



UPDATES ON REFUGEE SITUATIONS

I wanted to give you a brief update on our various refugees and their current situations. The biggest news comes from Masoud and Mahboubeh, who had their baby in December! Cyrus (named after the Persian king from the Old Testament) was born on December 17th, a few weeks earlier than planned but perfectly healthy. The church immediately latched on and everyone has done an amazing job of helping out this young couple as they are getting used to their new lives, not only as legal residents of Austria but as new parents. After a few weeks of much needed rest at home, they finally brought Cyrus to church

for the first time last Sunday (February 3rd)!

A few more people have come to church we need to pray for. Wafa is a young man from Iran who is still seeking asylum. Unfortunately while he waits, he is living almost by himself in a shelter in a small village 20 minutes outside of Vienna. He needs lots of prayers, both for his loneliness and asylum situation, but also for productive Bible studies with Chuck and Jake.

The two sisters, Bitia and Kiana, were asking for prayers last fall because both their mother, Afsanah, and cousin, Niushe, were fleeing Iran. Thankfully both made it safely to Vienna in November. Niushe was put in a shelter in Linz (about an hour from Vienna), but Afsanah is in Vienna so we've been able to spend time with her and grow to love her. She speaks no German or English, but it doesn't matter, because she exudes love and joy at all times,

and that's all the communication she needs. Our kids love her, and she and Elliott can interact for hours despite not speaking a single word to each other. Both Afsanah and Niushe have had their interviews in the past few weeks (a much quicker timeline than usual) so we are praying for positive results. Afsanah is also studying with Chuck and Parastoo so please pray for her heart as well.

Other news: both Siavash and Sahar (both became Christians last year - go back to previous newsletters!) have moved to Wels (about 2 hours away) for jobs. So far they don't have a Christian community there to be part of so please pray that they can find something for their spiritual nourishment.

Further prayers for Omid, Mohammed and Mehrdad who are all studying with either me, Jake or Chuck.

God has been doing great things in the hearts of the Iranians. Please pray that his will continues to be done in 2019.

-Will



FALL CONFERENCE IN GERMANY



donations from churches around the world.

The conference was started as a way to bring University level professors in Theology and Ministry to Europe in order to allow anyone in Europe the opportunity for deeper study in God's Word. Some of

the previous speakers include Dr. John Mark Hicks (Lipscomb), Dr. Jim Dvorak (Oklahoma Christian), and this year Dr. Evertt Huffard (Harding Graduate School of Theology). It is a weeklong program that typically includes a field trip to a local landmark or, because of good weather this year, a barbeque.

I've had the privilege of attending the Fall Conference for the last several years at the Bibelfreizeitheim (Bible Conference Center) close to the small town of Gmünden, Germany. It is located about an hour northwest of Frankfurt, Germany and like our own Schwarzwaldckhaus is owned and maintained by the churches in Germany and through

Subjects range from deep theological topics like Christology to practical matters like strengthening our spiritual influence which was this year's topic. Dr. Huffard brought us through a process of how to help guide people from being passive followers of Christ to encouraging them to be active followers of Christ. We also learned about mentorship, leadership and how to be an effective leader in the church (hint - it has nothing to do about telling people what to do). In order to be an effective leader, you must first be an effective follower, first and foremost of Jesus Christ. It was a very good few days spending time learning about why people are in the spiritual stage they are, what hinders them from moving forward, and how we can help them along their spiritual path as guides and mentors.

I have also been wanting to take some of the men from Donau Gemeinde with me and this year Bobby went. He has a great interest in spiritual mentoring and has many young people that he works with that look up to him. He has a great desire to not only see the members of Donau Gemeinde grow spiritually, but also those around him at work and where he lives to realize their greatest potential in Jesus Christ. With this year's conference we had a lot of time to reflect on the members of Donau Gemeinde, their needs, and to pray for them to grow spiritually and it was a blessing for me to have Bobby there to share that with.

I look forward to my time every year and praise God that Don and Cindy Roehrkasse and Kyle and Susan Bratcher (missionaries in Hildesheim, Germany) work tirelessly to put this on every year.

- Jake

CHRISTMAS CARDS

We've been trying to do a better job of reaching out to the rest of the tenants in the building where our church apartment is. We made a good step in December when Karina and Tamika had the idea of making Christmas cards for the whole building. So one Sunday after worship, our church got our inner craftiness going and worked together to make 30 or so cards out of construction paper and glue, just

like elementary school. Even for those craftily challenged (like me) it was fun and great to see everyone working together.

We've gotten a few verbal "thank-you"s from some of the neighbors and even a card in return! Please pray for the church building as we try to not only impact our city but our immediate neighbors as well.

-Will



Making Christmas cards for the building

PICTURES FROM THE FIELD



Visiting Siavash in his new home in Wels



November group picture



4th annual Kooi Christmas party



Bringing "cold packets" to homeless with the youth



Afsanah with Lucy



Hermine and her Christmas card

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

We had yet another incredible year with our teenagers. This fall saw the conclusion of a study we've been going through together which, over a series of lessons, introduced them to the core messages of the Gospels, led them through a study on prayer, and showed them short, transparent interviews about God with teens and young adults from all over the world. The content of these lessons and videos encouraged a great deal of discussion, openness, and self-reflection. We've since picked back up with a more in-depth series on the character traits of Jesus.

The ladies, Hallie, and I continued our girl time at Cafe Little Britain

where we made a natural shift in our discussion time from conflict management to friendship. It's been a joy to watch our three girls grow closer in fellowship with one another and help each other through weeks or seasons of challenges. It's hard for me to believe they'll be 16 this year as it wasn't too long ago that all three of them were shorter than me. Now, they tower over me, love on my kids like big sisters, and happily make fun of Will and me for our pop-culture cluelessness. They're the best.

In November, during the Rothenburg retreat, Abby was moved to be baptized! The Haskews invited us along with all of Abby's retreat friends into their hotel room to witness her bathtub baptism. There was barely an inch of wiggle room left due to the number of people who wanted to be there for this celebration in Christ. It was an emotional, joy-filled experience.

The teens closed out the 2018 year with an impressive, self-created service

project after a lesson on Jesus and service. Jonathan, Abby, Marlen, and Izabela raised over 800 euros to buy new winter clothes and necessities for those living on the streets of Vienna. One huge shopping trip later, the teens had bags and bags of quality items to give to those in need. We love these servant-hearted teens.

-Holly

PRAYER REQUESTS

Judy: going through a difficult time in her marriage

Macarena: interested in coming to DGC

Nici: further her walk with Christ

Nici and Yordan: their marriage

U!Shine Vienna: the people with whom we come in contact and potential for a workspace

Sara, Wafa, Omid, Niushe, Afsanah, Mohammed: their asylum

Mitra (Sara's mother): her desire to move to Vienna

Seeker's Service: that it would grow and bring new people

Hermine: health

Donau Gemeinde Christi: for the growth and health of the church and to make wise decisions



THE VIENNA TEAM

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