

November 22, 2024

Dear Brethren, Friends and Family,

The spirit of togetherness and love is something that we experience every year during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was shared and expressed once again this year.

Even though, due to sickness and diverse frailties, our numbers in the USA were less than in previous years with around 30 in personal attendance, the great outpouring of brotherly kindness and great joy was present. Some participated by viewing our live services over the internet, and communicated with each other over the chat line. This year at the Feast in Tempe, Arizona, we did a fair number of things together, including a game night, a walk at a Desert Botanical Garden, glow-in-the-dark 3D mini golf, talks around the fire pit on the 11th floor, and a dinner with everyone. We enjoyed inspiring and heart-warming special music, including a quartet presentation in German ("Alles Leben strömt aus Dir") and a choir presentation in English ("Heros and Dreamers"). The overarching messages at the Feast focused on our soon-coming future and what we can do daily to stay strong as we move forward. There was a focus on love for fellow brethren and the need to stay connected. Overall, it was a great Feast physically and spiritually.

The Feast in Kalkar, Germany, was considerably larger with over 100 in attendance. Most of the time, our group was in the hotel as there weren't many other people staying there, making it even more personal.

The importance of being a Family was alluded to in several messages as WE, The Church, are just that. We observed the Feast together in unity. Nobody was alone, or shouldn't feel that way. We were there for each other when one of us suffered and we rejoiced together when one of us was praised.

We had a baptism of Sabrina Grillmeier welcoming her to the Family, who was overjoyed with emotion.

We had an ordination of Evelyn Gerz to the rank of Deaconess as she has been very significant in creating short videos for the youth and their families in the Church, among other things, fulfilling the role of a deaconess as described in the Bible (1 Timothy 3:11 ["wives," not "their wives"; the reference here is to deaconesses]; Romans 16:1-2 ["servant" describes a deaconess here]; Titus 2:3-5).

We had a special occasion for a Family member, Nicole Kiserev, who turned 50, by surprising her during our Fun Show, which meant a lot to her.

We presented a very nice and emotional memorial video of our long-time and faithful member Margaret Adair, widow of late Evangelist Colin Adair, showing us all what a big influence she was in our Family in the Church, who will never be forgotten, and we all look forward to seeing her again in the near future. (This video was shown both in Tempe and in Kalkar. We are also planning to conduct a memorial service for Margaret on December 15, 2024, in Escondido, California. If you would like to attend, please contact us.)

We had an interactive Bible Study presented by Norbert Link, and during a private session with children and teens (without parents), presented by Evelyn Gerz similar to her videos, Norbert Link asked questions where the children and teens could express themselves freely with their experiences in the world and their understanding of the Bible.

We enjoyed several activities including an 80's Themed Dance night, a Fun Show filled with a variety

of talent and many laughs, an interesting and informative video of Jerusalem presented by one of our deacons, Manuel Müller, who also organized an outing to Colonia Ulpia Traiana which was a Roman city in the province of Germania Inferior, founded by Emperor Trajan, located in Germany along the Rhine River and was one of the two most highly-ranked Roman cities in the province.

We also enjoyed a Whiskey tasting night for those who participated which was very well prepared and presented by our Family member, Andreas Rätz.

Our Family, the Church, has a number of talented individuals which was shown through the special music performances throughout the Feast. We have a choir and an orchestra including several pianists, violinists, flute and trumpet players, and singers. We enjoyed live music throughout the entire Feast, including the singing of the hymns.

Everybody has a talent in their own particular way which benefits the Church, even if some may think that it's not significant enough. Our translation team did a tremendous job. Our technical team and everyone else who helped out in any possible way did a tremendous job. We did it all together!

It was truly an enjoyable and successful Feast with much excitement for next year as plans are already in the process. Making a good impression on the hotel was also vital as they want us back. And why wouldn't we want to go back? An All-Inclusive Hotel with breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets, beer and wine, soft serve ice cream machines and snacks at all times, an amusement park included right next door, our own meeting hall with fully stocked drinks and snacks, coffee machines with a variety of options are just some of the perks offered at this facility. And just like with any facility, some things need improvement, and we had a meeting with the director who wanted to know everything that could make our stay even more enjoyable next year. God has truly blessed us with this location and that is also something we should not take for granted.

And by the way, if you are interested in attending our Feast site in Kalkar, Germany, in 2025, please contact us.

Compared to the world, we are not even a fraction of a percentage, but a small group that observes God's commanded Holy Days and Feasts. Where do we hear such information in a short amount of time that teaches us what the future is going to be like, when Christ returns to make this world a better place? And yet, while we observed God's commanded Feast Days, the world did not. The attitude of disdain for what we believe is quite evident in the fact that they don't observe God's commanded Feast Days, and yet, the vast majority of people in the world didn't get to experience what we have experienced during that time. This was not by any means a burdensome occasion but rather a joyful occasion, spending time with people of like mind and it's unfortunate that it only lasts a short time and we can look forward to next year or a future time when we will all see each other again at the time of our resurrection to eternal life.

Unfortunately, some of our Family members were not able to attend the Feast in Germany this year due to illness and other complications, but they were not forgotten as we continuously prayed for them. There were also some who were able to attend this year when physically and humanly speaking, it did not appear to be possible. Nevertheless, we continue to pray for each other in hopes that we will ALL see each other again next Feast. That still may not be the case for some but that doesn't stop us from trying, praying to God that He will miraculously intervene. God wants us ALL to be together, and He is limitless in His capabilities, but He does also test our faith at times.

In his most recent editorial, titled, "Strengthened in Faith", Dave Harris says the following:

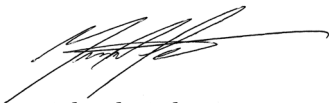
“God has all the answers to anything we could possibly imagine or ever need! Have we grown in faith to the extent that we believe this? Do we truly face all our challenges based on this kind of resolute and unshakeable faith? Being called by God in this life should allow us to reflect and consider the many times when our faith has been tested. When we fellowship as members of the body of Christ (the Church of God), we share our stories of faith with others. We should also be able to see personal growth and how, with the power of God’s Holy Spirit, we are being strengthened in faith... Having the kind of faith that will please God is, indeed, the hard work of salvation! Let’s remember that we aren’t alone when it all seems too great a challenge to have faith for the moment, but consider, we have the example of a father who sought to have his son healed. Jesus said, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes’ (Mark 9:23). I think the father’s response hits home for all of us: ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief’ (Mark 9:24). He did find the help he needed, and Jesus did help him and heal his son. We, too, can be strengthened in faith by God—let’s fervently ask for God’s help and He will!”

We will experience a time of togetherness once again in the near future where we will ALL be together at the place of safety here on earth that God will choose (Proverbs 14:26; Revelation 12:14; Isaiah 26:20-21; 33:16), and He will make it possible for almost everyone who will be counted worthy, to be there for protection from the prophesied events that will take place on this earth. However, there will be some who won’t be there since they will be used by God for a specific purpose to fulfill His plans, like the Two Witnesses, for example (Revelation 11:3). There will not be several different locations but only one place of safety, and we will not depend solely on our physical ability to get there, but God WILL intervene in some way, perhaps even supernaturally making sure that His chosen and faithful people will be protected (Luke 17:34-37; Acts 8:38-40). Let us not forget, even presently, that with God ALL things are possible, and we need to have the absolute faith in Him that He will provide and help us.

It’s always sad when the Feast is over, but we encourage our members, Our Family, to stay positive throughout the year and to look forward to when we will all see each other again. The question of whether or not we ALL can be in Germany together for the Feast of Tabernacles next year is being addressed. And why not? Even if it may look like, humanly speaking, that not all of our members, and others, could travel there, there is nothing impossible for God. If it is God’s Will, He will make it possible!

Let us continue to be there for one another, praying for one another, looking to God for His mighty intervention.

In God’s service and with Christian love,



Michael Link