



Spring 2017

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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. Focusing primarily on alumni and friends of these churches, the AFCU manages endowment funds to support these churches, stimulates donations to grow these funds, and offers consultation and direct support to assist these churches in their operations. Please visit [www.afcubridge.org](http://www.afcubridge.org) for more information.

## President's Message

Dear Friends,

As I begin my letter today, I am reminded of a verse from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. "We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers, constantly bearing in mind your faith and labor of love and steadfastness in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Yes, thank you! Thank you for your prayers and generous contributions to the AFCU and the three European churches that we support.

Some recent highlights of improvements that your support have made possible include: 1. significant security improvements and a new accessibility lift for people with disabilities at the American church in Paris, 2. the completion of a heated conference room and badly needed upgraded restrooms at the American church in Berlin, and 3. a new meeting point for the Vienna Community Church that now permits the congregation to have its own facility for special services, social events, and meetings.

All of these projects are critical to the health and growth of these congregations and have been made possible by strong leadership in the churches and your generosity. Again.....Thank you!

The three European churches play serious roles in their communities and are beacons of light in furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ. For example, approximately 1500 people attended the Christmas Eve service at the ACP. The ACP also sponsors important "Thurber" lectures featuring world renowned speakers, and provides numerous other programs for the English-speaking Paris community. In Berlin, the ACB again participated in the annual Berliner DOM Christmas Caroling service at the large Berliner Dom cathedral, a program that ACB helped to organize 24 years ago. Vienna continues to operate "Project Centipede," supporting orphans in Romania and several children's programs in South India.

*Continued on page 2*



Have you moved recently? Please update your contact information with us by sending an email to

[AFCUeditor@afcubridge.org](mailto: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*

These are only a few examples of how the churches support their congregation and communities as well as maintaining a missional focus of serving others in need. Be sure to check out the websites of the individual churches and read forward in this edition of "The Bridge" to read more about what is happening in them.

The year 2017 is a very special year for protestant churches around the world since it is the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation that was begun in Germany by Martin Luther in 1517. ACB Pastor Steve Kienberger, from the last edition of "The Bridge," commented that he was invited to attend the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Thomas, U. S. Virgin Islands, where he previously served. He stated, "This predominantly West Indian congregation attests to the global reach of the Reformation and the diverse peoples and cultures that are part of the Holy Spirit's call to renew and reform the Church, not only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but also in our day and age." Our challenge today is to continue to fulfill Christ's command to bring the Gospel to all nations and peoples.

The AFCU is now focused on planning for our annual board and development meetings to be held in Vienna, Austria during May 12-14, 2017. We are eager to fellowship with the VCC community, and to see and assemble in their new Meeting Point. We thank the VCC team for helping to organize the meeting.

I invite you to attend the American churches when visiting Berlin, Paris, and Vienna to experience firsthand their commitment to the gospel. Be a FRIEND by supporting the churches with your prayers and financial support. When giving through the AFCU your gifts are tax-deductible. Also, if you have the desire to continue serving these churches with your time and talent after returning to your home country, please contact me or another member of the AFCU Board. We always welcome new volunteers!

May God bless you and your steadfast love.

In Christ,



Ted Ziemann  
AFCU President

P.S. Be sure to check out the new AFCU website at [www.AFCUbridge.org](http://www.AFCUbridge.org) and page around to see new features.

## Creating a Charitable Legacy (With Tax Benefits Now!)

### Supporters of Our Three Beloved Churches:

In our last issue of *The Bridge*, we posted an article covering the services of the InFaith Community Foundation (<https://www.infaithfound.org>) based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

InFaith is a faith-based organization committed to offering personalized giving opportunities to individuals, families, churches, organizations, etc. In this issue, I'd like to relay our experience working with InFaith to begin our "Donor Advised Fund."

For decades, my wife and I knew we wanted to leave a portion of our acquired assets to various charities including the three churches supported by the American & Foreign Christian Union. We set aside blocks of mutual funds and stocks to be received by churches and other charities upon our death, thus avoiding potential inheritance liabilities to our living heirs. It wasn't until we connected with InFaith did we realize we could be receiving a tax deduction from these donations while still alive. InFaith's cordial and helpful staff efficiently walked us through the procedures to establish our

Donor Advised Fund. We began in 2016 by transferring a block of assets (mutual funds) to our new InFaith fund and immediately realized a tax deduction for the full donation, even though these funds will not go to the designated church until the time of our deaths. In the meantime, these funds grow and are constantly monitored. The results of InFaith's supervision has certainly outpaced where the assets were in years past. Furthermore, the tax deduction received can be used over the next five years if not able to use it all this year. Our Donor Advised Fund remains flexible, meaning we can add or take away charitable 501-C3 designees, adjust amounts to each and select invested instruments. We could not be more pleased with InFaith's service. We highly recommend working with InFaith Community Foundation to fulfill your charitable giving goals, no matter the size.



AFCU Development Committee Co-Chair

## The Heritage Society

The AFCU Heritage Society was founded 17 years ago to encourage supporters of our partner churches (the American Church in Paris, the American Church in Berlin, or the Vienna Community Church) to include them in their estate plans. To date we can report that over 50 individuals have reported they have made plans to support one or more of these churches in their estate plan.

For many, the contribution of a gift as part of an estate plan represents a significant decision on the part of the donor. This gift may represent many years of a lifetime of savings on the part of the donor. The care used by donors to accumulate these funds is very much appreciated and is followed on by investment care by the AFCU.

Separate endowment funds have been set up to support each of our partner churches. These receive professional management at U. S. Trust. Furthermore, the AFCU Board has several experienced financial professionals who oversee the activities of U. S. Trust. In this way we try to insure that AFCU funds are being prudently managed.

How are people donating to the AFCU in their estate plan? As you probably know there are many vehicles

that are used when planning for an estate distribution. Examples include direct bequests from wills or trusts, donations from retirement plan assets, charitable gift annuities, charitable lead trusts, life insurance policies, and many other possibilities.

For the most part donors have indicated that their bequests to the AFCU will be specific amounts as stated in their will. A few have indicated their bequest will be a percentage of their IRA Retirement account. Donor advised funds and life insurance policies are also represented.

If you would like to take steps for future gifting as part of your estate plan, please contact us at our e-mail address: [afcuh heritage@afcubridge.org](mailto:afcuh heritage@afcubridge.org).



*Robert DeLuryea*  
Heritage Society

## 2016 Donor List

The American & Foreign Christian Union would like to thank all of those who made donations in support of our ministries during 2016. Your support is valuable to the ministries we serve: The American Church in Paris, The American Church in Berlin, and the Vienna Community Church.

Ben & Marie-Christine Aller  
Jim & Marilyn Ault  
Gilbert & Elenor Austin  
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Katherine J Dierker  
Bruce & Christine Digby  
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Tom & Gail Duggan

*Continued on page 4*

## 2016 Donor List, *continued from page 3*

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During January 2017 donor statements were mailed to all those for whom we have current addresses. If you made a donation during 2016 and your name does not appear on the above list and/or you have not received a year end giving statement, kindly contact the Development Committee Chair, Russ McNaughton, at [russmacton@aol.com](mailto:russmacton@aol.com).



## The Vienna Connection



[www.viennacommunitychurch.com](http://www.viennacommunitychurch.com)

### Witnessing the Lord's Blessings in Vienna!

After six months of serving the congregation of the Vienna Community Church, I am delighted and humbled by the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in our church life! Our time together has been an uplifting, exciting and moving ministry for all of us, a time of adjusting, a time of building our activity together, and a time of rejoicing with the Lord! I am thankful to Him, and to all the members and ALUMNI of our church, because we have taken a huge step forward together, and I cannot even count all the blessings and miracles that have been given to us!

All members and leaders have served tirelessly and cooperatively, always seeing the big picture ahead of us. We have received a new vision statement from the Lord which guides us towards our future: *"We Praise God by Reaching People for Christ!"* As a result, at the end of November we welcomed ten new members and their children into our church family. Personally, through the congregation, I have new friends and coworkers, a suitable home

and all that we need now and for the future. I never seen a church so much united in our plans for the future and having no conflicts or power games, a church family where our relationship and ministry are overwhelmingly characterized by trust, support, prayers and willingness. We have a promising future in Jesus Christ, a wonderful new year ahead of us!

Since God speaks to us in many ways, one new focus of attention at the church is to sense His presence and hear His voice through praise songs and music. Our church is well known for its music, and praise brings us instant attention, soothing comfort, excitement, and passion as it opens our hearts and lifts our spirits before the Lord. We understand that it is completely different to performance oriented secular music and therefore we align our singing and music with God's Vision for His church. Our primary goal is to praise the Lord and to help people to be engaged in worship. Our newly formed Praise Band would like to follow exactly this vision as an evangelical ministry, guided by Biblical principles and Kingdom objectives as we reach out in the community.

Worship is the centre of our life. As a congregation, we praise God in unity, whether we are old and young, whether our tastes are traditional or contemporary, whether we are church members or newcomers. We would like to grow in faith, in music, in singing and praise together as a family and as disciples of Jesus and move in on an unlimited field of miracles. Let us *"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth."* (Psalm 96:1)



**2016 VCC New Members**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to all of our ALUMNI. Please keep us in your prayers as we keep you in our prayers as well. Here in Vienna we are looking forward to continuing to serve together with you and to building up our beloved church with the Lord's help! God's blessings be with you all!

Yours in Christ, **Pastor Gábor**

## Hosting the AFCU Spring Meeting in Vienna



Here in Vienna we are enjoying making plans to welcome members of the AFCU for its Spring Meeting on 12 and 13 May. Although the meeting itself will be those two days only, what would a visit to Vienna be without a few extracurricular activities spilling over to the previous and following day? Thus, we are looking forward to welcoming participants at a reception on Thursday evening, and hope that many will stay for our Sunday service.

Perhaps the main impetus for our invitation to host the meeting arose from the acquisition of our new Meeting Point, with generous support by several AFCU members supplementing that of our own members. Although this important development occurred only two years ago, it is hard now for our VCC congregation to imagine church life without our own premises and the wide range of activities that they facilitate, many of which are mentioned by our Moderator, Mary Geissler, in this issue. A few of our AFCU friends who have been to Vienna recently have visited the Meeting Point, and we are proud to be able to use it in May to host the forthcoming gathering.

Rosalind Laimer and I are assisting the Board in coordinating the planning. Early on we established good contact with Ted Ziemann and other key AFCU friends familiar with Vienna, and progress is well advanced. The schedule includes dinner at good Viennese eateries, and before-dinner drinks at my home Friday evening. A special feature will be Rainer's walking tour "From Schwedenplatz to Karlsplatz" after the meeting closes on Saturday. As Mary rightly mentioned, Rainer is known for conducting excellent tours, greatly enhanced by his encyclopaedic knowledge of history.

For those able to stay long enough, we will visit a "Heuriger" Sunday evening, where we can enjoy food from a typical Heuriger buffet washed down with good local wine. Hard to believe that this international capital has its very own vineyards within the city limits, and the wine they offer can certainly hold its own!

We'd like to remind everybody that May is a busy month in Austria, so if you haven't already booked your hotel, now is the time to do so. You will find a warm welcome awaiting you here in Vienna!

**Anne Storey**

Fellowship Chair



## Christmas at the Vienna Community Church 2016



*Joseph & Mary*



*Three Kings & STAR*

# Know From Whence You Came

## VCC in the Making

*"Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go."\**

This is Part II of a three part series about the VCC. In my first article, I described the founding of the VCC in 1957. In Part II, you will be able to read the letter sent by VCC's first permanent pastor, Prof. Dr. Alexander McKelway, on the occasion of VCC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, in which he outlined his efforts to lead the VCC to develop its identity as an ecumenical Protestant church in Austria through its engagement in the community, and creation of many traditions over the years that are relevant to its mission as an international, inter denominational and ecumenical church.

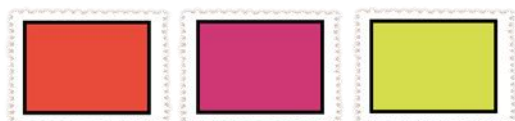


### From Whence We Came

The early years of VCC were spent building relationships both inside and outside of the Church. Interestingly, a feature of our early services was that it was held in both English and German. We were fortunate that Pastor

McKelway memorialized his time and his many ups and downs as VCC's first permanent pastor in his letter of 15 February 1978. He noted: "From 1958 to 1960 I learned how to be a pastor and the congregation learned how to be a church." On the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2005, the Vienna Community Church was recognized as an official congregation under the auspices of the Reformed Church in Austria. This act paved the way for the VCC to purchase the Meeting Point in 2014 and provided the opportunity for the VCC to expand its ministry and fellowship activities.

### TOMBOLA/RAFFLE PRIZES



### FESTIVAL OF THE SENSES

ART MUSIC & GOURMET

DONATION OF €5 = 1 RAFFLE TICKET

DONATION OF €10 = 3 RAFFLE TICKETS

### VCC Traditions

Many traditions from earlier years have come and gone, such as Bill's Book Table, the Pumpkin Pie Fest to commemorate the U.S. Thanksgiving in which the Thanksgiving Proclamation was read by the bilateral U.S. Ambassador, or the VCC Varied Cultures Celebration, a multi-cultural fundraiser. In their footsteps, other new activities were started, such as the **Festival of the Senses** (a gourmet festival), the Christmas Potluck, and Film Night held at the VCC Meeting Point.

A constant at the VCC is always music: music that uplifts and inspires our Sunday Worship Services and other aspects of VCC life. The music comes from a variety of sources, such as the VCC's own choir or guest choirs, as well as singers and instrumentalists from the Church, as well as, guest singers and musicians. Also, there are opportunities to listen to music through specially organized concerts from our extremely talented musicians, their friends and colleagues. Anne Peschek, who is a former VCC Choir Director and a member for over 40 years, awards a 500 Euro stipend to a



*Anne Peschek, former VCC Choir Director, at the piano forte during a **Wienerwald Kammerensemble** concert which she directed.*

*Continued on page 8*





Sandra Nel after her ***Being Loved*** fundraising concert on 26 November 2016.

musician who has made an outstanding contribution to music at the VCC in a particular year. Under the Choir Director, Kristor Hustad (son of Helen and Pastor Jack Hustad), the *Collegium Dorotheum* was founded to perform sacred music; Johan Botha sang regularly at VCC's Worship services when he was in Vienna, as well as being the featured singer at a VCC Mother's Day Concert and other fundraising events for the VCC; and, just recently, Sandra Nel (soprano), the VCC Music Chair, introduced her new CD and held a fundraising concert, *Being Loved*. In which eighty percent of the proceeds were donated to the VCC, which proceeds, in turn, were used to enhance VCC's music capability.

### Into the Future

With an overview of our past, the last article in this series that is slated to be published in the Summer of 2017 will describe our efforts to seek and follow God's plan for the VCC into the future and how the Meeting Point is playing an integral part in strengthening the bonds of fellowship and allowing VCC to assist in fulfilling its mission.

The source for the information on Pastor McKelway was taken from *The Vienna Community Church, International Ecumenical Life in Vienna*, painstakingly researched and written by VCC members Heinz and Louise Pickart to celebrate VCC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007.

*\*Quote attributed to James Baldwin, American novelist, essayist, playwright, poet, and social critic*



**Mickela Moore**  
Property Chair and acting Publicity Chair

### More Christmas at the Vienna Community Church 2016



Matasushita Family lighting the  
Fourth Advent Candle

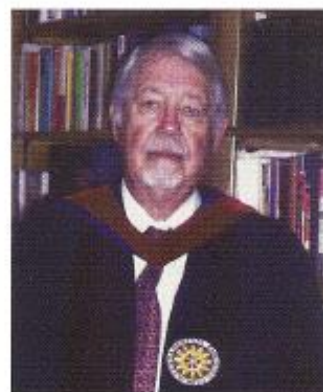


Little Angels



## Letter from Prof. Dr. Alexexander McKelway

Prof. Dr. Alexander McKelway, the first Minister of the Vienna Community Church, recalls the founding month in a letter to the congregation.  
10-12-07 10:42 FROM: 8044368416 TO: 0114317742543



**DAVIDSON COLLEGE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION**  
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To the Minister, Congregation and other Friends  
of the Vienna Community Church  
February 15, 1978

Dear Friends

I appreciate very much your Invitation to attend the anniversary celebration of our first pastorate, and I am sorry that I cannot be with you.

It came as something of a shock to be reminded that twenty years have passed since I arrived in Vienna to take up a work which was to mean so much to me. I believe I must have preached my first sermon as pastor in late February or March of 1958, but the actual service of installation was not until June 22nd. I have dug from my files a copy of that service, and looking at the long list of clergy participating, have been reminded of many old friends. I understand that Pfr. Abrahamowicz and Prof. Dantine are still in Vienna, and that Herr Schmidt and his wife are still serving the church. To them and perhaps others, I send my warmest greetings.

The Community Church has always been a transient congregation, and I was not surprised, when I visited in 1970, to find not a single member left from the years of my service. Such a congregation cannot stay in touch with its past, so you might be interested in my recollections of the beginning that you are celebrating.

As you know, our church was an outgrowth of services held in a military chapel during the allied occupation of Vienna. When the troops were with drawn diplomats and their families, students, and other English-speaking Protestants continued to meet for Sunday - school and preaching services which were conducted by various English and American clergymen in Vienna.

Pastor Theodor Althof, the American director of the Lutheran refugee program in Austria, gave much leadership to the congregation in the interim between the end of the occupation and the founding of the Vienna Community Church. In the summer of 1957 the American National Council of Churches Overseas Churches Division assisted in preliminary steps towards organization, and in the fall the congregation began to look for a full-time minister. The pulpit committee wrote to theological faculties in various European universities asking for volunteers to come to Vienna to preach. When I responded to that invitation I knew nothing of the church, nor even that they were seeking a minister.

After my first visit sermon in Vienna, members of the Church Board began to discuss with me the possibility of becoming the Church's first pastor.

Having just begun a program of doctoral study in Basel, I was reluctant to interrupt my study, but with the understanding that I would stay in Vienna only for two years, and with the permission of my teacher, Prof. Karl Barth, I agreed, and moved there in late February or early March of 1958.

While I had served congregations in West Virginia and Florida during the summer of my seminary years, I had never really served as the permanent minister of a church, so both the congregation and I were without experience in the enterprise we were undertaking.

It was a very apprehensive 26 year-old theological student who arrived alone in Vienna to take up a job which was as unique and strange as it was challenging. Fortunately, the diplomatic members (I remember especially the Cushings and the Yoemans) gave me good advice and I was able to avoid some of the pitfalls of the situation. In the first months of my pastorate we had to make some fundamental decisions about the nature of this church.

*Continued on page 10*

First, it must serve the needs of the families. So we organized a church school, congregational social life, and a form of worship that could serve the whole membership -- from the Baptists to Episcopalians. A Church Constitution was written and the election and duties of church officers established. An office was set up in the Reformed Church, and pastoral services of visiting and counselling were begun. Secondly, the church had to meet the needs of the students who attended. Since most of those were musicians, we organized a choir, and began church concerts where they could perform. We also began Sunday-evening discussion groups, and created a social context in which friendships (and even marriages!) were formed which still continue today.

Thirdly, the church had to serve the many tourists who visit Vienna, especially in summer. We began a program of publicity which resulted in increased attendance by transients and a more effective ministry to their needs. We also began the Sunday morning coffee hour, where English-speaking residents and visitors could meet. This proved very popular, and I imagine is still going on. Finally, the church had to develop good relations with its host, the Austrian Reformed Church, and especially the congregation and pastors of the Dorotheergasse. Without the generous hospitality of that congregation, our church could not have been located in the city center, and thus could not have served as wide a constituency. In spite of the cultural, theological and liturgical differences between our congregations we were able to achieve the accommodations needed on both sides, and foundations of friendship and understanding were laid which for twenty years now have supported this partnership.

Beyond the Dorotheergasse we established relations with other Protestant churches, and through Bishop May of the Lutheran Church contacts were established with the Catholic Church as well.

After the initial months of organization and ecumenical outreach, we celebrated the beginning of our church's work with the service of installation which you are now observing. In keeping with our ecumenical character, more than twenty clergy from nine or ten different denominations participated in the service. Moreover, a number of laypersons from these churches attended, so that the church was quite full. Our organist, Ingeline Gallwitz, provided excellent music for the occasion. (Miss Gallwitz subsequently married one of our members, and now lives in Pennsylvania.) This service was bilingual in all of its parts and proved to be an auspicious beginning of our work in Vienna.

From 1958 to 1960 I learned how to be a pastor and the congregation learned how to be a church. There were many crises and failures, but for me they were wonderful years of growth and unique experience. One of the student members, a young lady from San Francisco who came to Vienna to study the piano, became my wife, and other friendships have remained strong through the years. After two years of work establishing the church, I returned to my doctoral studies in Basel. Those were completed in 1963, and I returned with my wife to the United States. I spent two years at Dartmouth College and since 1965 have taught theology at Davidson.

While in Europe in 1970 we returned to Vienna with our three sons, and I had the pleasure of preaching once again from the high pulpit in the Dorotheergasse. Over the years we have had many encouraging reports of the life and work of the Vienna congregation, and scarcely a week goes by that we are not reminded of the church and the city of Vienna.

Because I was your first pastor and you were my first church, I have always had proprietary feelings toward the Vienna Community Church. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its beginning I would like to express my appreciation for the privilege of being associated with this work. I am thankful for the excitement, challenge, and friendships of the years of my service there, and that over the years others have built well on what we began. It is my hope and prayer that our church will continue to serve the needs of English-speaking Christians in Vienna, and that the relationship with our Austrian hosts will deepen and grow for our mutual benefit. In a small but important way the Vienna Community Church expresses the unity of life and worship that ought to characterize the whole Christian family. The witness of this congregation has touched the lives of thousands of members and guests over the years, and I believe it will continue to do so far a long time to come.

My wife and I look forward to the time when we can worship with our congregation once again, and wish for you continuing success in the service of Christ and his Church.

Alexander J. McKelway



## The Berlin Connection



[www.americanchurchberlin.de](http://www.americanchurchberlin.de)

*"You are the God who sees me."*

Genesis 16:13

How do you host over 100,000 guests to your city in the space of three days? Welcome to Berlin this year from May 24-27, 2017 as the capital of Germany plays host to the Protestant Church festival known as *Kirchentag*. *Kirchentag* is a festival that occurs every two years and is hosted by various cities throughout Germany. This year the main focus of *Kirchentag* will be in Berlin. Since it is also the year of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, however, the closing worship will be held just one hour to the south in the town of Wittenberg where almost 500 years ago on October 31, 1517 Luther nailed his 95 theses on the Castle Church door of that university town. This invitation to debate certain church practices is thought to give rise to the Protestant Reformation in Germany. The logistics of moving ca. 140,000 people from Berlin to Wittenberg (200,000 total expected) for the closing worship is mind boggling, but the German church leaders seem surprisingly confident in their ability.

The American Church in Berlin will be deeply involved in the events of this church festival. We have been asked to lead one of the many opening worship events on Thursday, May 24, for the first day of *Kirchentag*. That same day at the Evening of Encounter, we will have an interactive booth at one of the largest street festivals ever, on Unter den Linden, Berlin's main street leading from the Brandenburg Gate to Alexanderplatz. We will be able to introduce our congregation and its international ministry to the thousands of guests attending this church festival. Due to the flexibility and new sound system in the church (made possible through the support of the AFCU), ACB has been chosen as a host site for various musical artists during the Berlin portion of the event, May 24-26, and the English language worship on Friday evening, May 25. We are excited and honored to play a part in such an amazing festival. Indeed, it is the fulfillment of our mission to welcome all people, serve our neighbors in Berlin, grow together in Christ Jesus, and celebrate God's amazing love.

The theme of this *Kirchentag* comes from Genesis 16:13. In this portion of scripture an angel of God comes to Hagar and tells her of the promised birth of her son, Ishmael. She responds that God is a God who sees us: <sup>13</sup> *She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me"* (NIV translation). The God who sees all creation (Genesis 1:31) and pronounces it "good" represents the kind of divine spiritual sight that each of us need. Being seen by God is at the foundation of humanity's dignity. Our God sees us and invites us to see and recognize one another as God's great diverse family. In the parish I served in Norway one of the members founded an organization by the name of "Sabona" that sought to give aid to poor rural communities in Zimbabwe. "Sabona" is the greeting that they give one another and it literally means "I see you," "I acknowledge your existence." To be seen, recognized, and called by name is at the heart of what it means to be human. This is also at the heart of God who sees into our hearts and knows us from the inside out. Being seen and acknowledged is also the beginning for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

In a profound way the support of the AFCU makes visible the work of our international ministries in Vienna, Paris, and Berlin. We are grateful to the AFCU and for the many gifts that we receive from the



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## The Berlin Connection, *continued from page 11*

members and friends of the AFCU. Your attention to our ministry, your recognition and acknowledgement of our existence makes possible the vital witness that we are able to provide to those who come into our fellowship and to our host countries. As we faithfully witness to God's love in Christ Jesus to the diverse family of God that constitutes our congregations a new way of seeing one another emerges; a new way of encountering the God who sees us and becomes visible through Christ's body in the world.

May the God become visible in Christ Jesus, our Lord, bless you this festive year, 2017!

**Pastor Steve Kienberger**



Life's most persistent  
and urgent question is:

**What are  
you doing  
for  
others?**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



We began this week with the commemoration of *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* and this week is filled with many more commemorations of past saint's and martyrs. *Antony of Egypt*, and *Pachomius* are both celebrated on Tuesday, January 17 as renewers of the church. Wednesday, January 18 is known as the *Confession of Peter*. The church remembers the apostle Peter's great acknowledgement of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thursday, January 19 is the feast day for *Henry, Bishop of Uppsala*, and patron saint of Finland who was martyred ca. 1156. Finally, on Saturday, January 21 the church commemorates *Agnes* as martyr, who died around 304. It is good to remember those who have lived and died as faithful witnesses. I am mindful of one of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s great sermons entitled "The Drum Major Instinct." King concluded the sermon by imagining his own funeral, downplaying his famous achievements and emphasizing his heart to do right.

"If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. (Yes) And every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize—that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four

hundred other awards—that's not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school. (Yes)

- I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. (Yes)
- I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody.
- I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. (Amen)
- I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. (Yes)
- And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. (Yes)
- I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. (Lord)
- I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. (Yes)"

I pray that our ancestors in faith would continue to inspire in us lives of service for others in Jesus' name.

*Pastor Steve*

## The Paris Connection



[www.acparis.org](http://www.acparis.org)

Dear Members and Friends of the ACP,

Warm greetings to you from a still cold and wintry Paris. It's been said that the only constant in life is change, and there has been quite a bit of change in recent months. In the midst of disorienting shifts in the political landscape in various countries, and closer to home changes in staff here at the ACP, Lamentations 3:19-26 has been on my mind: *"The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."*

I remember as a young boy in Lancaster Pennsylvania standing in worship with my grandmother and singing the famous hymn based on this verse, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." My grandmother took my little hand into her own, looked down at me and said, "Scott, this is my favourite hymn." It has been one of my favourites since then and has always been a source of inspiration and hope in transition times that are troubling or full of uncertainty.

Two other helpful quotes have emerged in recent weeks: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said at one of his SCLC conferences, "Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future!" and from a pastoral colleague: "Do not miss the opportunity in every crisis!"

In fact, even in these turbulent times, there are opportunities to experience God's faithfulness and love. For example, there are almost 60 people attending the current ALPHA course, and we had a tremendous start to the Thurber lectures with Rev. Cleve Tinsley IV and Dr. Matthew Russell (you can watch the video as a link is posted on our website), and the first Women's Gathering of the year with Alexia Rabé was a great success with over 50 women in attendance. *Serve the City* is up and running with new leadership in place, and we are looking forward to welcoming two new colleagues to serve as interim pastoral leadership for the Youth and Young Adults ministries.

Our theme verse for this year is "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 *shalom*..." (Jeremiah 29:7). The word *shalom* is often translated as peace, but has a much richer meaning than simply an absence of violence. It can be translated as "the way it's supposed to be," and implies health, flourishing, wholeness and generativity. Shalom is something to which we are called by God to pursue in the spheres of our personal lives, our relationships with others, and of course in the the larger societal and political relationships of our world.

At a recent reception I was able to meet one of the leaders of one of the *Alcoholics Anonymous* groups that meet at the ACP, and he shared the story that 30 years ago he was drinking a bottle of vodka a day. He walked into the Thurber Room for an AA meeting, and he said it was "a miracle." He has been sober and helping other to gain sobriety ever since. Two weeks ago I meet with two Muslim sheikhs and a rabbi to learn more about their experiences in France. The Rabbi, a friend, will be giving a lecture next month to share more about how God calls us to live together in peace from a Jewish perspective. And Professor Tariq Ramadan is coming over from *Oxford University* to speak about peace from an Islamic perspective.

It's been said, "the truth will set you free, but first it makes you mad." In order to pursue peace-making as followers of Jesus, sometimes we need to engage with people who have very different views than we do. Sometimes we need to engage with those whom we may consider to be our enemies. Jesus put it bluntly: "Love your enemies." I still haven't figured out how to do that without first getting to know them and better understand how they see the world and their place in it.

Even amidst all of the ambiguities and perplexities of our current world, we believe we have a unique opportunity at the ACP to wrestle with the truth at a deeper level and call to mind God's great faithfulness and steadfast love.

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We believe we are uniquely gifted and called to grow as a community which not only receives but also shares God's mercies with our neighbors...and even our enemies.

As always, if you will be coming to Paris we would love to see you and to thank you personally for your continuing prayers and faithful support for the ministry and mission of our diverse and dynamic outpost of the Kingdom of Heaven. And either way, I pray we all will live with audacious hope in the future and be both recipients and dispensers of God's grace and peace!

In Christ,



## What is the FACCP and Why Does it Exist?

By Pam Bohl

In recent months you may have heard the name Franco American Community Center of Paris or FACCP used in conjunction with activities in and around the ACP. The French government, desiring to maintain a separation of church and state, provides for two types of non-profit organizations or *associations*. The first type is the "culturelle (cultural) association" the laws of which were established in 1901. Then in 1905 the French government created another type of non-profit "cultuelle (religious) association" which was conceived specifically for churches and other religious organizations and, as such, is subject to a narrowly defined sphere of operations.

The ACP is a 1905 (religious) association that serves the needs of the strictly defined "religious" activities of our church. Over the years, our missions have broadened to include not expressly religious organizations as well as organizations that are outside the territory of France, which was not anticipated by the laws of 1905 associations. Additionally, our funding needs to maintain the beautiful, historical ACP facilities have grown much more significantly than our sources of funds from members and friends of the church. Over time the sources of funds have evolved to include events like Bloom Where You're Planted, the Marché de Noël, and the Christmas and Habitat Concerts. Additionally, a significant portion of ACP's funding comes from rental income. All of these developments are positive and they contribute not only enrichment in our outreach to the congregation and the community of Paris but also important funding for our building, religious programs and missions. Unfortunately, the 1905 law for religious organizations did not envisage nor does it allow religious organizations this degree of diversion from strict receipt of congregational gifts for funding the limited religious activities to the local congregation and within France.

FACCP, a 1901 "cultural association" was formed in 1996 to receive donations from corporate donors, but it was eventually allowed to go dormant. In recent years, however, ACP's financial auditors and legal advisors have suggested to our leadership that we revive this 1901 association and transfer ACP's activities that are more compatible with the laws of a 1901 association to the FACCP. Late in 2015, the Council voted to follow through with this advice and took action to revive the FACCP. Since that time, the officers of FACCP and the ACP finance committee have been working to organize the financial and administrative aspects of this change. While it is not an easy process, it is considered necessary to ensure that the ACP fully complies with the 1905 association laws and does not jeopardize its status as a religious association in France.

What does this mean for our members, friends and the public that enter the ACP on a regular basis? Not much will change. For tenants renting space in the building there might be a change in the name of the lessor from ACP to FACCP. For some functions, tickets might be sold by the FACCP instead of the ACP. And some of the missions we fund may receive a check from the FACCP whereas they formerly received a check from the ACP. As Pierre Lisbonis, who has spent much time on this transition has said, "The FACCP is really like a trailer that follows along directly behind the ACP and carries out certain of the functions previously handled by the ACP." If you have any questions about the FACCP feel free to contact, Pierre, Julia Kung, or Pam Bohl. Any of us will be happy to discuss it with you.



## Introducing the ACP Intern

Dear Friends of ACP,

My name is Emily Chesley. I am the present Youth & Young Adult Intern at the American Church in Paris, and I currently direct the ministries for youth (ages 11-18) and young adults (ages 18-30). I was asked to share a bit about myself and what I do.

I was born in Brussels to American parents, but spent the first 16 years of my life in the country of Chad where they were missionaries. I grew up speaking French and Migaama, a local tribal language, outside, and English at home. I moved to Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, to attend an international boarding school for my last two years of high school. I loved the life of an MK (missionary kid) and it has given me a deep passion for missions and a concern for the world.

After graduation, I transplanted to Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles where I majored in Christian Ministries with a concentration in Intercultural Ministry. I was involved in my local church (Village Covenant Church) and co-led the young adults group my senior year. My primary ministry focus, though, was with the international student community where I volunteered and, eventually, interned. I helped organize and run International Student Orientation, worked for International Chapel, and organized the American-International small groups.

During the summers I continued with global ministry. One summer I worked as a counselor for a Christian English-language camp for international high school and university students; another summer I went on a mission trip to Kolkata, India, to serve in the Mother Teresa homes and work with street children. One of my favorite experiences was getting to study abroad at the University of Oxford, where I studied C. S. Lewis, the medieval Christian mystics, and Thatcher-era British politics in intensive tutorials. All of these experiences have helped me tremendously in my ministry at ACP, where I serve young adults from all over the world—many of whom are studying abroad themselves.

My professors encouraged me to pursue higher education, so in September 2014, I moved yet again and began my M.Div. studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. Some of my favorite classes there have been on the Cappadocian Fathers, post-Classical

Greek, and a 6<sup>th</sup>-century theologian known as Pseudo-Dionysius.

I have been privileged to serve in a wide spectrum of areas over the years, from a Christian summer camp for underprivileged children (mostly foster children) in Arizona, to a summer internship on Capitol Hill with the Library of Congress. I was the Tutoring Center Administrator for a Princeton University outreach program to 75+ underrepresented middle school and high school students in the community. In my first Field Education placement I served Trinity Episcopal Church in Princeton, teaching adult Sunday school classes and assisting in worship. I have found the American Church in Paris to be both its own unique challenge and an easy continuation from my previous areas of service.

After my year in Paris ends, I will return to Princeton to finish my last year of classes and graduate in May 2018. I have been focusing my studies on Early Church History, and I hope to pursue a Ph.D. in Early Christianity and become a university professor. I seek to serve the Church through my love of learning, and to always incorporate my faith into my studies and my studies into my faith.

Thank you for supporting the ministries of ACP!

Sincerely,  
**Emily Chesley**



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Unsolicited articles and pictures are welcomed. Next Deadline: June 1, 2017

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