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Herrnhuter Mission *aktuell*

Nachrichten der Herrnhuter Missionshilfe

Ausgabe 2024-23 vom 19. Dezember 2024

We wish you a Merry Christmas



Dear readers of the newsletter, a tough, violent and uncertain year is coming to an end: The appalling suffering of the people in Ukraine and the Middle East is before our eyes. Sometimes you get the impression that I no longer have the strength to look at and process it all. How much longer? Can I simply celebrate Christmas in the face of the suffering in the world? - The Herrnhut Star shines in many churches and

homes during Advent and Christmas. Its light breaks through the darkness that surrounds us. Perhaps I can use this promise right now: God can make it light, God can create peace and justice. It does not depend on me alone. Perhaps now is the time to pause for a moment, recharge my batteries, celebrate Christmas and trust in God. I can then start again with renewed strength in the new year. With this in mind, we wish you a Merry Christmas!

Many thanks to everyone who has supported us this year with financial gifts, commitment and much more.

For the entire HMH team - Niels Gärtner

Three new classrooms at Herrnhut Academy



Due to numerous new registrations for the elementary school of Herrnhut Academy in Mwera, Zanzibar, the construction of three new classrooms was started at the beginning of October. Thanks to the support of the fly & help foundation, the construction work was financed and completed in record time. As a result, the school will be able to admit more pupils in

January. Around 600 children and young people currently attend the education project. A further 80 children can now also start school at the Academy. We would like to express our sincere thanks for supporting the project.

Project trip HMM to Zanzibar and Tanzania



Together with Cornelia Wolf, responsible for church development, service and partnerships at the Württembergische Landeskirche, and Pastor Dena Fortuzi from the Moravian Church in Albania, the Managing Director of Herrnhuter Missionshilfe, Bettina Nasgowitz, traveled to Tanzania and Zanzibar in November. The trip led

from the Herrnhut Academy in Zanzibar to Tanzania on the mainland. There, numerous schools and vocational training centers were visited, discussions were held with the local church leaders of the Moravian Church and further projects were planned for 2025. During this time, it once again became clear how important personal contact with partners abroad is. To the complete travel report [here](#).

Dena Fortuzi from Albania visiting Tanzania



Dena Fortuzi, the first member of the Moravian Church in Albania to be ordained as a pastor two years ago, recently had the opportunity to visit the Moravian Church in Tanzania. She first visited this East African country as a teenager. She had many congregation encounters on the island of Zanzibar (Eastern Province) and in Mbeya in the Southern Highlands (South-

Western Province). In one report, she said that Tanzania was just like Albania. The women acted as pillars of society and the church. "It was a happiness and an honor for me to preach in two churches and meet with the women's groups, sharing my thoughts with the Tanzanian women. Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe, but poverty in Tanzania has a completely different dimension. The way people in Tanzania worship showed me how they experience God and how they live with Him in their humble everyday lives." See the reports and pictures [here](#) and [here](#).

New newsletter from Dr. Jochen Tolk



In his latest newsletter, retired dean Dr. Jochen Tolk once again reports on his work in Tanzania. Among other things, he reports on the construction of a house for a widow, the end of the school year in Tenende, Chunya and Ilindi, a completed kitchen house and needed new purchases for orphans. Thanks to Dr. Tolk's orphan projects/scholarships, many needy people have received support, help and

education in recent years. We would like to thank all donors for their active support. You can find the complete newsletter [here](#).

Cyclone “Chido” devastates large parts of Malawi



On December 15, Cyclone Chido hit Malawi, among other places. The storm brought heavy rainfall and strong winds and left a trail of devastation in many areas. The center and south of the country were particularly badly affected. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) has released preliminary reports on the damage caused, indicating that more than 1,800 households, or about 8,100

people, in 17 districts have been affected. Many families have lost their homes and are dependent on aid. Herrnhuter Missionshilfe is supporting those affected through its emergency relief fund. If you would also like to help, please donate to the following account: **Herrnhuter Missionshilfe e.V., DE25 5206 0410 0000 4151 03, reference: “Malawi Emergency Aid”**

Rochelle Petrus is the first woman to be ordained a bishop in South Africa

On its Facebook pages, the Moravian Theological College in Cape Town-Heideveld writes in view of Sunday, 15 December 2024 (3rd Advent): “Our institution had the honor of being represented today at the service for the ordination of the first female bishop of the



Moravian Church in South Africa (MCSA) at Bloemendal Moravian Church! What a historic, moving moment! God's presence was clearly felt as the Rev. Rochelle Petrus was consecrated a female bishop of the Moravian Church. To God be the eternal glory!" Many photos [here](#).

Rochelle Petrus was elected as a bishop on October 3, 2024 in Jeffreys Bay during the 9th

Provincial Synod of the MCSA. Before her, two other women, Angelene Swart and Elise Theunissen, had already held important offices in the Moravian Church. The former was President of the MCSA and President of the global Unity Board, the latter was Vice President of the MCSA.

From the first women's conference of the Moravian Church in South Asia



The delegates of the first women's conference of the Moravian Church in the mission province of South Asia (South Asia: India and Nepal) celebrated a service in Rajpur near Dehradun on 1 Advent 2024. Video [here](#); Photo [here](#). The official group photo, taken in front of the Christian Retreat Center in Rajpur, [hier](#). Julie Tomberlin from the Unity Women's Desk UWD

in Winston-Salem/NC, who attended this conference as a guest and gave a keynote presentation on Women with Vision, writes on Facebook: "The first full day of work at the Women's Conference was filled with beautiful music, getting to know the different districts of the South Asia Mission Province, making new friends, and lots of delicious food. The time of sharing and fellowship was a time of great blessings. Last Wednesday, the women were already wearing their traditional dresses, most of which are hand-woven and beautifully embroidered. I have met many amazing sisters over the past few days, what a pleasure! I met [Manna \(links\) aus Delhi und Ankita \(rechts\) aus Dehradun](#). Manna will be attending the next Unity Women's Consultation in North Carolina in June 2025 as a delegate of the Moravian Church in South Asia. Ankita is a graduate of the Moravian Institute in Rajpur and works as an intensive care nurse in Dehradun. In 2012, she was the first girl in the world to receive a scholarship from the Unity Women's Desk. Since then, she has excelled during further studies and continues to maintain very close relationships with the Moravian Institute staff. I am so grateful that despite her demanding schedule as an intensive care nurse, she took the time to travel here to attend the conference for an evening."

Star Mountain message on “World Day of Persons with Disabilities”



On December 3, 2024, the World Day of Persons with Disabilities proclaimed by the United Nations in 1993, the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center SMRC, Star Mountain, near Ramallah (Palestine/West Bank) posted a message on its Facebook pages. It said in Arabic: “We affirm that disability is not a limit, but rather a catalyst for the impossible. Let's build an inclusive society together that values

diversity and encourages creativity.” See [here](#). Around this day, Star Mountain staff spent three days providing psychological and social support to children with disabilities and their mothers around the facility to build trust with the SMRC and to strengthen the facility's bond with external families. Some photos of the contact visits [here](#).

Star Mountain with new offer: school tutoring



On its Facebook account, the Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center, Star Mountain, near Ramallah (Palestine/West Bank) has announced a new program that is due to start shortly. The program is supported by the globally active [Mercy Corps Foundation](#) and is part of a much larger project in Palestine (Positive Youth Participation). It is a school-based tutoring

project aimed at children from the 7th grade onwards who come from different schools and have learning difficulties, particularly in the subjects of English, mathematics and science. When registering online (see [here](#)) the last school report should also be submitted. Arej Hajaj is the coordinator of the new program. At the end of the advertisement for the new program, it says: “ Register now and continue your educational journey with the best instructors!” See [here](#)

Moravian Church in Cuba on the way to the needy

A large group of members of the Iglesia Morava



Juan Hus in Guantánamo, Cuba, set off in the early hours of December 10, 2024 in a chartered coach with their pastor, Yadiria, and the chairwoman of the church leadership, Tania Sanches, to bring relief supplies to some of the villages on the south coast of Cuba that were affected by the recent Hurricane Rafael. They stopped in San Antonio, Imias and Cajo Babo,

among others. The unloading and handing over of the backpacks, clothing bags and donation packages lasted well into the evening. Some pictures [here](#). A video [here](#). The church members wrote on Facebook: “We were happy about the encounters and gifts. Thank you, God, for showing us how service can be done. Thank you to our pastors and thank you for the gifts from the congregations in the various church districts. Thanks to the Armando Rusindo Mission Foundation (ARMS), the Cuba Foundation of the Moravian Church. God is faithful!”

Book gifts for students of the “Mlimani Theological College” in Sumbawanga



A monetary donation from the Danish Lærernes Missions Forening (Association of Missionar Teachers) made it possible for the mission organization of the Moravian Church in Denmark BDM to give a gift to the prospective pastors and evangelists of the Moravian Church at Mlimani Theological College in Sumbawanga (Tanzania, Rukwa Province). A blog post by

Svend Løbner from November 26, 2024 reads: “The 39 students of Mlimani Theological College stood wide-eyed and smiling at the gift distribution on the final day before the Christmas break. They had not expected to be given two books each (worth ten days' wages) - a help for them to better understand the Bible and find answers to the questions they will most likely encounter in their future work as evangelists. A valuable gift, a day of joy.” More in Danish [here](#).

Church building report from the Lake Tanganyika Province

“You need more than bricks to build.” This is the title of a report by Svend Løbner from the missionar organization of the Moravian Church



in Denmark. It deals with the work of the missionary couple Bettina and Morten Poulsen (DK) in the Lake Tanganyika Province of the Moravian Church in Tanzania, in the vicinity of the large city of Mwanza. See in Danish [here](#). In Ngasamo as well as in Imalanzala and Ngogo, newly built or expanding church buildings and parsonages are an expression of rapid church growth and thus a result of educational work

and evangelization. In Ngasamo there is now a beautiful vicarage with a steep roof for the first time. The new, larger church, on the other hand, is not yet finished. In Imalanzala, volunteers have been working so quickly that the topping-out ceremony for the new church can be celebrated soon. In Ngogo, the foundations for the church have already been laid during a work assignment.

Video: 155 years of the City Mission of the Moravian Church in Paramaribo



On the occasion of the 155th anniversary of the City Mission of the Moravian Church in Paramaribo, Suriname, a seven-minute video was posted on Facebook on November 29, 2024, which lovingly introduces the past and present of this deserving institution. See in Dutch [here](#). The film is hosted by Carl Breeveld, a well-known politician from the Surinamese party

Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid (DOE) and a member of the Surinamese parliament, who comes from an important moravian family. He gratefully mentions the important role that the City Mission, founded on November 1, 1869, has played and continues to play in the spread of the Gospel and in the Moravian Church's social and diaconal work throughout the country. The hostel, the bookshop, the radio and film studio and the church archives, which are all housed in the large building complex on the lower Burenstraat, are also mentioned. Finally, Carl Breeveld mentions the major renovation and expansion plans for the City Mission, which will cost a total of around 700,000 euros (various cost units).

Semerster closing service at the “Moravian Theological Center” in Heidevelt

A festive service for this year's graduates of the



Moravian Theological Center (MTC) in Heideveld near Cape Town was held on November 23, 2024, with several members of the leadership of the Moravian Church South Africa MCSA in attendance. See the two-hour video [here](#). The tenor of the numerous Facebook posts after the service was as follows: "Congratulations to you all. Go out into the world and tell everyone

about this wonderful Jesus who has brought you to this place and you will all be blessed together. Congratulations also to the other students from the Moravian Church. You make us proud." The institution's mission statement reads: "The mission of the MTC is to prepare the Church of Jesus Christ, and especially the members of MCSA, for ministry in church and society through study, research and education in theology and related disciplines."

Advent get-together in the "Moravian Chapel" in Cape Town



Advent and Christmas in South Africa is - quite unlike in Europe - Advent and Christmas in midsummer. This did not stop the Moravian Church in Cape Town from inviting people to an Advent afternoon and evening in the grounds of the historic Moravian Chapel on December 8, 2024. On Facebook it said: "Join us for a family, joyful and fun get-together with songs and Bible

verses in the garden before we celebrate the coming of Jesus soon. We would love for you to bring your loved ones to celebrate this special time with us. Bring a blanket, a chair, a cushion, a candle and some picnic treats for each person. Some snacks will also be available for purchase." The Moravian Chapel in Ashley Street was one of very few buildings to survive the demolition of a densely built-up, very lively multi-ethnic Cape Town neighborhood at the foot of Table Mountain (District Six) in the early 1980s by the racist government, which wanted to settle whites there. See [here](#).

Confirmation service in Bridgetown, Barbados

The Calvary Moravian Church in Bridgetown on the island of Barbados, Unity Province Eastern West Indies, celebrated a confirmation service



on the 1st Sunday in Advent 2024. The five confirmands with their pastor [here](#). The confirmands with the members of the council of elders [here](#). Pastor Dr. Adrian Smith, together with the members of the Council of Elders, paid tribute to the life and faith journeys of the confirmands to date. They were dressed from head to toe in white for their confirmation, as is

customary in the Moravian Church in the Caribbean. After the service, the elders invited them to a small reception in the church hall. Unlike in Germany, where people are usually confirmed at the age of 14, the age of confirmation in the Caribbean is significantly higher. It is a kind of confirmation of baptism or confirmation of membership in the Moravian Church acquired as a child, which takes place after individual or group instruction.

Soup sale of the “Trinity Moravian Church” on Tortola



The *Trinity Moravian Church* on the small island of Tortola (Unity Province Eastern West Indies) held a public soup and beverage sale on Saturday, November 23, 2024, at noon in Road Town Market Square to raise funds for the church's work. A wide selection of tasty, finely prepared soups (chicken soup, vegetable soup, pea soup, bull's foot soup, goat meat soup, fish

soup) and local drinks and more were available. The congregation's fundraising team, consisting mainly of women, had prepared the soup sale and afterwards thanked the many people who took advantage of the offer. Some pictures [here](#). The Moravian Church on Tortola, one of the 50 or so larger and smaller British Virgin Islands, is just over 20 years old and has only had its own small church for 15 years.

A look at the history of Bilwaskarma Clinic

Bilwaskarma on the Rio Coco, the border river between Nicaragua and Honduras, has been a center of the Moravian Church in the tropical rainforest of Nicaragua for almost 150 years. During the civil war between the Sandinista troops and the so-called Contras, the village and



all its facilities (including the hospital and theological seminary) were completely destroyed in 1983. After 1997, the clinic was successfully rebuilt and provides care for around 10,000 people in eleven indigenous rural communities in a large area around Bilwaskarma. The clinic is run by local people and is self-supporting. In 2024, a portable

ultrasound machine and other medical technology was purchased with the help of the Board of World Mission BWM. In addition, doctors were able to make home visits to pregnant women who were at risk of complications, making a hospital visit unnecessary for them. A historical photo of nurses from the Bilwaskarma Clinic [here](#).

Second newsletter from volunteer Hanna Isterheld from Indonesia



Hanna Isterheld, a young volunteer from the Moravian Church, has been completing a volunteer year with the *Ökumenischen Freiwilligenprogramm* of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity EMS in a kindergarten in Mamasa, Sulawesi, Indonesia, since summer 2024. She writes: "[As promised, here is the link to my next blog entry](#). This time it's about my work in

the kindergarten and some leisure activities. At the moment I am busy with Christmas preparations in the kindergarten as well as in the choir and in my group of friends. I'm excited to see how Christmas is celebrated here and will then report on what I was able to experience. I'm looking forward to celebrating a different Christmas with 25 degrees and sunshine, but I already miss the Advent season in Herrnhut and the cold and cozy atmosphere. I wish you all a blessed Advent season and a wonderful festive Christmas!"

Board meeting of the “Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation”

In the 47th calendar week of 2024, the board of the Moravian Unity Cultural Heritage Foundation, newly created by the Unity Synod 2023 in Cape Town, met in Herrnhut. The foundation is being established to help preserve



the cultural heritage of the worldwide Moravian Church, not only in the four UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The aim of the meeting was to structure this ambitious goal and agree on the next steps. Participants included Jørgen Bøytler (Denmark), the Unity Board Administrator UBA, and two representatives from each of the four Unity regions: Jeffrey Long (Bethlehem/PA),

Martha Hartley (Winston-Salem/NC), Samone Patterson (Jamaica), Andrew Parris (Barbados), Lizwi Mtumtum (South Africa), Revocatus Meza (Tanzania), David Johnston (Northern Ireland) and Wieland Menzel (Germany). In addition to the thematic and structural discussions, the guests had the opportunity to visit the Herrnhut Church Hall and the Zinzendorf Castle in Berthelsdorf.

Memories of the Christmas bazaar at the Bethel Moravian Church in Alaska



The Alaska-based weekly newspaper The Delta Discovery - Real news for the Real People published an article from Bethel Moravian Church/AK in the Kuskokwim Delta on December 10, 2024. Peter Twitchell had his say, recalling his childhood in Bethel 50 years ago, especially the annual Christmas bazaar at Bethel Moravian Church, which he regularly attended with his mother Sara after an adventurous truck

ride. The full article in English [here](#). The article says: "The Christmas bazaar at the church was something great for me, one of the best memories of my childhood in Bethel. Mom always bought a dozen cupcakes and sugar cookies baked by the Schattschneider and Schantz sisters. The Moravian ministers from Lititz, Bethlehem and Nazareth in Pennsylvania always brought so many beautiful things to church. In the Christmas service, all the little children six years and older went up front and recited Bible verses they had learned. At the end of the service, there was a bag of Christmas candy for everyone."

Geneva Moravian Fellowship is five years old

The multinational *Geneva Moravian Fellowship*, which is not committed to any particular Christian denomination and is



therefore English-speaking, celebrated its fifth anniversary. It is de facto one of the Moravian Societies in Switzerland. See [here](#). The Fellowship is led by Winelle Kirton-Roberts, a pastor from the Caribbean. The Fellowship usually holds its meetings in the Paroisse du Petit Saconnex, 1 Place du Petit Saconnex, in CH-1209 Geneva; however, most of them can

also be followed online. Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, preached at the congregation's fifth anniversary celebration on December 1, 2024. Many of those who belong to this fellowship are people of color or black employees of the World Council of Churches WCC in Geneva or are involved with this institution in other ways. The complete anniversary service can be relived [here](#).

Moravian Church receives tangible assets from inheritance



The Moravian Church recently received news of an inheritance in the form of a house clearance via Achim Bazlen, Inheritance Fundraising in Bad Boll. Some valuable items such as crockery, glasses, vases, wall clocks and floor lamps were left behind. These heirlooms went to the second hand store *Laden Mittendrin* in Königsfeld and were lovingly offered for sale in the shop window. The proceeds from the sales have

benefited the projects of our Herrnhuter Missionshilfe for many years. Within a very short time, the majority of the fine items were already sold. Many thanks to everyone involved in this campaign!

News in Brief

1. On Sunday, November 24, 2024, at [Roots Moravian Church](#) in St. Paul, Minnesota, the Rev. Dr. Amy Gohdes-Luhman was installed as Director of Mission Engagement for the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church in North America by Chris Giesler, Bishop of the Moravian Church. After the service, which was also attended by Sylvie Hauser, Director of Communications and Development from the Board of World Mission, a Milk and Honey Lovefeast was celebrated.

2. Children from the Christian David School near Barkava, Latvia, visited the Latvian National Theater in Riga on December 1, 2024, where they watched the play *Sālsvārnas salas vasarnieki* (Holidays on Saltkrokan; based on a book by Astrid Lindgren). See [here](#). A photomontage of the recent school project bird feeders [here](#).
3. There was an abundance of singing performances by children from Moravian Church schools in Paramaribo and other cities in the country on November 28 and 29, 2024, under the motto Anitri singi prisiri (The Moravian Church sings and praises). See for example [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).
4. The youth of the Moravian Church in Paramaribo, Suriname, will be on the road with a gospel truck on December 17 and 19, 2024 for an Advent singing with preaching, dancing and prayer at the Deaconess Hospital - once founded by the Moravian Church Mission - and at the Latourkerk. See [here](#).
5. During her service trip to the South Asia Mission Province, Juli Tomberlin, the head of the Unity Women's Desk (UWD) headquartered in Winston-Salem/NC, was also able to visit the Moravian Church's Kindergarten & Shristi Academy in Kathmandu-Baneshwor, Nepal. She wrote on Facebook on December 3, 2024: "It was a great pleasure to meet two of the UWD scholars at the Academy in Kathmandu! I was able to give them each a sister star handmade by Lynn Lancaster Waggoner! We are so proud of you both!". Both are apparently young judoka in their spare time.
6. Some photos of the visit of Justin Rabbach, Executive Director of the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church in North America, to the 75-year-old Clinica Evangelica Morava in Ahuas, Honduras, in November 2024 can be found [here](#). Justin Rabbach was accompanied by Dr. Benno Marx, who had worked at the clinic for a long time. During the visit, Hurricane Sara struck the east coast of Honduras, where Ahuas is located, causing huge amounts of rain and power outages, meaning that some work had to be carried out in the dark.
7. Part of the student body of the Friedrich Staehelin School of the Moravian Church in Paramaribo, Suriname, visited the Northeast Police Department of the city on December 9, 2024. The children were picked up and brought back in police buses and warmly welcomed by District Commissioner Dhr Bhola and his staff. The children were particularly taken with the police motorcycles. Photos [here](#).
8. Some of the children from the Kindergarten & Shristi Academy of the Moravian Church in Kathmandu, Nepal, went on a trip to a breathtaking eco-resort in early December 2024: the *Beeshazari Valley of 20.000 lakes* on the edge of Chitwan National Park. They went on a jungle safari and also visited the *Tharu Culture Museum*. The Tharu are one of the largest and most marginalized ethnic groups in Nepal. "Every moment was an adventure, with an exciting story attached to every step," it says on Facebook. See [here](#).

Impressum

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