

Connecting Our Churches and Friends around the World



President's Message

Our new Mission Statement was the focus of this article in the last edition of the Bridge. This mission plan makes the commitment that the AFCU, in partnership with our member churches, will take the following actions.

1. Strive to develop and manage a strong financial base.
2. Nurture and strengthen our alumni ties.
3. Support the pastors, leadership and members of our churches.

In this letter the focus will be on our financial position. The other two initiatives will be dealt with in future articles.

Financial Base

At the close of the year of 2004, the AFCU investment funds totaled close to \$3,000,000. The Board has established the amount of 5% of the total funds as the prudent, annual grant rate for our individual churches. Many of the donations received are designated to a particular church or even some are directed to funding certain programs. Thus the annual grants available from the AFCU for each church are based upon the total investments for that specific church and the designations of the donors.

All of the AFCU investment funds are managed, through Board approval, by our Finance Committee, which is now chaired by William MacArthur. The professional fund manager for the portfolio is US Trust.

Our mission statement calls us to develop and manage a strong financial base. The current Friends program is an annual program that requests donations and gifts from alumni and friends of the churches. Thanks to each of you who have contributed in this past year, we are making good headway. The total giving through the Friends program was \$200,000 for the year 2004.

The AFCU Heritage Society was established a few years ago to encourage planned giving. This program is managed under the leadership of Russ McNaughton and we are making significant progress in getting our alumni to include the AFCU in their wills and estate planning. At the present time there are 47 members in the Heritage Society.

While improvements in developing and managing the investment portfolio have been made, the financial base really needs to be strengthened. The current amount of \$3,000,000 is barely adequate to support the present churches' needs. Thus, our goals for the future are to significantly build up this total. These plans will be reported as they are developed.

The AFCU is at this juncture in its development due to the generosity of our membership. Your past support has been instrumental in providing a solid foundation. On behalf of the AFCU and our member churches, please accept our sincere thanks for the care and generosity that you have given to this cause. We look forward to working together toward insuring a positive future for The American Church in Berlin, The American Church in Paris and the Vienna Community Church.

Jim Craig, AFCU President

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Two Search Committees Review 200+ Candidates to Choose New Senior Pastor for The American Church in Paris

The recently completed search for the new Senior Pastor at The American Church in Paris was unique. First, a normal search may draw about forty interested candidates. The Senior Pastor

ate the Atlantic. Members of the AFCU Search Committee traveled to visit each of the four candidates that both committees had agreed upon, and the AFCU Committee, based upon dossiers, tapes, and

personal visits, forwarded a list of three finalist candidates to the ACP Committee in Paris. It was agreed from the start that the final choice and recommendation to the congregation would be made by the Paris Committee. The AFCU made it possible for all three finalists

and their spouses to fly to Paris for a visit of several days. During this time the ACP Committee spent large amounts of time with the candidates, both formally and informally. After this, and a great deal of serious consideration of all three finalists, they unanimously decided to submit the name of The Reverend Barry Dawson to the congregation. The congregation approved, and Pastor Dawson was called to become the new Senior Pastor of The American Church in Paris.

All of us at the American and Foreign Christian Union and at The American Church in Paris should be thankful for the time and energy put into this project by both search committees. The AFCU committee was tireless and did a great deal of work and travel at their own expense. The ACP committee was carefully formed of thoughtful, hard working people who represented each of the major communities which worship within the ACP family. Their insight into the candidates was excellent, and their willingness to work into the night after a full day's work was commendable.

*Norm Findley,
Vice President, AFCU Board*



The ACP committee, in the back row, from left to right are Norm Findley, (visiting from the AFCU), Emeka Uzoukwu, Judith Huart, Vincent Randy, Bob Gardner, and Charles Mitchelmore, (Chair). In the front row are Vicky Daguasi, Deborah Cavin, and Avril Lee. (Not pictured, but just as involved was Meri-Kathryn Peed).

at the ACP has drawn more than 200 applicants each of the last two times the position was open. Second, because the candidates are in the U.S., and the Church is in Paris, two search committees are needed, one on either side of the Atlantic.

The AFCU Search Committee in the U.S. received the initial applications. Each applicant was reviewed by at least two members of the AFCU committee. If either of the two reviewing committee members felt the applicant should move to the next round, the candidate was moved forward. This process of applicant profile and dossier review was repeated until the list was down to seventeen quarter-finalists. The dossiers of these seventeen were shared with the Paris based ACP Search Committee. Both committees then reviewed the seventeen, in hopes of paring the list to from five to seven semi-finalists. Between the two committees, seven were chosen, four of whom were chosen by both of the committees.

Video taped sermons were obtained from the seven candidates and reviewed on both sides of



The AFCU committee, (from left to right around the table), consisted of Don Eppert, Rita Krupp, Dale Raar, Norm Findley, Pat Burns, John Rogers, and Bob DeLuryea. (Not pictured, but just as active were Luz MacArthur and Thomas Wilson).

Making a Planned Giving Gift in Your Will

Making a charitable gift in your Will is a simple way to benefit your favorite charity and yet can be the most significant gift you can make. An estate gift to the American & Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) can have a lasting impact and significantly support our mission without reducing your current income or giving up assets that you may need in your later years of life. The donation would also be exempt from federal estate taxes. You can specify how you would like the gift to be used, such as supporting the endowment of one of our representative churches (American Church in Paris, American Church in Berlin, or Vienna Community Church). You may also leave the gift unrestricted to the American & Foreign Christian Union. The gift may also be given in honor of loved ones.

To be sure the Will clearly states your intentions and ensures that your objectives are met, you and your attorney can use language suggested as follows:

Unrestricted Gift:

I give, devise and bequeath (Description of gift) to the American & Foreign Christian Union (AFCU), a not-for-profit foundation with a present address of 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 2050, New York,

NY 10115, and its successor, to be used for such purposes as determined by its Board of Directors.

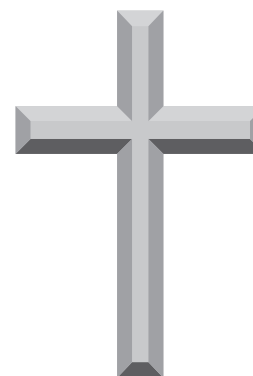
Restricted Gift:

I give, devise and bequeath to the American & Foreign Christian Union, a not-for-profit foundation with a present address of 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 2050, New York, NY 10115, and its successor (Percentage of residue, sum or description of property) for the benefit of the (American Church in Paris, American Church in Berlin, or the Vienna Community Church) for their (endowment or general programs).

It is important in both of the above examples to indicate that the gift is to the American & Foreign Christian Union. This is necessary to obtain the necessary U.S. estate tax benefits (IRC Section 2055) as a charitable contribution.

When you have made the decision to include the American & Foreign Christian Union in your estate plans, please contact us so that we may include you in the Heritage Society. Thank you for your prayers and your generous support.

Russell McNaughton
Heritage Society/Planned Giving
Contact at 512-261-9725
russmacton@aol.com



How You Can Contribute

The American and Foreign Christian Union (AFCU) supports the American Church in Paris (ACP), the American Church in Berlin (ACB), and the Vienna Community Church (VCC) through grants to help their programs. Gifts to the AFCU help to increase our support of these churches. Contributions may be sent to the American and Foreign Christian Union at AFCU, 475 Riverside Drive, suite 2050, New York, NY, 10115.

You may also make gifts to the individual churches. If you wish your gift to be tax deductible in the United States, you must make your dollar check payable to the AFCU at the above address. Put the words “for ACB or ACP or VCC” on the memo line of your check. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your support!

An important function of the AFCU is the support given in the form of financial grants to our member churches. Each church provides a Christian oasis in primarily secular countries in Europe. These churches provide spiritual nurturing in a vibrant, Christian, English-speaking atmosphere to many persons who would otherwise suffer spiritual starvation. The congregations of these churches rely on financial help from the AFCU to sustain their mission. Many of those who receive the benefits are students who will become future leaders of our world. The AFCU relies on support from **your** tax-deductible contributions in order to meet the needs of these congregations.

We are grateful for all your past support. The following is a list of donors who have given us gifts during 2004.

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Ms. Betty Edgar	Mr. and Mrs. John Ledes	Mr. and Mrs. James Ruffner	

If we have inadvertently left someone off this recognition list, please contact us (coordinates below) so we can correct our records.

AFCU Development Committee
76 Earlsgate Rd.
Dayton, OH 45440
Tel: 937-427-4537
or Email: jepaburns@aol.com

or AFCU Treasurer Julie Voskuil at jvoskuil@calvin.edu,

PARIS CONNECTION

A Beacon in Paris

In Christ there is no east and west, in him no south or north; But one great fellowship of love. Throughout the whole wide earth.

These are the words of John Oxenham that are perfectly fitting to describe the American Church in Paris. These words can also be found on the church's self tour document

Today there are about 35 nationalities represented in the church. Along with this representation of diversity there exists a plethora of activities both church and non-church related. These activities serve to assist in the financing of the church.

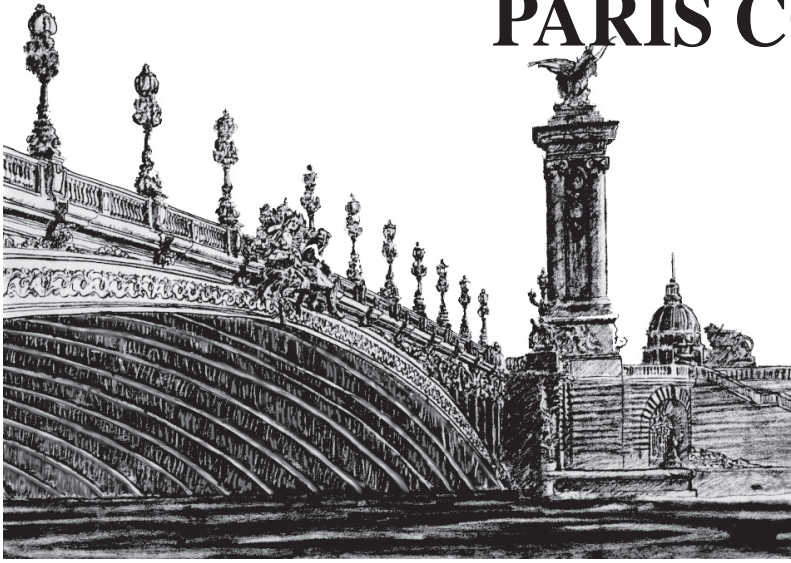
There has been a recent addition to these activities that enable the church to reach even more people in a manner that many visitors both to the church and to Paris have long awaited.

This addition is the docent tour. The tour was started in January of 2004 thanks to the diligence and determination of one of our many Pastoral Assistants, Ross Robson, along with a group of faithful volunteers. Our Pastoral Assistants usually serve the church community for a period of 6 months, and always enrich and sometimes implement addition activities to improve the life of the church community.

The tour is currently conducted by dedicated volunteers of our Christian body. The primary individuals are Alice Gardiner, coordinator, Danni Lippoldt, Robyn Teed, Maureen Bovet, Meri-Kathryn Peed, Kathy Turner, Ellen Soret and Midge Dillon. This list is by no means an exhaustive one as there are so many other faithful volunteers contributing to this endeavour.

The church open its doors on Thursdays between 13h30-15h30 (1:30-3:30) for all those who wish to enter. There is a tour with guides as well as a self guided tour primarily in English and French. To date the tour text has been translated into three languages (French, German, and Japanese). There are plans to expand this translation to Italian, Spanish as well as other languages in keeping with the spirit of our diversity.

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DAWSON INSTALLATION

It was an honor and a privilege to represent the AFCU at the November 14, 2004 installation service of Sr. Pastor Barry Dawson at the American Church in Paris. This festive event included glorious music directed by Fred Gramann, an inspiring sermon by Rev. Scott Campbell, Director, Network of International Congregations and the presentation of pastoral ministry symbols by members of the ACP. Rev. Dawson was firm in his response to questions of commitment and leadership asked by Charles Mitchelmore, Chairman of the ACP pastor search committee. The congregation was equally steadfast in its response to questions of acceptance, encouragement and support of its new Sr. Pastor from Philippe Poux, Moderator of the ACP Church Council.

The symbols of pastoral ministry presented by a diverse group of ACP members included Holy Scriptures, Bread and Cup, Water, Prayer Book, Hymnbook, Flask of Oil, Refugee Packet and Towel and Basin. As the installation participants lay their hands on Barry, I read the following prayer of blessing:

“Almighty God, in every generation you have chosen servants to speak your word and lead your loyal people. We thank you for Barry Dawson, whom you have called to serve as a Minister of Word and Sacrament and now as the Senior Pastor of this congregation. Give him special gifts to do his work, and fill him with the Holy Spirit, so that he may have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, and be a faithful servant in the Church of your Son, our Savior, as long as he shall live. O God of Grace, we also pray that your blessing will rest upon and multiply within this part of the body of Christ known as The American Church in Paris. Grant the people in this community of faith abundant wisdom and courage in this new ministry partnership, that together they may declare the hope of the gospel and show your love throughout this great city and to the ends of the earth. In the strong name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.”

It was a joyous fellowship gathering after the service with congratulatory comments and handshakes shared among members and friends. Visitors and guests gained a sense of warmth and outreach that was sure to beckon them to return. Barry and Shelly Dawson graciously hosted a reception and lunch in their apartment for installation service participants, ACP leaders and council members. During the reception I took the opportunity to provide a brief greeting from the AFCU and extended our joy and pride in formally welcoming Barry Dawson as the nineteenth Sr. Pastor of the ACP.

The ACP and the AFCU have been truly blessed in both the process and result of the search for the new Sr. Pastor. The Holy Spirit was present at each step of the journey as he was in the concluding step of the installation service.



Philippe POUX leads the Declaration of Installation.

Don Eppert, AFCU Board

Service of Installation for Barry Dawson, Senior Pastor

Charge to the Congregation

Good morning.

I am honoured to deliver the charge to the congregation of the American Church in Paris as part of this installation service for our new senior pastor, Barry Dawson. The Good Lord knows that for me—having served as moderator of the church council during several years of a difficult transition—this day has a particular resonance.

So, this is a glorious day, one that we have prepared for diligently. We have engaged in a continuing process of reflection, assessment and planning. We have restructured our administration and our finances. We have refurbished. We have sought to make our faith more manifest through Christian education, nurture and outreach. And now, our new senior pastor is in place. Together with our parent organisation, the American and Foreign Christian Union, we have laid a sound foundation for facing the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. Based on recent experience, I anticipate that there will be plenty of both.

Today, we, the congregation of the American Church in Paris have entered into a covenant with our new senior pastor. Such a covenant comes with mutual obligations that go beyond a simple contract. The word “covenant” in a church context has a deeper meaning that speaks to our hearts and intentions, as well as our shared faith.

In preparing these remarks, I reflected on the advice and guidance for the congregation that we have received from various sources during the transition process. The literature on the topic abounds with titles pointing to the pitfalls. One tract on pastoral departures is entitled, “Running through the thistles.” Ouch. Another on pastoral arrivals is entitled, “Be careful not to void the warranty on your new pastor.” Judging from the feedback I’ve received up to this point in the transition, I might say, “so far, so good,” but there

is still more work to be done.

Much of the advice on pastoral transitions is aimed at helping congregations to work together with their new pastors in developing a respectful, attentive, trusting and fruitful relationship. There is no fixed recipe for a congregation to develop such a relationship with a new pastor, but it generally involves on-going communication, patience and sincere efforts at mutual care and support. In addition, most of the advice points to the importance of ensuring the pastor has adequate down time and social opportunities to recharge his batteries,



Guests including Donald EPPERT (left) enjoy a reception following the Installation Service of Rev. Barry P. DAWSON (center).

as well as time for spiritual development and reflection. We can find additional pointers in scripture, e.g., from 2 Corinthians, chap. 6, verse 6, where it says “We put no obstacle in any one’s way... but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God...”. To this, I might add, be sparing in your use of e-mail. Think before you hit the send button.

In moving to follow through on our covenant with Barry, we will need to keep our sights on the shared mission we are undertaking together. This is the broader mandate that we have set for ourselves, as laid out in our mission statement. I would like to close with this statement in mind:

“The mission of the American Church in Paris, an interdenominational and international Christian community, is to bear witness by word and deed to the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, to provide a place of English language worship in the American Protestant tradition, and to engage in ministries and services that enrich the lives of residents and visitors in Paris.”

That, my friends, is what our covenant with Barry is all about.

*Delivered by Doug Lippoldt,
14 November 2004*

A Beacon in Paris

Continued from page 6

There have been visitors from Canada, Spain, Portugal, The United States, Russia, Italy, Dominican Republic among other countries. And let us not forget our French nationals. The interesting thing about our French visitors is that some have lived in the area for years and have never been inside the church before we opened our doors with the tour. The visitors come from many sources. For example the ACP church council, (approximately 18 people), attended as a part of their fall retreat. There are also those who come from the boat tours along the Seine and individuals who have a passion for architecture.

The tour focuses on the history and architecture of the church from its formation at the rue de Berri address to its relocation to the current building constructed between 1926-1931. The details in the tour document include a lot of names of people involved in the historical life of the church, varying from architecture to ministers who have preached on the pulpits. This is done in the hope that individuals will be able to identify with these names. A major highlight of the tour is the stained glass windows, particularly the Tiffany and the Great North, whose theme is world-wide mission. Its theme reads “Go ye out into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

It is also possible to obtain souvenirs of the church such as ACP mugs, photos of the church, stained glass window postcards, and ACP note cards.

Here are a few testimonials from the guest book: “Merci de cette visite.” “Thank you for a wonderful tour of this beautiful church.” “So happy to see such a beautiful church and hear the excellent information and history.” “It is so cool.” “Love it.” “Thank you.”

In keeping with the spirit of welcoming all who want to enter, The American Church in Paris is pleased to open its door to those who are interested in the history and architecture of the church. We will keep being one of the shining beacons in the city of lights.

Monica Brown, Paris Correspondent

News From my Sidewalk Café

...with *café au lait*, eating my *galette des Rois* celebrating Epiphany remembering those Wise Kings (Magi) who brought gifts to the *bébé Jesus* and thankful for whoever that enterprising *boulangère* (baker) in the Middle Ages was who thought about merchandising *les galettes d'Epiphany*.

During the Middle Ages a cake was made for the Epiphany feast with one piece of the cake reserved for the poor. Later the tradition evolved through Pagan and Christian rituals with the insertion of a *fève* (or fava bean) into the cake. The *fève* was the first vegetable to appear in spring so the idea of renewal and sharing were the important aspects of the ritual. By the late 19th century the traditional round, buttery, almond-filled puffed pastry began having small porcelain figurines inside replacing the beans but still called *les fèves*. Whoever received it in their portion of the cake was King or Queen of the day. And, eventually paper crowns arrived with the purchase of *les galettes* to ensure that the King or Queen was suitably crowned. (Guess the poor were forgotten).

Aujourd'hui, c'est le gros business (big business) and, *bien sûr*, last week the 17th annual competition of the Confederation of Bakers in the Paris region rewarded the pastry chef who produced *les meilleures galettes des rois* (the best) for the season. Strict rules ordered the size and decoration to conform to what was able to be produced regularly in any bakery shop. The 91 person jury looked at five criteria: baking perfection (golden in appearance), decoration, the taste of the almond paste (not too excessive), flakiness of the crust (must not stick to the palette) and the proportion of paste to pastry.

François Vacavant, who had finished 19th last year, rose to win this year, weeping as he was awarded his certificates and brass *galette* topped trophy. He was the All American success story, French style, when he announced that he had been brought up in a foster home and had to fight his entire life for anything he had ever gotten and stated that this was

the apotheosis of his career. He announced it was the quality of the products he used that made the difference including a special butter from the Charentes-Poitou region and California almonds. (Amazing he didn't lose points for those California almonds!) He should be happy. The IHT reports that last year's winner doubled his *galette* sales from 3,500 to over 7,000 after having won the competition. M. Vacavant weeps for joy at the prospect of selling 7,000 *galettes*.

Martine Specialties, an industrial baker from the Dordogne region reports having sold 3.5 million frozen *galettes* to 15,000 bakeries throughout France. So much for the myth of your neighborhood baker staying up many nights to make certain your *galette* is perfect.

In southern France the *galette* can be purchased in the shape of a crown garnished with candied fruits. At Fauchon, you may buy a chocolate & praline filled *galette* while The Bon Marché is selling a celery, carrot and hazelnut vegetarian version. Laduree added strawberry pulp and cotton candy flavors to its almond paste while LeNotre has a 6 serving *galette* stuffed with foie gras, black truffles & the filling used in boudin blanc sausages on sale for \$60 each. (Who eats it?) Needless to say the Confederation Chefs are outraged at the less than "galette" spirit of the culinary sacrilege being offered by *les gros garçons!* (the big boys)

Then there is the wonderful secondary market of "*les collecteurs des fèves.*" Last Sunday more than a 1,000 collectors held their annual congress buying and selling the precious collectibles. Some of those little "watch out or they may break your tooth" concoctions sell for *les gros Euros* (big bucks)! A retired train conductor, President of the Association of French Fabophiles, (collectors of *fèves*) says he has more than 60,000 of them. He



wrote a 126 page guide which divides them into hundreds of categories. They include symbols of royalty, masks, animals, historic buildings, articles of clothing, foods, paintings, professions (like geishas, Napoleonic soldiers, jazz musicians), objects such as coffee pots and radios, modes of transportation like Mongolfiere balloons, classic good luck *fèves* of four-leaf clovers and horseshoes as well the unlucky *fèves* of the guillotine. The most unusual have to be the set of twelve porcelain tiles showing sexual positions from the Kama Sutra. (*Vive la France!*)

Most of these collectors report eating 35 or more *galettes* in a season and confess to having a large network of *les amis* (friends) on the watch for them. Think about all of the *galettes* I could eat, if you, *mes amis* would want to start a collection! *Bonne Année!*

Ellen Soret, Paris correspondent

BERLIN CONNECTION



Happy New Year!

Some of us make resolutions like George. He said to his friend: “There’s nothing like getting up at six in the morning, going for a run around the park, and taking a brisk shower before breakfast.” His friend Bob asked, “How long have you been doing this?” George: “I start tomorrow!”

Others still do it in other ways. At the beginning of a new year, a high school principal decided to post his teachers’ New Year’s resolutions on the bulletin board. As the teachers gathered around the bulletin board, a great commotion started. One of the teachers was complaining. “Why weren’t my resolutions posted?” She was throwing such a temper tantrum that the principal hurried to his office to see if he had overlooked her resolutions. Sure enough, he had mislaid them on his desk. As he read her resolutions he was astounded. This teacher’s first resolution was not to let little things upset her in the New Year. (Dr. John W. Keith, Oak Ridge, TN)

It’s a New Year! What will the New Year look like for each of us? Margit and I will begin the New Year by walking our daughter down the aisle in marriage. You would think that after four other weddings I would have this down to a science. I don’t! I know that there will be tears! Saying good-bye is always difficult. But the good-bye is really coated with joy.

What will be happening at ACB? Having been here over two years now the one thing I can say with authority is that there will be CHANGE! We live in exciting and challenging times. The mission and ministry through ACB to the Berlin community are greater than any one of us. The hopes and dreams of yesterday are before us. The reality of being faithful in our calling is before us. Can we do it? On our own by our own strength – NO! But we do not despair! The Word of the incarnate God given in the gift of Christmas, Jesus, promises to lead and guide us each step of the way.

As we venture into 2005 hear this Word from God: Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:28-31

In this confidence, let us march bravely into the New Year, 2005.

Pastor Ben

New Year Prayer

God grant us this year a wider view,
So we see others’ faults through the eyes of You.
Teach us to judge not with hasty tongue,
Neither the adult ... nor the young.
Give us patience and grace to endure
And a stronger faith so we feel secure.
Instead of remembering, help us forget
The irritations that caused us to fret.
Freely forgiving for some offense
And finding each day a rich recompense.
In offering a friendly, helping hand
And trying in all ways to understand;
That all of us whoever we are ...
Are trying to reach an unreachable star.
For the great and small ... the good and bad,
The young and old ... the sad and glad
Are asking today; Is life worth living?
The answer is only in, loving and giving.
For only love can make man kind
And kindness of heart brings peace of mind.
By giving love, we can start this year
To lift the clouds of hate and fear.

Helen Steiner Rice

From the Campaign Manager

Dear ACB Member and Campaign Supporter:

December is here and with it comes the holiday rush. Few people will have the time to sit down and relax for a few moments—let alone read a newsletter—so I will be brief. In January 2005 we will review the past year, the lessons learned and make plans for the future. If you have not been involved in our church activities or in the campaign to help shape our future here at Dennewitzplatz—please consider making this a priority for 2005.

Remembering the simple lesson which our children have been learning in Sunday school, I invite you to take out your jar of marbles and see how many represent the time you spend not only in prayer and meditation, but in actively living out your faith. Get involved. This year don’t wait until you have time—MAKE time for God and his work.

I hope that your holiday is filled with love, compassion and joy in the face of God’s great gift to us—Jesus Christ!

Denise Banks-Grasedyck

Letter from ACB Council President

The last time I connected with you, I mentioned that ACB had a niche for everyone and that exciting things could happen when everyone found their niche. ACB continues to change and grow. This summer we were blessed with the open hearts and sunny smiles of John and Barbara Rogers who filled in for Pastor Ben and Margit as they spent two full months in the U.S. sharing the story of ACB with hundreds of people. John and Barbara were always available to listen, help, laugh with, comfort, guide, and bless. Some members had to move away for one reason or another, but God has brought new faces to the congregation so that our numbers do not fall drastically.

Pastor Ben and Margit were able to share the story of ACB in film as well as word of mouth while in the U.S. During the spring, Leah McDonald put together a film about ACB and its development. This is also available to AFCU for the purpose of sharing our story. It is our hope that those who heard the story will be able to support us in our building project and in prayer.

The thrill of activity and growth continues to be present. It draws to mind Paul's words from Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Our attitude for the world is to be one in which we give to others, to give honor to Christ, and serve our fellow human beings. This summer we again offered the Adventureland Day Camp and had a strong, vibrant staff with a theme of construction through Jesus Christ. Those young children who attended were able to visualize that it is Christ who builds our faith strong to last. They could then relate to the building that needs to take place physically on our premises. Everyone

wore hard hats, had "tool boxes," and learned songs appropriate to the theme.

September 5 was Rally Day with the beginning of our complete program of Bible studies, Sunday school, Confirmation, youth activities, choirs, committees, etc. This year we will hold Sunday school classes for the younger children in a day care facility across the street from the church building. The children will be better able to concentrate on their lessons. The number of people installed as teachers and helpers for the Christian Education program has grown steadily since last year. Since the day was a gloriously sunny day, the doors to the church were wide open and people from the neighborhood stopped by and some even joined in the worship service. During the potluck that followed the service, others stopped by and chatted to find out more about us. This is the building of community and showing our desire to be a church home for people from diverse nations who believe in Jesus Christ.

Denise Banks-Grasedyck has ambitious plans for the Luther Church Development Campaign with one aspect directly involving AFCU members. The Outreach and Cultural Exchange Program will offer opportunities for individuals and groups particularly from the U.S. to join ACB on community work projects around Berlin to expand our ministry. These groups and individuals will provide us with talent and resources to make an even greater impact with our social ministry, while providing participants with challenging and exciting projects and exposure to the cultural diversity of Berlin. A second Gospel Powerhouse Concert in September and a Thanksgiving con-

cert in November took place with enthusiastic attendance, and a lecture series to inform people about the Luther Church campaign began in November.

The months of November and December have been devoted to accomplishing some smaller but important tasks. Don Krump, a member of the AFCU board, spent many hours of his vacation trip to Berlin helping with preparing a side entrance to house a temporary kitchen. The kitchen has been installed and is ready for use. An extension was built on the existing altar area in order to make it symmetrical. The children's Christmas program made use of this extension on Dec. 12. Landscaping has been done right next to the church building and carpet in the sanctuary should be installed within the next two weeks.

Although many churches choose to move out of the center of the city, we are convinced that God wants us planted in the heart of the city of Berlin. Yes, there are challenges, but there are also great rewards. It is a joy to bring Christ, the Light of the world, to a dark city. With God's help, we will be able to overcome the obstacles of a poor economy, significant costs needed to renovate the existing building, and finding ways to involve more people in the active life of the church. As you have already read, we are making inroads toward our mission. We ask for your persistent prayers on our behalf that we would always recognize the privilege of sharing Christ's Gospel and share it confidently with joy.

*Ruth Bakke, Council President,
American Church in Berlin*

Giving to ACB

The American Church in Berlin depends on the offerings and gifts from members and visitors for its financial obligations.

ACB has an account with the Commerzbank: BLZ 100 400 00, Konto Nr. 02612 91900. This account is used for both the General Operating Fund and the Luther Church Campaign. If you give by bank transfer or envelope, please designate whether your gift is for the General Operating Fund or the Luther Church Campaign.

If you wish your gift to be tax-deductible in the United States, you must make your dollar check payable to one of our partner organizations, "The American and Foreign Christian Union" (AFCU) or "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" and write the words "for ACB" on the memo line of your check. The church issues year-end receipts of giving acceptable for both German and American tax returns.

The American Church in Berlin by former ACB pastor Stewart Herman tells the story of our history from our earliest days until the 1970s. Thanks to the work of the AFCU (American and Foreign Christian Union), this treasure of a book has been reprinted and is available in the church office or on Sunday mornings. We are asking for a contribution of EUR15 for the book.

Giving to the Luther Church Development Project

The bank information for contributions to the Luther Church project directly to ACB's bank in Berlin is:

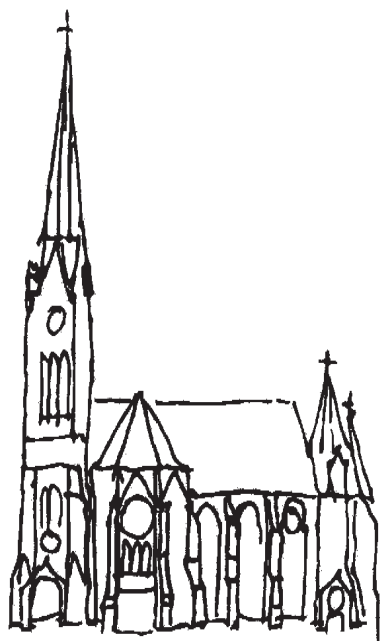
Commerzbank
BLZ (bank routing) 100 400 00
Euro Acct. # 02612 91900
US \$ Acct. # 02612 91901

For gifts in cash, use the envelopes found in the pews. **You must mark and designate the donation for the Luther Church project.** Please remember to include your name!

Checks should be sent to the ACB Office at:

American Church in Berlin
ACB Onkel-Tom Strasse 93
14169 Berlin, Germany

Regardless of how you choose to give-please remember to complete a gift (pledge) card!



An Intern's Perspective of the American Church in Berlin

The American Church in Berlin is a community of people from around the world. Judging by its name, one might think that the majority of those in attendance would be from the United States, but this is not so. When I arrived in August 2004 I was pleasantly surprised to hear English with Scottish brogue, British, Indian, German, and Russian accents, as well as many other accents. There are over 25 nations represented by worshipping members, and I suppose many more by those who visit briefly. From my first Sunday at ACB I was welcomed into service by being asked to help assist with communion distribution. Smiles from faces representing various places around the world greeted me and I felt safe, welcomed, and at home. After the service there was a reception potluck for me as well as for the return of Pastor Ben and Margit Coltvet from their three months of service in the U.S. Also on that Sunday the congregation had a beautiful thank you ceremony for the interim pastor and his wife, John and Barbara Rogers, as they made arrangements to return to the U.S. It was big day, not just for me, but for the whole congregation, and I could feel the excitement in the congregation.

Since that day of entrance into ACB, life in the congregation has been exciting and moving swiftly. The leadership of the congregation has encouraged me to participate with them in making decisions for the growth and development of the church. I have been here to see not only physical changes, such as the landscaping of the outside of the church, the reshaping of the interior worship space of Luther Church, and the building of a kitchen, but also spiritual changes. I have had the joy

of walking with people as they are baptized, as they prepare for marriage, as they struggle with illness in the hospital, and as we as a congregation struggle with our response to world catastrophes and world missions. It has been a wonderful journey so far.

As I look at a new year with my new family here, I think about all that faces us. Our congregation lives on faith that God will sustain us. This is especially true when I think about the hope that many of us have here as we think about living and worshipping in this beautiful space of Luther Church. If you think about the financial cost of it, you might be tempted to walk away from the challenge, but I am amazed at the faith of this congregation. There is hope, and at the same time realism. We take each step, one at a time, reevaluating, praying, encouraging, and living out Christ's love to the community.

I want to just add another observation that I have about this congregation. I have seen people from all walks of life walk in the doors of Luther Church. There have been those who are simply curious about the building. There have been neighbors who hear the music of a Gospel concert step inside. There are people seeking to develop their English skills, and there are those who are visiting Berlin who join us for one Sunday. But with each experience there is something at work here. I believe that it is our faithful God using us, calling out, reaching through us to others with the Gospel message, and I believe that the members of ACB do a marvelous job, and I am honored to be a part of the ministry here in Berlin.

Jenny Hanus, ACB Correspondent

VIENNA CONNECTION



The Pastoral Search

The Vienna Community Church was very pleased to welcome the Rev. Troy Morgan as interim pastor for the period October through December 2004. He was with us through the Advent season and for Christmas, but has now moved on to another assignment. Although his time with us was short, the VCC community greatly appreciated Rev. Morgan's services. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors; we have good memories of his time with us.

On January 9, we welcomed the Rev. Jack Hustad back to the VCC pulpit. Rev. Hustad and his wife, Helen, are no strangers to the VCC. He served as interim pastor once before, for about a year before the Rev. James Wiberg became our regular pastor in 1999. His son, Kristor, is currently the Music Director of the VCC. Rev. Hustad will be with us for the months of January and February 2005. For the period March through May, we look forward to welcoming the Rev. John Rogers. In June, we will welcome the Rev. Jay Dee Conrad, who will be with us for the summer from his home in New Mexico. Meanwhile, the search for a full-time pastor to take up duties in the fall of 2005 continues. A pastor about to begin a sabbatical leave would be given full consideration

Rothgeb Music Scholarship

The Vienna Community Church has a long standing reputation for the high quality of the music program. Although our music budget is very limited, we have had a long list of outstanding musicians who have contributed their talents to the worship services. The Rothgeb Memorial Scholarship was established to enable a study program for selected VCC musicians. Since we have not been able to pay our performers this is one way of showing gratitude for those who have contributed time and talent to the VCC worship services.

The 2004 recipient of the Rothgeb Memorial Scholarship was Rebecca Babb-Nelsen. Rebecca graduated summa cum laude from Texas Tech University. She received a Fulbright Scholarship (2003-2004) to study voice in Vienna and now has an extension for the present school year. She has sung leading roles in various opera productions of *La Traviata* (Violetta), *Gianni Schicchi*, (*Lauretta*), *The Merry Wives of Windsor*



Rebecca Babb-Nelsen, soprano, and Klaus Helm, virginal

(*Anne*), *Iolanthe* (*Iolanthe*), *The Pirates of Penzance* (*Mabel*) to mention a few as well as *The Woman in God's Liars* in a *Neue Oper* production in Vienna. She has performed in numerous oratorio concerts and song recitals. Rebecca has also been finalist in a number of international vocal contests.

Rebecca is a devoted Christian and stands every Sunday in the choir loft of the VCC with her husband, Gregg who is talented in acting. Both sing with the choir. She is a lovely, floating

soprano and all are charmed with the quality of her voice. Rebecca was honored in a house concert last spring. A large group enjoyed a baroque concert with selections from Telemann, J. S. Bach, Pachelbel and others performed by Klaus Hehn, our organist at the VCC, Rebecca and other musicians from the VCC (see picture). We wish Rebecca success in all of her future endeavors.

Anne Rothgeb-Peschek, Vienna

VCC Activities

After bidding a fond farewell to the Wibergs at the end of August, the VCC community turned its attention to a busy autumn of activities. For several VCC members, the highlight of the fall was the semiannual collection of >banana boxes= filled with supplies for Project Centipede, and the trip to Romania to deliver these badly needed items to orphan children. As usual, Louise and Heinz Pickart led this activity. They were joined by several VCC members, Pastor Morgan, and others from the broader Project Centipede community. Project Centipede has now been providing essential support to the orphan children of Romania for 15 years.

In October, we enjoyed our annual Harvest Festival, an occasion marked by churches throughout Austria to give thanks for a bountiful harvest. The VCC participated in the annual celebration of (American) Thanksgiving in November. And,

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Music CD Offer

For a donation of at least \$10.00, you can receive a music CD featuring the Choir of the Vienna Community Church conducted by Jacquelyn Pruett.

The CD contains:

- *Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten, featuring Harpist, Arcola Clark
- A Collection of Favorite Anthems.

To receive a copy of this CD, send your mailing information below along with donation of \$10.00 minimum to:

Jerry Burns
76 Earls Gate Rd.
Dayton, OH 45440

Make checks payable to the American & Foreign Christian Union. Donations will benefit the Vienna Community Church.



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Please send me a copy of the music CD featuring the Vienna Community Church Choir.
Send to:

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

VCC Activities

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of course, we prepared ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child with the traditional Advent activities of Vienna and the VCC family. The children's pageant depicting the birth of Our Lord was a particular highlight of the VCC services during Advent.

Joy and Tragedy

The month of December brought both joy and tragedy to the Wibergs and to the VCC family. As many readers of the Bridge already know, Jenn Wiberg, wife of Dave Wiberg, and daughter-in-law of Luray and Jim Wiberg, died of a sudden, massive attack of Hodgkin's Disease on December 28, 2004. All of the Wibergs and the VCC family had rejoiced when Jenn gave birth to a daughter, Alexandria (Lexi), on December 12, less than three weeks before she died. Now we are filled with grief that this loving young family has been torn apart, and we ask for your continued prayers for all of the Wibergs as they confront this tragedy. Jim and Luray are now back in Vienna with their son and granddaughter. There will be a memorial service for Jenn on Saturday, January 22, 2005 at 3:00 PM, in the Reformierte Stadtkirche where the VCC holds its services (Dorotheergasse 16, 1010 Wien).

Of course, the VCC family is also shocked and saddened at the widespread loss of life in the areas impacted by the earthquake and tsunami in southeast Asia. Fortunately, we know of no one from the VCC family who was lost, but there are several tens of people from Vienna and elsewhere in Austria who are among the missing or known dead.

Walt Deitrich, VCC correspondent