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Rev. Joseph and Deac. Dr. Jennie Asher

DID YOU KNOW?

- Germany is the 7th largest country in Europe.
- German is the language with the most native speakers in Europe.
- German is the official language of 5 countries – Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein. It is also spoken in Northern Italy and some French provinces.
- Plans are underway in Berlin to build a Christian church, a Mosque, and a Synagogue all in one. It is called the “House of One” and will cost 43.5 million Euros.



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Joe Begins Work With the U.S. Military

Responding to the needs of the United States military and government contract workers who support them overseas is a drastic turn in the direction of Christian ministry that Jennie and I are taking for the cause of Christ... and it is completely unanticipated. When we left for Turkey, our focus was to bring the Gospel to those locked in a false faith, and following a prophet with no connection to the true God. But now, our work has completely changed, and this new course is a joy to see.

The US Armed Forces is a culture all to itself. Few without a connection to it (former Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard personnel) really understand what is involved in “being in uniform” for our country. And I don’t understand it all either, but this is what I’ve learned so far.

The military culture begins behind a security gate with armed

guards. Because of the nature of the combat mission (to suppress the enemies of the United States and protect our country), security is paramount. Military installations are not recreation theme parks where Americans can go to see new and surprising things, like the latest American air superiority fighter (the F22A Raptor) or a modern aircraft carrier. Instead, it is a world unto itself with the very important assignment to fight America’s battles and carry out the MISSION. And if we are in a war, that mission is to win the war.

For that reason, it isn’t easy to get access to a military installation. Americans with a passport cannot just show up at the gate of an American base or post and expect entry. To interact with the US military, one must have a reason, and then depending on what you want to do, countless background checks to determine who you

Continued on page 3



The entrance to the U.S. Army base in Sembach, Germany.

God Gives Us New Friends

It started like any other bus ride on a cold January day. Get on (while giving thanks for the warmth of the bus), pay the fare, find a place to sit, and settle in for the jerky ride with all its stops and starts. Little did I (Jennie) know that this ride would be different. This was the day that God would put a new friend in my life.

Sitting in the seat across from me was a tiny elderly woman, her wrinkled face peering out between her red scarf and hat. I smiled at her. She smiled back. I said, "Hallo." She returned the greeting. I smiled. She smiled back. After a very long minute or two, I said, "Mein Name ist Jennie." She smiled and said, "Mein ist Hanna." I smiled. She smiled back. Silence. "That's it," I thought. "That's all I can say. Besides 'Danke' and a few other words which aren't useful at the moment, I know no more German." In this moment of discomfort, I looked out the

window. When I glanced back, she was looking at me. So I smiled. And she smiled back.

Then, after about 5 very uncomfortable minutes of silence (and smiles!), she said (in beautiful, perfect English), "Are you American?" Pleasantly surprised, I said, "Yes, I am." A conversation ensued that lasted the rest of our bus ride. We told each other where we were from and where we live now. I talked about my husband. We talked about the weather. And finally we said that we hoped to see each other again.

And, as God had it planned, we did see each other again – a few days later on another bus ride. And then another the following day. Again the next week we met. And each time we got to know each other a little better.

One day Hanna was returning from the hospital where she had some tests. We talked a bit about her ailment, and I told her



that I would pray for her. "Do you believe in God?" she asked. "Yes, I do. And I believe that He provides for all of our needs. So I will pray that the doctors are able to help you."

Arrival at her stop cut the conversation short, but the next time we saw each other, we talked about Jesus. That's when I found out that Hanna is a Jehovah's Witness. "Will you still talk to me?" she asked with a hopeful gaze. "Of course I will," I replied. "But I want to tell you more about Jesus."

"Oh, I love to talk about the Bible" was her cheerful reply.

Continued on p. 3

EASTER WORSHIP AT KELC



On Sunday, April 16 we held our Easter worship service at Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church with more than 70 people in attendance. As the organ belted out the familiar melodies and the voices of young and old vigorously joined in declaring "I Know That My Redeemer

Lives", we couldn't help remembering last Easter, when we sang that familiar tune in our living room in Ankara with our little group of 7 Lutherans. And we couldn't help but think of all of you, throughout the world, who joined in that great declaration, "He is Risen. He is Risen, indeed. Alleluia"

Joe Begins Work With the U.S. Military, *continued from p. 1*

REALLY are.

Earlier this year, I started the three month process to introduce myself to the US Army chaplains in the region in order to try to determine some helpful work that the military could use. It quickly became obvious that with my prison chaplaincy background, the best place to start was with the area military prison and the military police post. This seemed to be the “best fit” for a volunteer civilian chaplain helping the military. And this work should start in June.

So, what are the military spiritual needs? They are vast and varied. To the single teenagers entering the military

as a first job, loneliness, new career pressures, dealing with a significant change in personal freedom and being far away from home, alcohol or drug issues, depression, and even suicide. So, a Lutheran pastor starts by communicating one’s worth in Christ, and one’s help from Christ.

To military personnel who are young and married, families are growing, with the needs centering on family dynamics (building strong relationships on a foundation of Christ). To career military individuals and families (ten to thirty years of service), a big help to these soldiers, sailors, airmen and

Marines would be helping them grow in faith in Christ as the stabilizing factor as they face the pressures for advancement in rank, frequent relocations, and many other challenges.

Regardless of their stage of career, our military personnel need the Good News of God’s love for them. Whether it is at the military prison, the army hospital, or in a base cafeteria, it is a joy and privilege to bring to the U.S. military the comfort and assurance found in a faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

God Gives Us New Friends, *continued from page 2*

It soon became clear that Hanna loved to talk about “the Bible” but didn’t bring Jesus into our conversation much. I learned that each day when I saw her on the bus, she was headed to someone’s apartment to “teach them about the Bible” or downtown to the mall to talk to anyone who would listen.

Hanna is deeply rooted in her beliefs. Why is her English so good? She spent 6 months in New York training to be a “missionary” for the Jehovah’s Witnesses. She then spent 4 years in another country “teaching people about the Bible”, and since

then she’s lived here in Kaiserslautern doing her daily work for her “church.”

Now Hannah has someone new to talk to about the Bible. We meet each Thursday for Bible study. I ask her questions about her beliefs and then share from God’s Word what I believe. Each week, Hannah is hearing about Jesus, true God and true Man, who died for the sins of the world.

Please pray for these visits. Pray that the Holy Spirit will work in her heart to bring her to faith in Christ as her Lord and Savior.

You can be a part of this work!

To support our work, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861
Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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Mapleton, IA 51034

Mark checks “Support of - Asher.” Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at lcms.org/asher.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Jennie's continued progress in German classes, especially the ability to memorize vocabulary.
- The three KELC families with newborn babies who will soon be baptized.
- Wisdom for Joe as he writes a curriculum for preparing military prisoners for reentry and reintegration.
- Jennie's witness to Hannah, that God would work in Hannah's heart so that she sees Jesus as her Savior.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Joe receiving access to the area army bases.
- Joe's completion of orientation at the army base.
- Jennie passing the beginner level language exam and moving on to the elementary level.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who pray for us, encourage and support us

Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church

The work at Kaiserslautern Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) continues to grow. Here we provide solid Lutheran Word and Sacrament ministry in the English language to all who desire to attend.

God is richly blessing this work. Joe continues to lead worship and preach each Sunday, communicating the Good News of Jesus's death and resurrection and assuring members that "Jesus is the Answer" to the struggles and joys in life today. He also teaches the adult Bible class, covering topics from the liturgy to principles of Biblical interpretation to Luther's Small Catechism.

Jennie has begun to guide the congregation's educational programs. This has included planning for appropriate age-group divisions for Sunday School, evaluating curriculum and recruiting teachers for the fall. She also teaches the youth

Bible study as well as music for all the children. What a joy it is to hear the children in the hallway after Sunday School singing, "God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!" (LSB 594)

This month, we expect to be blessed with two infant Baptisms. Four youth will begin Confirmation instruction in the Fall- in the year of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation!

The servicemen and women, along with their families, are grateful for a place where they can worship in their own language and in a service (liturgy) with which they are familiar. We are privileged to share to the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for the salvation of our world lost in sin. It's great to be at KELC!

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:17

God's richest blessings to each of you as you serve Him.

Joe and Jennie Asher



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Joe and Jennie Asher, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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