

Aaron and Annegret Bowes “And you shall be witnesses to Me...” in Germany

Dear Praying Friends,

Jesus said, “I will build my church.” (Mt 16:18) We are not yet a church, but our Sunday afternoon Fellowship in the Soup Kitchen is growing. Lately we have had over 40 people attending with some new visitors each week. And it is starting to take on its own character. We are in a low income apartment block neighborhood. Most of our guests do not have a church background and we experience the challenges that go along with it. Some have issues with alcohol, several have done jail time, others come because of loneliness and there are poor people too. Often we have requests for food, even after the meal. We try our best to make it a fellowship for them and on their level. It is encouraging that people tell us that our Sunday meeting is very important to them and that they enjoy coming. We usually have some good conversations after each service and people are starting to take literature or a Bible. One man age 62 was recently diagnosed with cancer. He started an aggressive chemo treatment. He asked to speak with me privately several times. He said he was afraid and shared how he has started praying to God. This is quite a change for him, when we first met him three years ago, he said he had no faith in God and would make jokes about religion. He explained how he grew up in a bar, his mother ran the place and he hasn't seen too many churches from the inside. We continue to meet, please pray for this man that he will accept Jesus as his Savior and be prepared for eternity. We always pray as a team before our meeting, two of our guests who volunteer in the kitchen joined us on their own, even though this is new for them. One of them recently asked me about baptism. Please pray that people continue to open up to the gospel.



Retreat: From June 21-23 we are planning a short retreat in a Christian guesthouse in Wernigerode in the Harz mountains. We will enjoy the town and surrounding nature trails and park and they have a chapel room for our meetings. Most people from the apartment blocks hardly ever get out of Halle, so they are excited about it. We have around 20 guests from the Soup Kitchen signed up. This should be quite a challenge for us. We need lots of prayer. We are subsidizing the costs as most of our guests have a low income. So thank you for your donations towards our mission work here.

A lesson in serving: When we first came to Halle about 3 years ago, we inquired about serving in the Train Station Mission and helping with a service there. The director responded by saying, “You move to Halle first and come and serve at the mission and then we will see.” We have a wonderful director and she meant what she said. The workers at the Mission are expected to follow rules and instructions, get along well with others on the team, serve the guests and work hard too. I enjoy serving there and get to meet lots of new people but I needed to be corrected along the way too.

Serving does keep us humble. And recently the directors asked Anne and me to help do a service on Good Friday in the Mission. That was a nice surprise.



So on Good Friday we held a short service right at the Train Station Mission, we were 14 people and it was a very moving experience to share what Christ did for us on the cross and to pray the Lord's prayer with the guests. The director asked if we could do another service on Pentecost Sunday (an official holiday here), and of course we agreed! The mission

does not have a regular service and so in between it is no problem to invite guests from the Mission over to our Sunday Fellowship in the Soup Kitchen and several now attend regularly.

As you can see, we are involved in ministry partnerships here in Halle. Anne is part of a team of Christians from different churches that hold a regular Friday Kids' club right in our apartment block district. She would like to give a short update on this ministry: Our numbers have been growing and we are usually around 20 children. What is more important though is that the children who come (most of them from a Muslim background) have grown in their understanding of the gospel. Since Christmas we have been doing a series of Bible stories from the gospel of Luke and Acts, focusing on God Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The series was entitled "The three ????" (a well-known children's detective series too) and the kids had fun being "Bible detectives" and finding out who the three ??? stood for. Last week we had "The Finals" with a quiz and it was exciting to see how much they remembered and understood from over a dozen Bible stories!



Family News: In July we are looking forward to a family reunion when all of our children will come to Frankfurt to celebrate the marriage of our daughter Kathrin and Thorben with a church service. (They already had the legal ceremony in 2020). We found a large vacation rental where the whole family can stay together over the July 2nd weekend – we are spread out in three countries and so we don't get to see each other that often!

We thank you again for your faithful prayers and support. Have a great summer and may God richly bless you!

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