



Merry Christmas from AUSTRIA December 2016 – January 2017

Dear Praying Family & Friends,



Thank you for praying for the Family service on the 1st Sunday in Advent. It was an exciting answer to prayer for the Klosterneuburg church and me. We had 49 people at churchmore than 20 were guests plus 8 children. Many of the guests were family members which was even more wonderful! (I know, because David, my son, came and brought his friend!) Most of the teenagers from the children's home came and even did a skit. We had a buffet afterwards and the people stayed around talking together for a long time. One of the teens from the home said she thought they should make and bring food too, because they're "part" of the group. Isn't that great! They're beginning to feel a part of the church.



Please pray for our special Christmas eve service at 11.00 p.m. on Dec. 24th. Invitations and tracts will be handed out in the neighborhood a day before the service. Because most Austrians have a Roman Catholic background, midnight "mass" is normal on Christmas eve.

Please continue to pray for our new evangelistic study. One of the guys from Joe's evangelistic study is now a part of our new study. David and his friend also have expressed a desire to become a part of the group. They've visited a few times last year when it was a "pizza discussion group." All of them have come to church a few times. One was asking very very important questions after one of Jonathan's sermon. We're really encouraged about the study and would appreciate your prayers.



I'm continuing to have coffee with women who need to know the love of Jesus both in Klosterneuburg and in Vienna. I also have the privilege of working with our field director to encourage our newer missionaries and others on our mission team. Pictured above is the Christmas brunch we had together. *We would appreciate your prayers for our Greater Europe Mission/Austria planning retreat we're having on January 5th to 7th in Steier, Austria.* We'll be doing strategic planning on how to reach all of Austria for Christ by partnering with others to make disciples, train leaders, and growing healthy, Christ-centered churches. Each one of us will also be reviewing our own personal ministry priorities for the coming year.

Isaiah, Jonathan and Raphaela's baby boy, is growing strong and is the delight of the church and the teens in the children's home. Right is a picture of Jonathan's father, a friend of the family and Bill, one of our elders all taking part in Isaiah's dedication.



Please pray for the Evangelical Academy (EVAK) in Vienna that Joe Ziska helped to start and at which he taught courses. On January 16 the school is exploring the possibility of accreditation of the EVAK in Austria. Many theological students tend to leave Austria to get their theological education. This year was the first time 4 students moved to Vienna to study at the EVAK instead of going elsewhere in Europe.



As you can see above, Austria is catching up with America & Canada with big beautifully decorated malls. When we first came here in 1979 there were no decorations up before the middle of December. On Christmas eve the tree is set up by Mom while Father takes the children out to play. The tradition is that the "Christ Child" brings the tree and presents, not St. Nicholas. Only on the 24th is "Silent Night" sung while the family stands around the tree.



Thank you for praying for David, Daniel, and me particularly during this Christmas season. As you remember Joe died on December 4th last year. I thought you might be interested in seeing how different graves are here in Austria. Left is Joe's urn grave in the cemetery where he's buried.

2016 has been a year of growth in ministry and personally. I am so very thankful for your partnership with me through your prayers and through your continued financial support. The church in Klosterneuburg is growing under the

leadership of Jonathan Mauerhofer and the other quality men and women God has placed in this fellowship. It's so great to work with such creative people that love God and want to reach the lost in their families and community.

The team working with the children's home is a lot of fun to be a part of. They're such dedicated, energetic people and really love kids. One couple even had 4 of the kids spend Christmas eve with them. One of the wishes of the director at the home when Joe, Gabi and I first came to the home was that he wanted us not to just drop off candy, gifts and money at holidays. They had those kind of organizations already. He wanted us to have a relationship with the children. The idea that God gave Joe to have birthday parties for each child was the beginning of our ministry in the children's lives. Joe would be so pleased to see that the teenagers are now coming to church on their own.

I was unable to go to the "teenie" retreat we had in the summer. When Jonathan asked the kids if there was anything they wanted differently, they wrote of course that it should last a whole week or 2 or 3 and not just last a weekend! The second thing they wrote was that I should come next time!! Sweet.....even here at Christmas time, the children asked if they could visit Joe's grave. I think the Lord let Joe and I become their fun-loving huggy grandparents.

Blessings & a big hug to you in this New Year!! As Paul said, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now..." Phil. 1,3

Love,

Brenda, David & Daniel Ziska

Kaposigasse 52, A-1220 Vienna, Austria

Greater Europe Mission

18950 Base Camp Rd.

Monument, CO 80132-8009

Greater Europe Mission Canada

100 Ontario Street, Oshawa, ON L1G 4Z1

Canada