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TT - 'Travelling Together' (91)

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." (Ezekiel 36:26)

Dear Friends,

March 2017

"March with a heart!" – this is how one church summed up our Bible verse: **"You shall rise before the grey-headed and honour the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord."** Lev 19:32.

How would this special campaign for March work in our church, aimed at bringing people together who would otherwise not be together: **single people, the young, the old, teenagers, families...** Anyone can take part or arrange their own activities: going for walks, (prayer) breakfasts, going to the cinema together – simply having and setting aside time to meet one another. Our verse for March says: it takes two sides – one which shows honour and respect and a 'grey head' which is there – which doesn't draw back but which goes about with the honour of old age, which does not refuse this honour, but allows it. The **'honouring of the old'** has its own longer-term advantage, for it is good to grow old in a society where things are good for old people. The honouring of older people by younger people is linked specially with God's Name in this verse: **"I am the Lord"**, the eternal God who is there for the young and the old. God didn't 'invalidate out' Abraham, Moses or the disciple John in his old age – but called them into a new role in which they could serve Him and His people. It became a blessing for everyone! The Lord wants the different generations to get on well together: to respect one another, to make allowances for one another, to pray for one another and to 'carry' each other through difficult times. Wherever there is pressure for everything to be "newer, fresher, more youthful", this Bible verse has a central message: **we are all important to God, regardless of how old we are.** We are not doing this because we **really need one another!**

Young and old: "You'll never walk alone!"

Can you imagine how much we were touched by the response of our two Sunday School groups to our current situation? Each group had put together a wonderful letter for Margret and every child had written something: **Rebekka (13)**: "Get well soon! Do not be afraid!" – **Hanna (9)**: "Jesus loves you!" – **Jasmin (13)**: "All the best, get well soon!"... "May our Saviour make you well again soon, that is our wish!" wrote the other group: Laura, Leah, Mia, Theo, Greta, Marlene, Lenja, Anna... Their big red 'Get Well' card had a sweet little lamb on it and the words of Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd..."

Many, many thanks to these encouragers, big and small!

"How are you both?"

Many times we have tried to give an up-to-date answer! In the past weeks God's Word has spoken to us in a new way, in our personal readings, through kind letters, WhatsApp messages etc. What depths there were, what comfort and what a firm foundation to carry us through in times of need! **Six days after the complete operation** (hysterectomy and re-moval of uterine appendages) and the following stay on the oncology ward **Margret was allowed to come home.** It has all gone well and in everything we have very clearly seen how God has graciously intervened – or would it be better to say "shown us favour"? Even the experienced staff on the ward expressed their **amazement at how positively everything had gone.** On 13th March there will be a consultation with the tumour experts to discuss whether further measures need to be taken.

It isn't easy...

Yes, we are going through difficult times, but we have confidence and trust in God's healing intervention for Margret. This hope is based in part on what has been told us by the doctors and also on the many encouraging promises that we've been given from the Bible. John Wesley summed up his hope in this way: **"As long as my service on this earth isn't complete, I am immortal. But when my service for Christ is done, then I will be with Jesus."**

Our service is continuing – for the time being – God willing!

Of course we have had to pull out of long-planned visits and engagements because of Margret's unwelcome diagnosis, and that was particularly hard for us! Our daily activities and tasks in counselling and at church are continuing as well as they can. Things have been disrupted and we are noticing how God is taking us in HIS school and HE is teaching us new lessons.

Prayer requests for March

In the past few weeks our Austrian fellow workers in other countries have written their annual reports and sent them to us. This has led to many constructive and advisory discussions. In the meantime a whole lot of Austrian people interested in short-term missionary service have been in touch, not only young people but also those in the "50-Plus" bracket.

05th Mar.: The subject of Hans-Georg's sermon at the Eisenstadt Forum: **"In the most difficult times you carry me!"**

12th Mar.: **Preaching** at the international church in Vienna

16th Mar.: Important meeting of the **Foreign Missions Team (TAM)**

31st Mar.: **Emergency counselling:** training in helping traumatised refugees

It is such a privilege to belong to the big – world-wide – family of God and not to be alone in difficult times! We send you our deeply grateful greetings,



Hans-Georg, Margret & Annika

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