words are spoken each week at the opening of our Sunday evening service. Words to remind us that though we have had different experiences through the week, together we are seeking to live our lives as companions of God and each other. Each week we also have the opportunity to light a candle, reminding ourselves that the light of Christ is with us now.

With flickering candles, the liturgy leads us from recognizing God's presence with us, to reflecting on a Bible passage. We've mainly been following the lectionary readings from the gospel of Matthew, with reflections shared on those, sometimes difficult, passages. What did Jesus mean when he said that?! But insights and reflections are shared, often offering a new perspective to ponder.

We are then led into a time of extended silence. Sometimes during the silence, I dwell on the words or music I've heard, praying that they will sink deeper into my heart. Sometimes I actively listen to the silence and start to notice the sounds of the traffic, of the birds, of the wind. Sometimes a prayer of concern comes into my mind, sometimes a purposeful moment of gratitude. And sometimes it is a just a blankness, and that is ok.



One of my favourite parts of the service comes next when we share our spoken prayers. Each week people take it in

turns to come forward to the front, and every week I'm thankful for the courage and honesty of each person's prayer. Prayers for individuals, prayers for the world; prayers to end racism, prayers about the Coronavirus. I love this part because we hear each person share what is on their heart, in their own words. The Prayer Wall is filling up fast!

So, I can tell you why I'm there each Sunday evening. We come together to seek God's presence, and in our togetherness (our sharing, our listening, our offering of ourselves, our caring for one another) I believe we find something of God.



Book Review - Pastor Christine recommends: “Extraordinary Women of the Bible”

by Michelle Sloan
and Summer Macon

The Bible is filled with so many incredible women, and it's time we were introduced to them! Meet Deborah, the only female judge of Israel; Lydia, successful businesswoman and early Christian; Priscilla, skilled tentmaker and determined missionary; and Rahab, quick-thinking, fearless protector of her family. This is only a few of the extraordinary women you can find in the Bible, so let's go and meet even more and learn how to be as amazing as them! The texts are a bit like a comic strip, and the illustrations are real fun, modern and cheeky. The book is published by SPCK, London in 2020.

Did You Know That...

With slightly less restrictive Covid-19 regulations, we may be able to start the Homework Club again in September? We will be able to set tables in a way that 1,50m will be in between each individual. And we will teach on a one to one basis.

We can take our masks off in the church now? We have to wear them, when we enter the church, and when we leave it, also when we are singing. But in between, we are allowed to take them off and breathe freely. We still have to make sure that there is sufficient distance between people – exceptions are couples and households.

Pastor Christine is still sending fun and activity packs to some of the church children? She will do a weekly package throughout the summer holidays.

Kids' Club can only begin again in its old shape and size, when schools are back to the normal teaching? This means without the social distancing. We may offer small individual projects for ten children at a time. Watch out for the invitations.

Sunday School is still taking a break? As a substitute Pastor Christine offers all-age services each on Saturdays at 5pm.

We are planning on having the annual African-style Harvest Festival on Sunday 18 October? But we may have to have it without the food, and with the African Choir singing from the balcony in the church.

Bible study groups, and especially home groups can now meet again? The Tuesday group continues meeting online. The Women's Book Reading Group will meet once a month on Thursday evenings at Rahel's again. And maybe Kat and Christian can begin opening their house to a new home group.

Peace Church started a Corona Unemployment Fund? Should you be in need of financial support, speak confidently to Pastor Christine. She can help.

The Peace Church website and the Facebook account are worth checking? Latest pieces of information and beautiful texts, prayers, photos and other ideas can be found there, especially in this time in which we cannot yet go back to our old worship format on Sundays at 12 noon. Maybe this will be possible in October.

Impressum

Your suggestions, comments and contributions are welcome. Deadline for the next issue is 25 July. Please include a photo if possible. (Reports may be edited.) If you would like to receive future issues by e-mail, please send a message to christine@peacechurch.de, simply type "PCN by mail" and we will add your address to the list.

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