

“Come to me, all who are weary and stand burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

—Matt. 11.28-30



In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You,
The cross You hung upon—
All You endeavored done.

“How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord”
Lutheran Service Book 853, stz. 4

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Christopher.Ahlman@lcsintl.org
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Sei getrost und unverzagt, fürchte dich nicht und lass dich nicht erschrecken!
(Lutherbibel 1984)

Be confident and unflinching, fear not and do not let yourself be
alarmed!
(Personal translation)

—1 Chr. 22.13b

Those were the words of mandate from David to Solomon, having prepared the arrangements for the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. That’s right, that was a *mandate* (yes, there’s *that* word . . . again), not a “charge.” This Temple-building business was not something that was “up to Solomon to ‘git it done;” rather, it was a gift of authorization to Solomon to receive a certain place among the people of YHWH, and thus to act in particular ways in actually building the Temple, which was something for which David (not Solomon) had entirely prepared and was ultimately responsible. The Chronicler takes great pains to ensure that you, the reader, know all of this, and you simply don’t argue with the Chronicler (if you do, you’ll lose).

The Christian life is not a life of charges from God; rather, one of mandates from Him. It’s not a matter of “gettin’ it done,” but of being given authorization to act in particular ways. It’s not a matter of making do with what you’ve scrounged up, but rather finding yourself in a situation where God has prepared everything for something for which He’s ultimately responsible. It’s not a matter of acting in accordance with fear, but rather, in accordance with promise, and doing so entirely with confidence and joy.

It’s not up to you; it’s up to God, and He puts you
in place to participate in all of it.





Let Us Pray . . .

- For God's continued keeping of us in his grace through Christ Jesus
- For faithfulness to Christ and his grace delivered in Word and Sacrament
- For God's abundant blessing in building up the Volkmarshdorf church plant
- For the protection and advocacy of persecuted Christians world-wide
- For tangible peace in war-torn areas
- For a wonderful school experience for Thomas



First Lutheran Church,
Boston, Mass.

Returning to the Field

After an aggressive, fruitful Home Service in the United States, we returned on 8 August to Leipzig. Aside from a delay in Chicago, the travels went well. We were greeted by Leipzig colleagues and friends, and slept rather well the first night back. Aside from one difficult night, our children have re-acclimated quite well, and as I write this, all of us are largely in sync again with the Leipzig daily timetable. As our life is now rooted in Leipzig, it is indeed good to be back.

Our first order of business has been to prepare for the new normal—which is to say, to prepare for our new stage of “We have a child who goes to school.” Yes, Thomas did attend Kindergarten this past year, but “Kindergarten” here in Germany has a more relaxed, recreational character detached from “school” than does the Kindergarten experience in the United States. “School” in Germany begins with first class (first grade), and here in Saxony, the entry into school (*die Einschulung*) is especially marked with great festivity. So, currently we have much to prepare, and preparing we are.

Part of this preparation has entailed the acquisition of the German driver's licenses, and I'm happy to report that we now possess temporary (and soon to be permanent) German driver's licenses, and have full facility to driver our car, which has already made life much easier!

In the midst of these preparations, it appears that we have entered the final stages of negotiations surround the use of *Lukaskirche*. A question or two remain, for which we're awaiting answer. The plan is still to begin our Test Phase at Easter 2015, and also to begin renovations at approximately the same time. Events are currently being planned. I'm also actively engaged in planning and preparing for work in broader Europe over the course of the next year. As always, I'll keep you posted as developments occur.

May God in Christ through the Spirit bless you now and forever.

Christopher & Elizabeth

Check out the LCMS Eurasia blog:

<http://eurasiablog.lcms.org/>

Check out *Lutherans Engage the World*:

www.lcms.org/lutheranengage

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