



Connecting Our Churches and Friends around the World

Summer 2016

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The American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) is a US-based 501 (c) (3) organization that supports the American Church in Paris, the American Church in Berlin, and the Vienna Community Church.

President's Message

Dear Friends of the AFCU and American Churches in Berlin, Paris and Vienna,



The AFCU conducted its annual board and development meetings in Austin, Texas, on April 15-17, 2016. There were more than 30 volunteer Members, Associates, Consultants, church representatives and pastors attending the meeting.

Nate and Courtney Groves hosted the meetings. We thank them for their generous hospitality and work in planning the meetings and associated functions. We also thank Russ and Carol McNaughton for helping to arrange the meetings at their home church, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran in Austin.

Our fall development meeting will be held October 14-15, 2016 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, hosted by Ben and Margit Coltvet.

They had previously served a pastoral assignment at the American Church in Berlin.

Our Spring 2017 Annual Meeting will be held in Vienna, hosted by the Vienna Community Church.

A few of the highlights from the European churches include the following:

- 1. Berlin - Work is underway to construct meeting places and classrooms inside the sanctuary to provide comfortable space without the need to heat the entire church during the week.
2. Paris - The ACP- 160 project has been successful in providing funding for capital improvements, a maintenance endowment, and an operational endowment. This funding remains critical for the on-going operation of this large and very busy facility.
3. Vienna - The VCC has acquired a separate apartment that allows them to have their own meeting space. This was facilitated by generous loans from 2 members of the church and contributions from many of you. Continuing

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Have you moved recently? Please update your contact information with us by sending an email to AFCUeditor@afcubridge.org



The Mission of the American and Foreign Christian Union is to support the International, English speaking, ecumenical churches whose ministries bear witness to Jesus Christ. In partnership with our member churches, we will strive to develop and manage a strong financial base to further their programs. We will nurture and strengthen our alumni ties and lend support to the pastors, leadership and members of these churches through our care and prayers.



President's Message, *continued from page 1*

contributions are needed to complete the funding. (I also congratulate the congregation on the call of a new pastor, the Rev. Dr. Gabor Lassu. We all look forward to meeting him.)

I wish to thank all of you that support the European churches and the operations of the AFCU through your prayers and generous financial support. This support is more important than ever as Europe faces significant challenges from the immigration crisis. Be watching for the launch of a new updated AFCU website this summer to help facilitate our communications.

Finally, I congratulate Fred Gramann on celebrating an amazing 40 years of directing and playing music at the American Church in Paris!

Yours in Christ,



Ted Ziemann
President

ACP-160 Capital Campaign Update

The ACP-160 capital campaign was started on December 1, 2013 at the ACP with two major segments – one for the church building one for immediate use such as church projects. On January 31, 2014 a third segment was created by the AFCU for the ministry of the ACP. As of April 1, 2016 the campaign pledges have amounted to \$1.05 million dollars. As of this writing, the total giving toward these pledges amounts to \$808,300. In addition to the pledges, another \$340,000 has been committed in the form of planned giving (life insurance, trust funds, and so on). The following table shows the portion of this campaign given through the AFCU.

| Segment | Pledges | Receipts |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Building | \$15,616 | \$8,183 |
| Immediate use | \$127,591 | \$52,729 |
| Ministry | \$433,986 | \$381,143 |
| Total | \$577,193 | \$442,056 |

The existing AFCU endowment was established in 1937 after the church building was completed on the quai d'Orsay. The intention was to establish an investment fund in perpetuity for the continuing operation of ACP. With the financial restrictions demanded at that time we cannot make changes to this investment and are only allowed to withdraw 5% annually. Over the past five years, 5% of the fund has averaged about \$73,000 per year. AFCU expenses on behalf of ACP over this same period averaged \$125,000.

As a result of the ACP-160 campaign, two new endowments have been established for the ACP, one for the building and one for ministry. These endowments will allow us to have more control over the management and growth of the monies donated. The purpose of these two endowments is to ensure the maintenance of the building and the viability of the ministry for ACP congregants into the future.

While the active campaign for ACP-160 is over, there is still an opportunity for new donations, material gifts (for example, stocks or land) as well as legacy giving (insurance, trusts and so on) to be designated for these endowments. It is up to us to care responsibly for this special home that we inherited. The ACP was entrusted to our care that we may "pay it forward" for future generations.

In closing, I would encourage you to prayerfully consider the Apostle Paul's praise of the early Macedonian church: "*In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the **privilege** of sharing in this service to God's people.*"

Gregg Foster

ACP-160 Campaign Coordinator



American & Foreign Christian Union

2885 Sanford Avenue SW #29934

Grandville, MI 49418

June 4, 2016

Fred Gramann

Dear Fred,

The members of the American and Foreign Christian Union congratulate you on your amazing 40 years of leading music at the American Church in Paris.

Many of our members attended the ACP while living in Paris and had the privilege of listening to or participating directly in the various music programs that you led. Others have had the pleasure of hearing your music when they attended the ACP while visiting. Some of us even hear your bell compositions played in our local churches.

In all cases, Fred, your musical talent, leadership, and dedication are highly appreciated by many.

Thank you for your dedicated service to the ACP. We wish you continued success in your career and life and look forward to continuing to enjoy the fruits of your talent. We also extend our best wishes to Nancy, who has also been a supportive partner in your many endeavors. May God richly bless you both.

Yours in Christ,

Ted Ziemann

President

EASY AUTO GIVING THROUGH THE AFCU

Financial support to the American & Foreign Christian Union or directly to one of our three European churches is easy and only a few clicks away. Sustained giving is an automated stewardship program that allows donors to make **tax-deductible** auto payments to non-profits through electronic funds transfers (EFTs). We at the AFCU have that program that insures **100%** of your donation goes directly to the AFCU or any of the three churches you as a donor designate. We volunteer board members even cover the credit card or pay service fees. Below is the "How To" steps:

- Go to the AFCU web site: afcubridge.org
- Click on "Support"

- Select "Donate" below in Dollars or Euros
- Enter "Donation amount"
- Check the box to the right if this will be a "Recurring Monthly" payment
- Fill in your credit card info or log into PayPal
- Click "Review Donation and Continue"
- **IMPORTANT:** Click on "Add special instructions to the seller" to designate AFCU, ACB, ACP or VCC
- Finally click "Donate ___ Now"

It is as easy as all that!

Don Krump, Development Committee Co-Chair

2015 Donors

The following names were accidentally omitted from the 2015 Donor list in the Spring Bridge. We sincerely regret the omission.

Russ McNaughton, Financial Secretary

Pamela Bohl

John Humber

Elaine Kruse

Pamela Schulz

Kari Schumm



AFCU Board meeting, Austin, Texas, 2016

The Heritage Society

The American churches in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna along with their U.S. partner, the American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) are fortunate to have many friends and alumni who consistently contribute to their ongoing efforts. As part of this effort, the AFCU established the Heritage Society to encourage these people to include these churches or AFCU in their estate plans. Today we know of over 50 friends or alumni who have done this.

Why are we committed to support the work of these churches? Stories vary, but many themes are similar. You may relate to the testimony below.

People often ask, "How did you ever become associated with the American and Foreign Christian Union?" and "Why are you supporting this organization?" That is a question that has been asked of every current and past member of AFCU many times. Each story is different, unique and interesting. No single story is more or less compelling than the next; however, they all carry a common thread. The individuals were drawn to AFCU through a connection with one or more of the three AFCU partner congregations in Europe. Drawn by the Holy Spirit to assist the congregations with the vision and mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior in each community, members of AFCU have committed their time and talents to supporting the people of God in Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

My wife Marcia and I became acquainted with the American Church in Berlin in the mid 1990's when our son moved to Berlin to open a business. As dutiful parents do, we visited our son and his lady friend frequently and attended ACB, his church of choice, when we were there. We, of course, met her family and parents who, as Germans had seen the darkest and brightest days of Germany. Coincidentally and to our surprise, we discovered they were married at ACB decades before. Time moved on and relationships changed, but with every visit, we attended ACB. Our son married, the grand children came and our visits became more extended and frequent. As ACB became our Church Family away from home, we became involved with some of the ministries of feeding needy neighbors, tutoring immigrant children, ministering to visitors and students, and worshiping with people from around the world seeking to worship in a common language of English. The Family of God at ACB

is made up of people from around the world, local families, diplomats, embassy workers, business people, students, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers.

We discovered from our son, long time church members and the pastors of the financial struggles the congregation faces to meet the many needs in the middle of such a beautiful city. So when ACB acquired an historical church needing heat, sound and paint, located in the middle of Berlin, we made an appeal at our home congregation in Tucson, Arizona. A donor who wanted to make a difference came forward; another couple offered their support because their son also attends ACB. We made new friends that day! Thousands of miles away, in unlikely Tucson, people show up with connections to one or more of the AFCU partner churches in Europe.

When we became members of AFCU, we became acquainted with the other partners, the American Church in Paris and the Vienna Community Church. Each has differing needs to meet the common goal of being a beacon of light in their communities and proclaiming the love of God to people of the world.

Recent political developments and conflicts have filled the cities with new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers needing a helping hand in unfamiliar surroundings. AFCU partner churches are struggling once again to do what Jesus calls on Christians to do. The call to be a supporting member of AFCU continues for us.

*Ken and Marsha Rislov
May, 2016*

If you would like to take steps for future gifting as part of your estate plan, please contact us at our e-mail address: afcuheritage@afcubridge.org.

Robert E. DeLuryea
Heritage Society
June, 2016



The AFCU is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. If you would like to include one or more of our three churches in your estate planning, please contact us at our e-mail address: afcuheritage@afcubridge.org

The Vienna Connection



www.viennacommunitychurch.com

Dear Members and Friends of the AFCU and American Churches in Berlin and Paris,

Greetings to you from our hot spring breezy and magnificent Vienna, I am Dr. Gábor Lassu, the new permanent pastor of the Vienna Community Church. First, let me begin with praise to our Heavenly Father for all His love, mercy and grace upon us. Also, I would like to thank all the church members here in Vienna for their commitment to witnessing faithfully our Lord Jesus Christ in the community, and their enthusiasm and welcoming love as they called me unanimously to serve this wonderful community. Glory to God alone!

In response to the invitation from the church leadership to introduce myself, let me share with you a few words about my ministry and future vision for the VCC. I was born and raised in Budapest, Hungary, in a loving and caring Christian family. My

father was a mechanical engineer, who designed the world's first articulated bus in service. As a teenager, I turned towards jazz music, and after finishing the Bartók Conservatorium, I became a musician. However, one day in a Christian youth group, I was saved and the Lord changed my heart. My ministry began "*underground*" helping wayward and drug addict teenagers. In 1979, I received the call from the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord. Several years later, I earned my M.Div. degree and began my ministry as a pastor of the Reformed Church in Hungary, a member of the WCC. Ever since my personal motivation has been to fulfill what God wants to do with my life.

In 1993, I was called and elected to serve in the United States as a missionary pastor in Detroit, Michigan. Continuing my ministry, the Lord transferred me to be a senior pastor in San Jose, California. After being granted U.S. citizenship, I earned my Ph.D. in Theology. My dissertation topic was "*Sustainability - Environmental Theology*". As an Adjunct Professor, I taught Systematic Theology at Simpson University, Redding, CA and as a lecturer of Applied Theology at the Károli University, Budapest. Meanwhile, I returned to Hungary, served as interim pastor, held continuing education courses for pastors, lay leaders, and became a member of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

During my ministry, I have served in cooperation with many denominations, organizations and international ministries. I have traveled to, served, and taught in 22 European and North American countries. My life journey has always helped me to live with a gift of acceptance from the Lord and bring diverse people together in unity. The Lord granted me an integrated and synthesized European and American perspective and global ministry experience, and I trust that this will provide a powerful intercultural and multilingual facet to the VCC.

At this time, my highest priority is to get to know my new friends and learn the blessed history of the church. Then we would like to explore together where our spiritual and organizational conditions are located on the "*Map of the Lord*". We believe that it is important to understand where we come from, where we are going, how the society changed around us, what trends and



Continued on page 7

Vienna Connection - continued from page 6

directions apply to us and where those are whom we would like to reach. Above all the most vital is to understand what exactly the Lord wants us to do and what His vision for us is, because "*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.*" (Psalm 127:1a) Nevertheless, I see more and more that the VCC is one, loving family! This is our primary strength and we can build upon this great value! I have no doubt that our Lord's abundant grace is with us!

Please, keep the VCC in your prayers and we all wish you from Vienna a wonderful summer and many blessings from our Lord.

Yours in Christ, **Pastor Gábor**

Vienna Community Church: Young Adults

We, the Young adults of the Vienna Community Church, are a small but tightknit group of students, interns and young professionals of many nationalities. Although we are a small fraction of the VCC we like to think that we are strongly involved. Our members sing in the choir, help in Sunday school and even hold positions on the board. Sometimes we volunteer during the service, if travels are not hindering. Being given the opportunity to be so closely involved with the congregation is one of the aspects that brought us to and keeps us at the Vienna Community Church.

Using the Meeting Point for weekly meetings and dinners have given us a stability that allows us to become more established and grow. As many of us live alone or in dorms it has always been a joy to have a weekly dinner together. Cooking meals for more than just one, trying new recipes or sharing Grandma's best and sharing food was and remains a time for us to come together in fellowship and to support each other in life. I have seen the Young Adults grow from acquaintances to friends and have embraced this development fully. By having regular meetings in a central location I have also noticed that we meet more often on a private basis. Lunches after church and meeting with Young Adults for movies, soccer games and concerts have



become as much a part of life as going to university classes.

Prayer and Bible study have been expanding as well. As we started Bible study we are hoping to also start a better organized prayer group in the near future. It is always encouraging for me to hear my fellow young adults speak about what God has done and is doing in their lives. As an active group who seek the Lord in our lives and especially in a time where our faith is often challenged, I have found a solid group of friends to turn to for advice and encouragement in the Young Adults. Through Bible study we have expanded our borders beyond our core group and thoroughly enjoy having an opportunity to get to know all members of the VCC. Sharing in life experience, knowledge and friendship have tethered us even stronger to the community at the VCC.



Vaclav Kroupar at Bible Study

We have grown in friendship, in fellowship and in Christ. It is an absolute joy to see these developments and to be a part of them. Although we are a small portion of the congregation the past year has shown us that we too are a driving force in the community. This newly found confidence of the Young Adults is one I wish to carry on into the future.



Alice Wanner and Katrin Karschart at a soccer game

Alice Wanner

Radical Anabaptist Women Rock Sixteenth-Century Austria

Next year marks the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation. Austria was once a hotbed of radical church reformation protest. The Anabaptist movement, which has often been characterized by historians as extreme, was part of the Protestant movement and particularly strong in Austria. Why were Anabaptists considered extreme? They did not believe in infant baptism. They argued against church and state alliances and they refused to bear the sword or swear oaths of allegiance. In Austria, some leaders had been a part of the Peasant's War and they advocated a "community of goods." Those who joined the small groups of believers were expected to donate all their worldly possessions to the group. The direct spiritual descendants of the Anabaptists are today's Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites.

Historians are uncovering the women's history of Anabaptism in Austria and finding that women provided much leadership in the early days of the movement.

Information on women in Austrian Anabaptism comes from the work done by Grete Mecenseffy. Mecenseffy was an Austrian historian, born in Vienna. A prolific and highly esteemed historian, she produced over 138 books and articles. In the second half of her life she devoted herself to the Anabaptist movement in Austria. By 1972, she translated all the Tirolean court records having to do with Anabaptist interrogations and sentencing. The Hapsburg court system kept excellent records. These records detail women's testimonies, court interrogations and sentences, which involved punishments ranging from confiscation of property to exile and even death. Mecenseffy's translated court records are the primary sources for the recent research.

Historians have found that women in Austria were more active in leadership roles than their counterparts in Lutheran and Reformed churches and some historians have argued that women in Hapsburg lands were more active than women in other German-speaking territories such as Switzerland and Germany.

Women comprised almost ½ (46%) of the persons brought into courtrooms for questioning. Compare this to the Lutherans and Reformed churches where only 6% of those brought in for questioning were women. Over 40% of the martyrs, or those who were killed by the ruling magistrates of the day were women. To quote historians C. Arnold Snyder and Linda Huebert Hecht,

"They [women] made up almost half the documented Anabaptist membership (that is, members who were arrested) in the earliest phase of the movement and were extremely active in missionizing and proselytizing, particularly through their networks of family and friends."



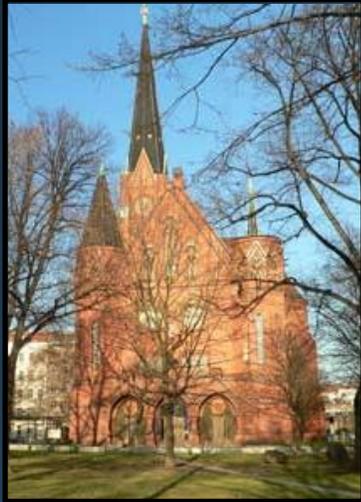
To illustrate and explain this history, women's historian, Kimberly D. Schmidt, presented a lecture with slides in which she summarized the work of several historians whose research focus has been the experience of Anabaptist women in Hapsburg lands.



A professor of history from Eastern Mennonite University, Schmidt is on sabbatical in Vienna and attends the Vienna Community Church and the Mennonite Friekirche in Vienna.

Next year, she will lead a six-week study-tour for EMU students, the focus of which will be Anabaptist women and peasants in the Reformation. She can be reached at kimberly.schmidt@emu.edu.

The Berlin Connection



www.americanchurchberlin.de

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.
Romans 14:19

One of my most favorite and challenging portions of Scripture is Romans 14. I am attracted by the unabashed generosity of spirit found therein. I am also challenged to have that same confidence in God's grace and openness to embrace the diverse ways that followers of Christ live out the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul reminds us of our complete freedom in the gospel, but at the same time balances it with the needs of the community. Paul will often call us to be about using our manifold gifts of the Spirit to build one another up and the community.

At its core I always have the same feeling about the work of the AFCU. Our ministries and settings in Vienna, Paris, and Berlin are diverse, but we pray that it is the same Lord we serve and the same Spirit that directs us. I was told by my predecessor that the members of the AFCU Board were some of the greatest saints to be found. It is true. Perhaps these saints have their own individual foibles, but as a whole the goal of supporting

and sustaining our international ministries is at the heart of the board's work. This is done in the context of serving and being active in their individual home congregations. The generosity of spirit that occurs when the AFCU board meets is infectious and spills over into my life and the lives of the people that we at the American Church in Berlin serve.

The AFCU Board meeting this spring was held at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. This is the church that AFCU board members Carol and Russ McNaughton attend. They made sure to invite their senior pastor, Rev. Tom Grevlos, to give a greeting to the members of the board. In speaking with him, I learned that he was traveling with a group from his church to visit the Luther sites of the Protestant Reformation at the beginning of May. I was mindful of the support that Shepherd of the Hills has given our congregation over the years, and wanted to find an appropriate way to thank them. Pastor Grevlos commented that they would be traveling from Berlin to the south of Germany early on a Sunday morning, but perhaps they could swing by our church on their way out of town for a brief prayer service. We stayed in contact with one another and it came to fruition. On a sunny Mother's Day Sunday morning we were able to welcome the group from Shepherd of the Hills, and since the hour was early and they needed to get on the road, held a brief worship service. It was a pity that the group could not stay for the main worship service, but representatives of our congregational leadership were present to talk about our ministry and offer thanksgiving for our partnership in the Gospel. The group also brought a gift of support to help us as we host an international internship program this year for pastoral leadership. Although we will be the host site, it is a concrete example of how together we build up the body of Christ. We pray that the internship program will bless the church for years to come.

There are constant reminders around us of the partnership and solidarity we share in ministry with others. This past Friday as the van was being unloaded with the donations from various businesses in the community for the food distribution program, Laib & Seele, that we host, I was cognizant of the



Continued on page 10

The Berlin Connection, *continued from page 9*



side of the van that bears witness to partners in ministry. At the bottom of the van side panel is Augsburg Lutheran Church. This is also a community in Christ that has supported ACB in significant ways over the years. In fact, it was the encouragement of AFCU board members, Don & Kathie Eppert, that emboldened us to consider hosting an international internship. They promised once again to go back to their congregation, Augsburg Lutheran Church, to ask for support of the internship program. Not too long after the Shepherd of the Hills visit, we received a letter with a significant financial gift that has helped us secure the necessary funding for the internship program.

I want to acknowledge the great generosity of spirit that the AFCU board generates and bear witness to how it overflows into the programs and daily life of our congregation and its ministry. I highlighted two communities who have recently made an impact on our ministry, but they are only representative of the many gifts we receive through the friends and members of the AFCU. We truly could not accomplish all the things we do, nor bear witness to the saving grace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ without your prayers, financial gifts, and ardent advocacy on our behalf. It is my privilege to join with you in our mutual ministry for the upbuilding of the world-wide church of Christ.

With heartfelt thanksgiving,

Pastor Steve



Michael Fritz, ACB tour leader.



AFCU Berlin Committee

Front row: Don Krump, Sharon Krump, Margit Coltvet, Marcia Rislov. 2nd row: Pastor Steve Kienberger, Pastor Ben Coltvet, Ken Rislov.

Germany's Vegetable King of Spring: White Asparagus

It's springtime in Germany and that means one thing, it's **Spargelzeit** (literally, "asparagus time or season"). Asparagus season is eagerly anticipated, especially in the northern part of Germany, and the season begins around the end of April and lasts until June 24, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, and the official beginning of summer. Most people in the United States only know the green variety of asparagus. The Germans, however, go crazy at this time of year over their white asparagus. It is featured in most restaurants and many farming communities have asparagus festivals. It starts out very low in calories, but it is often served with a hollandaise sauce and beer or white wine as a beverage, so goodbye to the low calorie count.



Growing white asparagus is still a labor intensive endeavor, even though modern machinery has eased the task. Asparagus roots need a minimum of three years before they yield the tender white variety that is desired. To



obtain white asparagus the plant must have little to no light at all, even moonlight can discolor the asparagus. This is why it is also known as the "vampire of the vegetable world." The asparagus stalks grow buried under mounds of earth like hidden treasure. If you stand in an asparagus field you see only mounded rows of earth. Just as the tips poke out from the mounded soil the asparagus stalks are harvested. The harvest is on many farms still accomplished by hand.

On May 28, 2016 ACB-members met in front of Potsdam-Hbf. (main train station) to go by bus to "Klaistow – Spargelhof" that is located 35 km southwest of Potsdam. Klaistow and the nearby Beelitz are the centers in the German State of Brandenburg, where asparagus is being cultivated ("Beelitzer Spargel" is known throughout the region).

At "Klaistow-Spargelhof" we visited the asparagus-processing plant and got to experience the harvest from the field -by cleaning, cutting, peeling and packing up into boxes- to the consumer. You'll also find restaurants where all kinds of asparagus meals are being served. Our group from ACB ended our tour of the processing plant



by enjoying a meal of freshly harvested asparagus. At different stores in town handcrafts as well as agricultural products like strawberries, other fruits, jams, vegetables and of course wonderful locally grown white asparagus.

Micahel Fritz
ACB Outings Coordinator

The Paris Connection



www.acparis.org

June 2016

Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

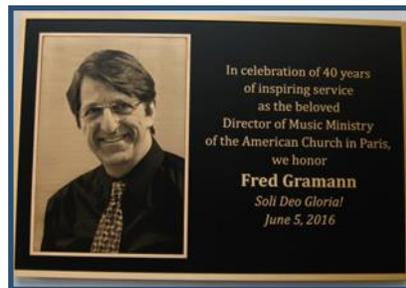
Amidst heavy rainfall, demonstrations and pesky strikes, it's been a season of celebration here at the American Church in Paris these past weeks. The first big news is that in a packed sanctuary, we officially installed the Rev. Timothy R. Vance as the Associate Pastor of Congregational Ministries. Tim is joined by his lovely wife, Maija and their three children, Noah (9), Sophia (6), and Ezra (2). His favorite Bible verses are Micah 6:8 and Acts 17:28.



Secondly, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of Fred Gramann as our Director of Music Ministry. It was a glorious weekend with the Raleigh Ringers as our guest musicians from North Carolina, as well as numerous other out-of-town guests and musicians whose lives have been touched by The Living Legend!

Fred has been serving the church for 40 years now, but what is most amazing to me is how he has continued to thrive in his leadership and productivity and developed the music ministry of the church over those years. Not a week goes by where I don't experience the sheer joy and inspiration of the beauty of our music ministry during Sunday worship, nor does a week go by where I don't hear a visitor commenting on the excellence of our music ministry that is so central to our service of worship to God.

Among his many accomplishments as the Director of Music Ministry, Fred has played the organ for weekly Sunday worship services (over 2,800 services including 9:00 and 11:00) and countless weddings and memorial services; led the campaign to raise funds and have the beautiful *Beckerath* organ built that graces our sanctuary; directed the adult vocal choir; founded and directs professional collection of bells; sings musicians and other worship leaders; organized and directed numerous but also for other organizations of the organ and the Steinway piano world to be the guest director at given his share of children's sermons; music for organ, vocal and bell choirs! and are much appreciated. Another way are honoring Fred is to place a bronze plaque on the back wall of the chapel so that every day Fred walks by it in the years to come he will be reminded how much we love and appreciate him and his ministry. Do come visit the church and enjoy seeing this tribute to Fred!



As we move into the summer months, the new Council will be going on retreat the same weekend as the Summer Spiritual Retreat for other congregation members. We trust the Holy Spirit will show up in both places! Please pray for the Council as we are excited about the new leadership team now in place and for some time away to rest in worship and prayer and discussion together to begin discerning where God is leading us as a church. We will be focusing on is Jeremiah 29:7, "But seek the *shalom* of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its *shalom* you will find your welfare." We believe we are called to explore and embody in fresh ways God's *shalom* for Paris that will bless many in the coming year. On behalf of the entire congregation, thank you for your faithful presence, prayers and financial support.

In Christ,

Congratulations Fred!

Fred Gramann's 40th anniversary celebration at the American Church in Paris was a true outpouring of both love and musical talent. Former members of the church and the choir showed up in great numbers to honor this extraordinary man of all seasons.

On Thursday, the Raleigh Ringers, a community-based bell choir with whom Fred has had a 25-year creative musical relationship arrived. They perform his work, and he has lovingly donated some pieces to their repertoire. Ben Gramann, Fred's son, had been invited as a guest (originally planned as a surprise) to the weekend so both Nancy and Fred were just thrilled to have him home! (He was born in Paris after Fred was already the Music Director.)

There was a Meet and Greet primarily for out-of-towners Friday evening. It turned out to be an ambitious meal-scrumptious hors d'oeuvres followed by a sit down dinner. It felt like a college reunion. Several former ministers were there: Carol Simpson and Lew Poag, among them.

Saturday evening there was a gala concert designed and orchestrated by Fred, showcasing the many talents within the church and Paris, including a thrilling eight-hands piano piece: Valse de Faust. The Raleigh Ringers had their first opportunity to perform in Paris in 20 years, thrilling the audience with their virtuosity. An amazing, joyful group of very talented children, Le Choeur d'Enfants Sotto Voce, founded by a former ACP choir member Scott Alan Prouty, completed the Saturday offering.



Following the concert, there was a "Forty Cakes for Forty Years"

reception, with a cake for each of the forty years!

Sunday's church service continued the celebration of Fred's leadership with Pastor Scott Herr offering a moving tribute to Fred, citing a David Brooks Op-Ed column this past week which looked at the difference between beautiful and sublime. Something beautiful is looking at a gorgeous peony whose petals are starting to open, welcoming us to enjoy its luscious fullness.



Sublime is looking at

a massive field of flowers whose colors and textures lift our hearts and give us spiritual renewal. Fred's 40 years of music, vitality and steadfast dedication and love is truly sublime.

During the sermon, Fred's endearing impish ways shone forth. When Scott noted that Fred was shy and a behind the scenes kind of guy, Fred peaked above the organ screen, smiled, and gave a fluttering wave.

A stunning plaque with Fred's smiling face shining on it was unveiled as a tribute to his extraordinary contribution to ACP.

After the church service, loving current and former church members and visitors paid tribute to Fred and Nancy, beginning with a Flash Mob rendition of "We love you Fred". A very funny skit was performed, in which several of



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Congratulations Fred *continued from page 13*

Fred's more amusing emails to his choir members were commemorated, set to music by Tom Johnson, and passionately sung by the choir. Jane Kendall presented Fred with a plaque from the AFCU thanking him for his "forty years of music, and sending him forty years of love."

Sunday evening there was a wine and cheese reception followed by a rousing concert by the Raleigh Ringers, who, more than once thanked Fred for his inspiration, and his stunning music, and ACP's generosity in sharing Fred with the world.

The weekend was an emotional and spiritual journey for all who could participate.

Jane Kendall

AFCU Development Co-Chair



Photos by Mark Primmer

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