

AMERICAN CHURCH IN BERLIN



Our Mission

We **welcome** all people.
We **serve** the neighbors of Berlin.
We **grow** together in Christ.
We **celebrate** God's amazing love.

February 2020 Newsletter

THE ACB FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Message	3
A Word from Our Intern	4
Sunday Texts in February	6
February Birthdays	7
Lenten Season	8
Committee of the Month	8
Grow	10
Communication	11
New Faces at ACB	12
Celebrate	13
Fellowship	14
Announcements	16

American Church in Berlin

Office: Leberstr. 7
10829 Berlin
Telephone: +49 (0) 30 813 20 21
Fax: +49 (0) 30 813 2845
E-mail: office@americanchurchberlin.de
www.americanchurchberlin.de



**March
Newsletter Deadline:
21 February**

**Missions Sunday
2 February**

Learn how we serve Berlin
and the world. Be ready to join
in with your praise and

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Mari Thorkelson
Pastoral Intern: Rachel Johnson
Deacon: Kumar Vasanth
Office Manager: Ric Carpenter
Contemporary Worship Leader: Eva Diestel
ACB Gospel Choir: Nanita Winniewski
ACB Chamber Choir: Merrilyn Groenewald

PASTOR'S MESSAGE | FEBRUARY 2020



Dear ACB Family and Friends,

I share with you spiritual food from my new calendar written by Sister Joan Chittister for Jan/Feb:

Nothing will bring world peace faster than the opening of our lives to cultures and religions unlike ours.

Love without measure, without cost, without judgment, is what all our spiritual practices are meant to develop in us.

We at ACB are privileged to worship among diverse peoples of multicultural and multifaith backgrounds. To grow in understanding, care and love for one another not only challenges our world view but our smallness of God. My friend Tom shared his daily prayer with me: "I pray for the wisdom to understand the *opportunity* in front of me. And not let it pass me by."

This time together on earth is OURS. We're a community. Treat it and each other well. If you see something, say something. Even a kind word. Keep it nice for the next person.

Thank you for attending our Communication meeting last Sunday. The healthy Communication model will be in every newsletter. Let's help each other do this better. I am thankful to our Leadership Team (Exec), council and staff for prayerful consideration and action on this topic. Our meeting wasn't perfect but neither are any of us, thank God. Let's keep moving forward with grace.

Please note our Nana Celebration in this newsletter and join in! Also note that Lent begins this month with Ash Wednesday worship on 26 February at 19:00. Time to make a fresh start together.

Council, staff and committee chairs met last week to share events, needs and new ideas. We had so much fun and accomplished so much that we are meeting two more times this year!

On behalf of us all, I extend profound thanks to Michelle Mallasch who is stepping down as Evangelism chair to devote more time to our children's ministry; Marina von Hübbenet who organized church cleaners; Lilian Okani Czech, our newly hired cleaning person; and Anna Grant who resigned from council and will use her skills in other areas. You are all God's blessing to ACB!

Peace and Goodwill,

Pastor Mari

Taste and see that the Lord is good! (Psalm 34:8)



We are well into the new year now, and as the time flies we are looking forward to all sorts of new ways that God is showing up in our midst, inviting us to 'taste and see' God's goodness.

For me, the most exciting development is that ACB will finally start to have "Celebrate Sundays!" Ever since I arrived in Berlin in August 2019 and started meeting people and immersing myself in this community, the one thing I heard from everyone I talked to was that they craved more time for community, more opportunities to get to know the people of ACB and build deeper relationships. As those individual conversations continued on in committees, council, and fellowship circles, more and more folks came on board with the idea of periodically combining services in order to have a unified worship and time for fellowship over a shared meal. After much time, deliberation, brainstorming, and planning, we are excited to try out these quarterly Celebrate Sundays.

On the first Sunday of March, June, and September, the entire ACB community will come together for one service followed by a potluck meal. These Sundays give us a chance to Celebrate all that makes ACB the dynamic community that we are - through study, worship, and fellowship.

There will be:

10:30 - Bible Study

11:00 - Coffee, tea, and snacks

12:00 - Worship Service with Holy Communion

13:00 - Potluck lunch (please bring a dish to share!)

ANOTHER WORD FROM OUR INTERN | FEBRUARY

Leading up to the first of March, I will be hosting small focus groups after both services on Sundays to hear from you all about what makes worship meaningful to you. Why do you come to ACB? Which service do you usually attend and why? What helps you connect to God during worship? What do you most look forward to on Sundays? Please come join the conversation and help me create a meaningful, worshipful Celebrate Sunday liturgy that can represent and unite this ACB community.

Pastoral Intern Rachel



2 February 2020

SUNDAY TEXTS IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, 2 February 2020 | Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Year A

Micah 6:1-8 | Psalm 15 | 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 | Matthew 5:1-12

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Sunday, 9 February 2020 | Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Year A

Isaiah 58:1-9a[9b-12] | Psalm 112:1-9[10] | 1 Corinthians 2:1-12[13-16] | Matthew 5:13-20

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

Sunday, 16 February 2020 | Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Year A

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 | Sirach 15:15-20 | Psalm 119:1-8 | 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 | Matthew 5:21-37

In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We too are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us. .

Sunday, 23 January 2020 | Transfiguration of Our Lord / Last Sunday after Epiphany, Year A

Exodus 24:12-18 | Psalm 2 | Psalm 99 | 2 Peter 1:16-21 | Matthew 17:1-9

Today's festival is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle that comes to a close today and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins in several days. On a high mountain Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem. We turn this week to Ash Wednesday and our yearly baptismal journey from Lent to Easter. Some churches put aside the alleluia at the conclusion of today's liturgy. This word of joy will be omitted during the penitential season of Lent and will be sung again at Easter.

BIRTHDAYS | FEBRUARY 2020

Bernd Schmeißer	1	Charlotte Carrico	13
Simon Batt-Nauerz	2	Julius Babila	14
Chukwuge Karim	3	Ivanel Ndip	14
Simon Dahnert	3	Ivanna Ndip	15
Antonio Mochmann	6	Julien Steffan	15
Shaofang Qi	6	Hanna Kaiserauer	17
Leonard Nghwagi Mashimi	7	Erich Toman	17
Saran Rohde	8	Sabine Grund	18
Johan Askes	8	Thomas von Rosen	19
Justine Schwarz	9	Petra Davis	21
Emma Batt-Nauerz	9	Sharon Eze	21
Zedré Thomas	9	Joanna Vasanth	21
Jane Ndungu	9	Aicha Karim	22
Lenus Carlson	11	Rosanna Buckley	22
Ralf Grasedyck	11	Alicia Luetzow	22
Svea von Hübbenet	13	Rebecca Siimer	22
		Jakob Müller	22
		Maria Ljepojevic	23
		Charles Ampaabeng	26
		Humberto Cedeño	27
		Nemibo Koko	27
		Lars Nichols	27
		Gabriele Fritz	28
		Andreas Boelcke	28



LENTEN SEASON | FEBRUARY 2020

Just around the corner.....LENT 2020

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. You are invited to attend Ash Wednesday worship on Wednesday, 26 February, 19:00.



On the five Wednesdays between Ash Wednesday and holy Week we will once again offer a midweek service beginning with a simple meal of soup and bread at 18.00 followed by Evening Prayer at 19.00-19.35. A sign up sheet for meals is posted on the church bulletin board. Thank you for taking action. Our Evening Prayer will focus on a different Psalm each week addressing the HOPE found in themes of stillness, forgiveness, waiting, darkness and letting go. We will sing the much loved music of Holden Evening Prayer.

One new addition this year is a prayer class, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*, questioning and digging into myths, difficulties and surprises about prayer. Beginning Wed, 5 March for 5 weeks, 17.15-18.00, pre-soup, ACB Little Light Room, led by Pastor Mari.

Lenten Mid-Week Soup Suppers @18.00, Service @ 19.00

You are heartily invited to all or any part of our Lenten Mid-week services.

COMMITTEE OF THE MONTH | FEBRUARY 2020

Mutual Ministry

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Matthew 18:15-20

Following our Lord's counsel, persons with disagreements first take them directly to the person with whom they are having difficulty with. They complain not to others but rather go directly to the other congregation member, the pastor, or the member of the congregation's staff with whom they are having disagreements. Their goal is reconciliation, the restoration of the relationship between two or more parties. If reconciliation cannot be achieved, the person takes one or two other persons with them—e.g., a wise, dispassionate, unbiased person—again for the sake of reconciliation.

We offer our support to the congregation, pastor and staff: to listen and address, to motivate and to accompany if needed or desired. If you have a problem or feeling overwhelmed and don't know how to say it, we will be right by your side approaching the person/committee or staff member with a problem that you see. Mutual Ministry will go with you and encourage a constructive reconciliation. All parties shall be heard in a safe setting and be enabled to address concerns.

Please do approach us if you seek support:

Committee members are:

Ralf Grasedyck Luise Hoffman Nitin Kundoori

Susanne Smith-Hinz, Chair

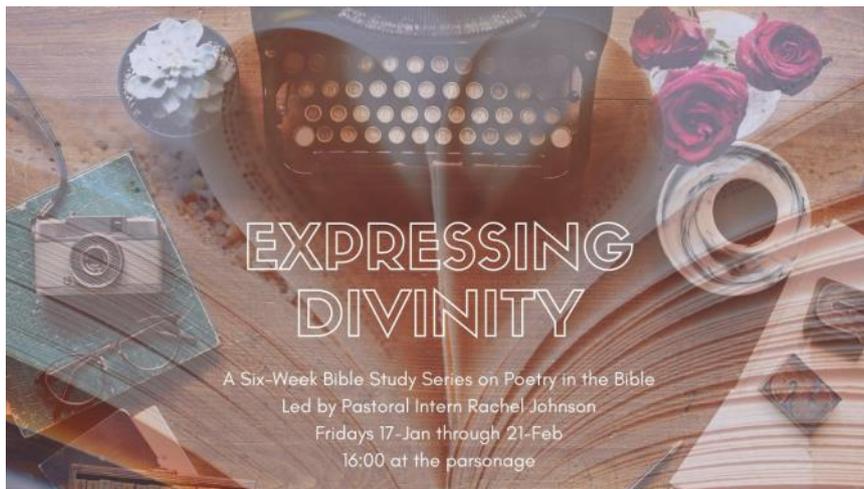


GROW | FEBRUARY 2020

Bible Study

16:00 on Fridays, through 21-February

Pastoral Intern Rachel is leading a six-week Bible Study series: "Expressing Divinity: Poetry in the Bible and in Our Lives." We are exploring poetic



books of the Bible (Psalms, Job, Song of Solomon, and more) and poems by people in the Bible (Hannah, Mary the Mother of Jesus, Moses and Miriam, and more!), and comparing them with modern poetry.

Join us on Fridays at 16:00 in the parsonage (Leberstr. 7, 10829 Berlin) for this exploration into how humanity has related to God through creative expression for millennia and how we still do today.

Spring Cleaning



It's that time of year you have been waiting for! Would you believe that a group of students from Indiana University have planned a trip to Berlin just to take part on 16 May (put it in your calendar). We would like to thoroughly demuck the building and afterwards BBQ. Special help is needed for minor plastering work, making the cellar into a real storage room. Does anybody know a mason who might be willing to help?

Alex von Engelhardt, Property Co-Chair

A Bible-based Communication Model

Following the example of Matthew 18:15-20, ACB has selected these guidelines for our communication.

1. I will take my question/concern/problem directly to the person most responsible (ex. I question why my child’s Sunday School class was cancelled, I ask the teacher or the chairperson of Christian Education; I have a concern relating to worship, I would talk to the pastor; music, I would talk to the pastor or the chairperson of worship and music; or youth events, I would talk to the director of the event, etc.) If I don’t know who to talk to, then I will ask. I will not discuss my concern with anyone else but the person most responsible; I will avoid complaining, negativity and gossip.
2. When I don’t know how to articulate my concern or don’t feel comfortable talking directly to a person, I know that I can approach a pastor or deacon to help me reflect out my concern and advise on a plan or approach to the responsible person. A pastor or deacon is committed to keeping my conversation confidential. A pastor or deacon can always be asked to accompany me when discussing my concern with the responsible person.
3. If I do not feel comfortable approaching a pastor or deacon, or if my concern or issue is with a pastor or deacon, I will approach the Mutual Ministry team to help guide me.

If no resolution is reached, I can then feel free to talk to a council member for direction. If I speak to a council member first, they will immediately direct me to talk to the responsible person according to the communication guidelines. An unwillingness or inability to follow these guidelines can be taken as a sign that the problem is not important enough to discuss with anyone; pray for guidance. The biblical approach can be the most efficient way to resolve a concern, question or problem, and keep faith with our baptismal promise to build up the body of Christ. When you hear someone questioning, complaining or gossiping, simply direct them to the appropriate person.

A model for
communication
at ACB

When a disagreement arises:

Go to...

1. The Person
2. Pastoral Staff
3. Mutual Ministry
4. Church Council

NEW FACES AT ACB | FEBRUARY 2020

Anisha Grover

I came to Berlin seeking community, a place for nourishment, to grow from, and to act. A place to be, and a place to do.

I have been coming to ACB most Sundays since July, a little hesitant, a little curious, and every time I left feeling reinvigorated and renewed by the sermons, and by the people I sat with and met over coffee and cakes. A light to carry with me into the week. For the past few weeks I've had the pleasure of giving something back to this community that has sustained me over these months, by working backstage in the office on the database, and designing posters you'll see up and around soon.

I am an artist and biologist who loves nature, gardening, and being outside. It's where I have always felt the most connected to the Divine. And like many Millennials, am a fierce new fighter for environmental justice.

Anisha has also gotten right down to business and started helping in the office. Currently she is trying to get our data up to date for a new directory. Don't be surprised to hear from her.



Sarah Bateman

I just moved to Berlin (a week ago) and have attended two services and some of the social groups. I am a dancer and I have come to Berlin to find work. As a child, I trained in ballet from the age of 2 and a half. I studied at London Contemporary Dance School,



gaining my BA(Cons) in Contemporary Dance. I then danced for a year with Theatre St Gallen, Switzerland. This led me to gain my Master of The Arts Degree in Contemporary Dance.

My goal in Berlin is making or creating dance and just having the opportunity to attend classes frequently; something I was unable to do back at home.

Overall, I am a creative person; I love interesting cuisines, cooking, poetry; I have an eclectic interest in variant music styles; I love comedy (I mean I loooooove comedy!) and of course my interest in the Church/Faith/Religion and Travel (two components which have also brought me to Berlin.)

I have really enjoyed meeting all the people here at ACB and I am extremely grateful to have been welcomed so openly. I would like to say a huge Thank you for the kindness shown me and also your love and support since my short arrival. I truly look forward to my life here and also growing with the ACB family.

CELEBRATE | FEBRUARY 2020

Dom Advent Concert 2020

In just 11 months (2 December) we will have our next Advent- and Christmas Caroling Event in the Berliner Dom.

Some of you might not be aware that there is a group which is seeking sponsors to cover the costs for this evening.

We try to meet regularly, collect ideas about who to contact and get the information out.

If you are interested in helping us with this project, please feel free to contact either Uta Tate, Marina von Hübner or me, Frank Campos (my email is frankfromberlin@aol.com)



Let's Celebrate Nanita Winniewski



Did you know that our beloved Gospel Choir director, Nana Winniewski has been voluntarily leading our ACB Gospel Choir for 10 years? It is time to CELEBRATE NANA on her 10th Anniversary this very month, Sunday, 9 February. Further good news is that the Gospel Choir will offer several selections at our 11am worship on 9 February, involving us all in giving thanks and praise to God and to the great group of volunteer singers who have generously and faithfully offered their gifts. Following worship we will hold a special reception for Nana and choir where you can make a donation for her awesome contributions. At that time we will present this gift to her as a token of our joy, gratitude and love. Yea Nana!

FELLOWSHIP | FEBRUARY 2020



All women of ACB are invited to gather for some femme fellowship! We will meet at Cafe BilderBuch (Akazienstr. 28D-10823 Berlin) on **Wednesdays , 5 and 19 February** starting at 18:30. Feel free to arrive late if you need to! You can find us in the café's larger back room. This is a time of casual fellowship where we can get to know each other over cups of whatever beverage your heart desires! Come to share your stories, your ideas, your passions, and whatever else is on your heart. We look forward to seeing you

LGBTQIA Christian Meet-up

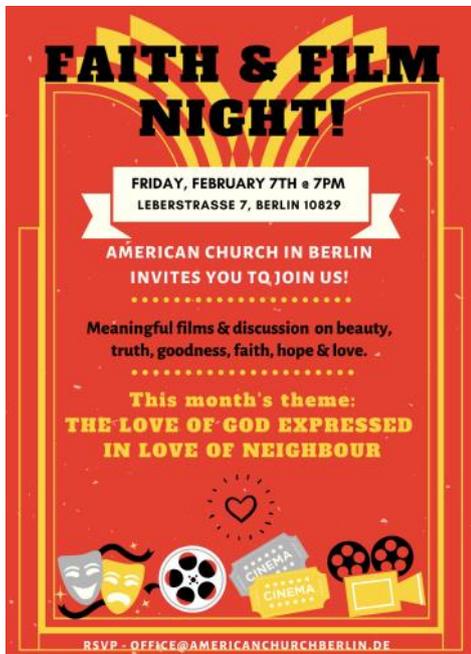
Wednesday 12 February

19:00—21:00

At the Harwicks' home | near Senefelderplatz U2 |
Contact for full address: ninamharwick@gmail.com



All LGBTQIA folks are welcome to attend this inaugural small group meeting! We hope this will be an opportunity to get to know one another in a casual and open setting. Feel free to chat with Emma Holliday or Courtney McHill for more information. (You can also email Emma at egholliday@gmail.com)



On the Wings of Eagles

Join us at the parsonage (Leberstr. 7, 10829 Berlin) for a fun evening of fellowship, cinema and discussion. Not to mention **REALLY** good popcorn. Feel free to bring your own beverage. The movie this month, released in 2016, deals with the life of Eric Liddel, a Scottish-born, Olympic gold medal winner and missionary to China, where he died in internment in 1945. Devout enough to refuse to run on Sundays, his quest is almost foiled. This quest was also the story for the Oscar award winning movie "Chariots of Fire" from 1981.

By the way—we are still looking for a Netscape profile so as to view "The Two Popes".

Up near the Fischköppe—Rostock



An ACB outing is always a great way to get away from the stress of the city. Especially during Advent. And that is exactly what an adventure-loving group did on 14 December 2020. The city, with a population

of just over 200,000, is home to the oldest university in the Baltic region and one of the oldest universities in the world, the *University of Rostock*, founded in 1419. Thanks to Michael Fritz for organizing a wonderful day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS | FEBRUARY 2020

1-2-5 Matching Grant



THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to our 125 fundraising initiative in celebration of the 125th Anniversary of Luther Church last December 2019. The congregation raised 5,294 euros in support of our Music Ministry, mostly for musician salaries. In addition we have received two matching grants (2,500 euros) with two more on the way for a grand total of 10,294 euros. Outstanding! This is what gratitude can do! THANKS BE TO GOD!

Taxing Season

Don't get the directions wrong. You would not want to miss this extremely enjoyable time of the year! Or at least not make it any more unpleasant than it already is. We are in the midst of preparing the tax certificates for 2019. They will be available in the church at worship service.



Please try to pick yours up there so we can avoid postage fees. If you have moved in the last year, please let us know so that we can put your correct address on the certificate.
