

Newsletter January 2011

Dear brothers and sisters,

The congregation in Thun wants to increase its efforts to reach out to people in the community in 2011. On January 2, the first Sunday of the year, the focus in the assembly was on evangelism. In this newsletter we would like to share with you one new way in which we will reach out to people this year. As in every newsletter we will also update you on different ministry efforts.

Evangelism Sunday on the First Sunday of the Year

On the last Wednesday of 2010, the church met for Evangelism Wednesday. We had this meeting to review the evangelism of the entire year and to get “fired up” for our outreach efforts in 2011. On Sunday of January 2, we planned an Evangelism Sunday on which morning my sermon focused on mission work in the Thun region. The whole assembly was informed about the past Wednesday and particularly about the different ways the church would want to be active in local evangelism in 2011. We announced that we were going to make additional efforts this year purchasing a tent that we want to put up in the market place in Thun. It is there where we hope to speak with people about our faith. Paperback Bibles will be distributed to those who pass by the tent and who want to claim a Bible for themselves. We also put together small work groups to take care of organizing all the mission oriented events during the year. One group will work on the idea of how to use the tent in the market place. Another group will organize the two feasts (Grillfest and Knusperfest) during the year for which we will invite guests.

Studying with Benjamin and Rahel

Lena and I have been meeting with Benjamin and Rahel for a Bible study this month. This is the first time within months that we have met with these two teenagers for a Bible study. They are more open now for more frequent studies in the Bible. Lena and I have the impression that they have matured much in the last few months. In January we studied with them about the gifts that God gave to us and how to use them. In addition to that Benjamin and I intend to meet for a weekly Bible study during the next few months. Benjamin and Rahel are the children of Marcel and Gabi who have been members in Thun for many years.

Benjamin is finishing ninth grade in summer. After that he will start an apprenticeship as an electrician in Thun. His sister Rahel is two years younger than him.



Rahel and Benjamin (at last December's Knusperfest)

Writing an Article for the Feste Fundament (“Firm Foundation”)

Last year I was asked by the editors of the magazine Das Feste Fundament (“Firm Foundation”) to write an article about archeology in each two monthly issue for one year. My second article was for the January/February issue for which I gave the title “Jesus and the city of Sepphoris.” There have been some interesting archaeological discoveries about this capital city in Galilea during parts of the first century which was located near Nazareth. You can find the article on the website www.gemeinde-christi.de/dff.

Brief News about People

Lena and Ilja have been coming along more often with me for the Bible study with Regina during the last few months. Regina lives more than an hour away from Thun and attends worship service once every five to ten weeks. Her husband, Peter, teaches part-time at the University of Basel in the field of ethnology. Since we don't know what job opportunities he will have in the future, we pray that he may find a teaching position at the University in Bern so they could move closer to Thun. His job situation is though very uncertain. Marcel still cannot work after his third back surgery in fall. He may though sometime in the next few months start working with a 10% work load a



Lena as our photographer taking a picture of Robin, Ilja, Elena, Regina, and me after a Bible study

The Swiss authorities have issued a statement that Teklosien's wife and his two children will be able to come to Switzerland as refugees. I continue to read with Teklosien in the Gospel of Luke. Once a month we ask him if he would like to visit us at church on the upcoming Sunday morning. He usually tries to be there, when we invite him. His cousin Missgine made a practicum at the public hospital in Thun, but since the practicum will be over in a few weeks, he will be out of work. Teklosien and his cousin are both looking for a job.

Asking For Your Prayers:

- Strengthening our confession of Christ in the world
- My reading in the Gospel of Luke with Teklosien
- Teklosien and Missgine who are looking for a job
- Lucia's health problem with her kidneys
- Marcel who has two vertebrae in his spine which need to grow back together
- The health of Elfriede, 81, and her being able to move to an elderly residency soon
- Lena's mother who finished undergoing chemotherapy to fight breast cancer
- Regina's husband, Peter, who is looking for a full-time teaching position for ethnology
- Ilja's, Robin's, Elena's, Jeanette's, and Joline's health and continual growth
- Anna, 20, who visits the church assembly occasionally
- Rösi, 83, who started to attend the Sunday morning assembly regularly
- Teenagers of church members – Mathias, 19; Benjamin, 15; Rahel, 13;
- Ueli, a church visitor, who studies electrical engineering in Biel, 40 miles from Thun
- Johanna who is still hesitant about coming to church regularly
- Tino and Mo who are traveling

Any Funds Can Be Sent to Our Overseeing Congregation:

Park Avenue Church of Christ
5295 Park Avenue
Memphis, TN 38119

Grace and Peace,

Ivan + Lena

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