

SERVING THE LORD IN

K-TOWN, GERMANY

NEWS FROM THE JENSEN FAMILY



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Landstuhl, Germany

March 6, 2024

Dear friends,

First of all, I apologize for taking so long to get another newsletter out. The last time I wrote was in October, and of course so much has happened since then. One of the highlights of October was Columbus Day weekend. One of our families was visiting a pastor friend in Woerth in the Alsace region of France—Pastor Garry Heintz—who then offered a Sunday afternoon English service and invited our congregation. Chaplain Ayers and I drove down to attend the service. It was apparently the first English-language service in that church building since Christmas 1944, when the Allied troops liberated the town. Besides all that, I had the honor of meeting John Warwick Montgomery in person! Dr. Montgomery, an ordained LCMS pastor, runs an apologetics academy in Strasbourg, France.

At the end of October, over Reformation weekend, we welcomed a very special guest at KELC—Chaplain Craig Muehler, the director of the LCMS’s Ministry to the Armed Forces. I describe him as the “chief of chaplains for the LCMS.” Chaplain Muehler was in the area to visit LCMS chaplains in Germany. He was able to speak about the Ministry to the Armed Forces during Bible Study as I drove up to Frankfurt to preach at Trinity. That evening, the Hester family threw a Reformation Day party at their home, including watching the Luther movie from 2003.

On Reformation Day, I picked up Rev. Brian Kachelmeier at the Frankfurt airport. We overlapped a few days as I showed him the ropes of living in Germany. On November 1st, we held an All Saints’ Day service together. Pastor Kachelmeier was able to meet some members and prepare for taking over for the month of November. The next day, Emma, Agatha, and I flew to the United States for our first visit since moving to Germany over two years earlier. Our dear friend, Lisa Helmreich, picked us up at the airport in Detroit and drove us to Bay City. We enjoyed having the opportunity to ride along on a Helmreich Farms sugar beet harvester. The Helmreichs also threw an open house for us to reconnect with many of our Michigan friends. In September, I had baptized a baby girl in Frankfurt and her great-grandparents from Michigan attended the open house! On Sunday morning, I presented at St. John Amelith during the Bible Study. It was an honor to be back in the church where Emma and I were married. That afternoon, we rode down to Fort Wayne with Pastor Stephen Starke.

In Fort Wayne, we met up with my mom and grandma. Agatha had the honor of meeting her great-grandmother for the first time (at Culver’s, of all places)! We were in town for the Good Shepherd Institute at the seminary. My mom and grandma babysat Agatha while Emma and I attended the conference. We enjoyed our time staying with our dear friends, the Ottens, who were at Oberursel during our first year in Germany. I baptized their son, Wilhelm, in Kaiserslautern, and Emma and I are his godparents. It was so wonderful catching up with old friends and professors at the seminary! I was a bit nervous driving in the United States again, especially being in mom’s Ford F-150! I’m not used to such a big vehicle! But driving in the U.S. came back right away.

From Fort Wayne, we drove to St. Louis, where Agatha was able to meet her Uncle Ian, her grandpa and step-grandma, step-grandpa, and her other great-grandparents, who she sees on the phone every week. How wonderful to be back in St. Louis! There we were able to spend a day at the International Center, where I also presented on our ongoing work. I also presented at my home congregation—Peace Lutheran—and led a chapel service at my old grade school, Abiding Savior Lutheran. There were three of my former grade school teachers and a former high school principal in attendance! For me, it was moving to present at a chapel service where I sat as a student 17 years earlier. I also spoke at a pastors’ “Winkel” at Peace. My home pastor, Rev. Jon Furgeson, introduced me as a son of the congregation. I was able to say with confidence that I am a son of nearly every congregation represented, growing up at some, grandparents as members of others, and parents at others. The pastors from the congregations where I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained were all present. Another highlight of our time in St. Louis was an open house thrown by my mom and stepdad. What a delight to greet old family and friends, including our very special friends, the Goetsches! The Goetsches were members at KELC when I was a vicar and now live in the St. Louis area. We often spoke of how our families are intertwined going back to the 1920s when David Goetsch’s grandfather and my great-grandfather were students together at Concordia Milwaukee.

Emma’s family flew from South Africa to St. Louis, where we spent several days together. We then rented vehicles and caravanned together down to Bossier City, Louisiana, to visit Emma’s brother who is there with the Air Force. On the way, we saw Vicksburg, Mississippi, which has been a dream for much of my life! In Bossier City, I presented at Immanuel Lutheran, where Emma’s brother attends. Then we drove to Dallas and stayed with my cousin. The next day, we drove across Texas to El Paso, where Emma’s family lived for many years. Then, it was off to Arizona.

In Arizona, we stayed with Emma’s grandmother in the Tucson area. Oh, what lovely weather we had! It was a joy to spend Thanksgiving with Emma’s relatives and attend the WELS church where Emma’s family has been connected for over a century. In the Sierra Vista area, we visited with relatives from Emma’s dad’s side. For me, it was meaningful to spend time on the old family ranch. On that Sunday, I presented at the Bible Study at Catalina Lutheran. From Phoenix, we flew back to Detroit, where we ate a last lunch at Bob Evans with friends from Bay City. Then, it was back to Germany just in time for Advent to begin.

For our Advent midweek services, we focused on the “canticles of Christmas,” including Mary’s Magnificat, the Benedictus of Zechariah, as well as the Nunc Dimittis of Simeon and the Gloria of the angels. We had a peaceful Advent season, which was much needed after all the traveling in November. We spent so much time in the car driving from Michigan to Arizona that Agatha became obsessed with cars, so we gave her some Hot Wheels and Matchbox cars for Christmas.

For Epiphany on January 6th, I had several house blessings for members. That evening after church, we had a lovely reception! A highlight of January for us is watching the Symposia conference from the Fort Wayne seminary. We also drove to Rome at the end of January for the first symposium of the Confessional Lutheran Church in Italy on the doctrine of Justification. I was asked to present a paper on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. On our way to Rome, we stayed in Trent, where the Roman Catholic Council of Trent solidified the current Roman Catholic understanding of Justification. On the way home, we saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the city of Florence, including the David statue and the Uffizi Gallery, as well as the burial place of Galileo.

On February 2nd, we had a service for the Purification of Mary and Presentation of our Lord. One of our Oberursel students, Markus Busenius, brought incense (which we use about 4 times/year at special services). The following day, we had our quarterly altar guild/acolyte breakfast, and Markus explained the background of incense and how it works, and let the youth take turns swinging the thurible. Everyone had a great time! Afterwards, we celebrated Agatha’s 2nd birthday with a carrot cake Emma made.

Also in February, I met several times with Chaplain Grosskopf, our Air Force chaplain, to work on a “Chaplains’ Prayer Companion” to be published by CPH. Over the years, I’ve worked on several projects for CPH, so it’s exciting to be working a bit on that side of things again. Since last summer, we’ve had a men’s group from the congregation meet monthly. Starting in February, the ladies also began meeting for a monthly women’s group. As a pastor, it’s a delight to see congregation members so excited to get into the Word of God! I also attended the Network of Young Lutheran Theologians conference in Frankfurt in February, where I preached at a Matins service. Then, I enjoyed listening to Pastor Tiews’ present on spiritual warfare (especially against demons) and Pastor Preus’s presentation on angels.

Otherwise, our study of the Lutheran Confessions continues as usual (except during Advent and Lent). After two years, we finally finished the Formula of Concord and moved on to the Augsburg Confession, along with the Confutation and the Apology. In Bible Study, we covered the book of Ruth during Advent. For the Sunday after Christmas, I decided to have Bible Study on a one-chapter book, the book of Jude. Well, that ended up taking three weeks. Then we moved onto Revelation, and we’ll be there for the foreseeable future. Our congregational sponsorship of monthly dinners for local Ukrainian refugees also continues.

We pray you all are well, and we ask in turn for your prayers.

Jesus be with you,

Rev. Nathaniel Jensen

The Jensen Family



With Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery and Pastor Garry Heintz in Woerth, France.



To support the LCMS through the work of *Rev. Nathaniel and Emma Jensen*, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks “Jensen-Germany Support.” Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/jensen.

You can also support the Jensen family through:
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Agatha eating at an old family favorite, Coney Island in Fort Wayne. Grandma and Grandpa Jensen used to take us here growing up on our trips to visit family.

Agatha with her mom, grandma, and great grandma at Grace Lutheran in Tucson, AZ, where the family has been since 1915.





Agatha at the old family ranch in Hereford, AZ, in front of a chicken coop built by her great great grandfather.



Pastor Kachelmeier visiting with some of the young men in the congregation.



Christmas Eve in Kaiserslautern

Agatha before a vespers service in Rome while attending a conference hosted by the Confessional Lutheran Church of Italy.





Member Paul Hester trying out the incense at the altar guild/acolyte breakfast.

Ash Wednesday in Kaiserslautern

