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Rev. Joseph and Deaconess
Dr. Jennie Asher

Did you know?

- The custom of chopping down a tree and decorating it originates in 15th Century Germany. According to legend, Martin Luther was the first to put candles on the tree.
- Almost every town in Germany has a “Weihnachtsmärkte” (Christmas Market) where crafts, baked goods and warm drinks are sold, and Christmas music is enjoyed.
- Christmas Eve is the highlight of the holiday season in Germany. A traditional meal is a salad made of sausage and noodles.
- The traditional Christmas dinner is goose served with red cabbage and dumplings.



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Fröhe Weihnachten!

Merry Christmas! Like most congregations, the past two months have been a whirlwind of activity for us. From preparations for our celebration of our Lord’s birth to the events of Christmas week, the time has flown by. And so, our wish for a Blessed Christmas comes in the *season* of Christmas. 😊

This Advent season found Joe, like most pastors, spending lots of time writing sermons and Jennie spending lots of time in the kitchen. This year we hosted our in-home midweek Advent services twice. The second week of Advent, we had 22 people around our dining tables for a soup supper and then crowded into our living room for a Vespers service. The following week we hosted 13 people for more soup and more of God’s Word!

On Sunday, December 22, our Sunday school had our annual birthday party for Jesus. The children enjoyed playing games like “Pin the Baby Jesus in the Manger”, a ring toss, candy walk, bean bag toss, and nativity Bingo. Each child also made a Christmas craft. Meanwhile, the adults had fellowship and Christmas goodies.

Christmas Eve brought a feeling of “home” to our members as many of us recalled growing up with a children’s service on Christmas Eve. Jennie led the children in a service of Lessons and Carols. Children read prophecies from the Old Testament, each followed by a hymn that spoke



The children line up for “Happy Birthday Jesus” cake

of Christ’s birth fulfilling that prophecy. Then the littlest ones told the story of Jesus’ birth from Luke 2, complete with all the children shouting with the angels, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.” The children also sang “Away in a Manger” and “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” After a brief message by Joe, the children sang a verse of “Silent Night” (in German, of course!), followed by the congregation singing the hymn by candlelight. The service even ended with children receiving “goody” sacks of fruit and treats!

While our Christmas Eve and Christmas morning services brought back childhood memories for many of the adults, the most important memory for all was the memory of our Savior being born in a humble stable; born to die on a cross so that we can look forward, not just to a New Year, but to a new life... with Him in heaven.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *The university students attending Joe's new monthly Bible study.*
- *A volunteer to chair our youth committee, completing our slate of officers for 2020.*
- *A productive Voters' Meeting on January 12, where we will elect officers and ratify our revised Constitution and Bylaws.*
- *Jennie's job search process.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *A wonderful visit from Rev. Craig Muehler (Chaplain USN, retired), Director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, where he gained insight into our ministry and assisted us.*
- *A record attendance Christmas Eve of 105 individuals, including two new families.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us.*

A Special Visit

In early December, we were blessed with a special visitor. Rev. Craig Muehler from the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces visited us to gain a better understanding of our ministry and our needs. He also wanted to visit our vicar, Ryan Schnake, since his office is co-sponsor of funding for the vicarage. (The other half is funded by the Office of International Mission.)



Joe, Vicar Ryan Schnake, and Rev. Craig Muehler lead worship on December 8

During his very fruitful visit here, Rev. Muehler had many meetings and met many people. From the colonel in charge of chaplains for the U.S. Army posts in this area to the military supervisor of Vicar Schnake to congregational officers, Chaplain Muehler was blessed with conversations that provided insight into our ministry. Joe, Vicar Schnake and Chaplain Muehler also traveled to Wiesbaden to meet the chaplain in charge of military bases near Frankfurt. He was also introduced to Rev. Gary Schuschke, our LCMS pastor in Frankfurt. We were also blessed to have Chaplain Muehler preach for worship and lead the adult Bible class hour.

The mission for Chaplain Muehler's trip was to understand the ministry potential for the establishment of congregations outside the military fence. He clearly saw the vital importance of providing spiritual care in a setting that Lutherans can relate to, the local church in the body of believers. His hope is that the vibrant ministry here can serve as a model for other military installations throughout the world.

\$20 in 2020

It's time for New Year's Resolutions. Are you making the annual diet resolution? Quitting smoking? Giving up something else? Why not use the money you save to support the work of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the military, university students and our German neighbors? As we begin this new decade of 2020, we encourage you to consider giving just \$20 a week to support this important work. That's just a few lattes at Starbucks or one pizza or fast food meal.

You may easily support our work by going to our online giving page at lcms.org/asher. Our friends at Mission Central will also gladly help you at 712-882-1029. By mail, you can send your gift to the addresses below.

Thank you for making 2020 the year when even more people will hear the Good News of Jesus!



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Joe Asher, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
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