

April Monthly Missions Update

Missions Director Jesse McCain

Welcome to FBCA's Monthly Missions Update. March was a month of anticipation with the coming of passion week and Resurrection Sunday. Believers are able to navigate the grief and sorrow of the world because their savior bore the brokenness of the world on his body. However, believers are also able to rejoice with great hope because Jesus Christ conquered sin and death through his death and resurrection. Believers cling to this hope, that Christ will return and make all things new. The work he has started in our lives will find its completion on his return. Life with Jesus is better. Look for an update from the Linz Baptist Church Partner Trip below.

Linz Baptist Church Partner Trip

Alice Ling, Jesse McCain, and Justin Raymer left for Linz, Austria on March 27 from Dulles Airport. The purpose of our trip was to encourage and affirm Linz Baptist Church in their work within Linz and to seek God together with them over an Easter Weekend Retreat in Sarleinsbach. Several of you have asked, "What did you do?"

Our partnership with Linz Baptist Church (LBC) goes back to before the pandemic. Audrey Davidson led two trips with groups of women to support LBC in ministering to immigrant/refugee women. Their second trip would barely get them home before the pandemic restricted flights coming into the US in 2020. A group from LBC joined us for 9 days in July of 2022. They served alongside us during VBS. They met community partners like Justin Raymer with For the Nations DC. They also spent a lot of time with Jesse and Emily McCain. This past year The FBCA Foundation supported LBC financially as they navigate a building project. 2023 was a stressful year for them as they secured permits to tear down and to rebuild. They also secured a bank loan to finance the project. All of these items were being navigated in a system which has historically catered to the Catholic Church. Baptist Churches make up a small portion of believers/churches in Austria. Evangelical believers make up less than 1% of the Christians within Austria and Baptist Churches were acknowledged by the state only recently.

FBCA's partnership with LBC is more than financial support. FBCA's partnership with LBC is also more than service or humanitarian aid. FBCA's partnership with LBC functions primarily under the common ground both churches share in bearing witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ, the gospel. FBCA gathered together around Acts 1 this past Sunday considering the importance of Jesus' ascension. Within this same passage Jesus told his followers their purpose, bear witness to me within your city, your country, surrounding countries, and the world. Later in Acts 4:20, some of the disciples would respond to the religious leaders' command to not speak of Jesus with, "we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard?" What a helpful example of bearing witness. Nothing fancy, simply sharing the person and work of Christ and its continued impact on their lives.

Alice, Jesse, and Justin invested several days with LBC and its leadership. The team read scripture, spent time in prayer, worshipped through song, and shared communion with each other. The team not only listened to the teaching from those there in Austria, but they also contributed towards two of the teaching times. The team ate with LBC often, including Kaffee and Kuchen in the afternoon. They enjoy their coffee and cake too. The team learned several phrases in German, some in a more specific Austrian dialect. The team played games with the Austrians on the retreat and even participated

in a talent show. Alice's dad jokes were well received, especially with her helpful translations via power point. The team was able to take in the beauty of Vienna and its buildings/statues on their last day which was reminiscent of the Austrians visit in 2022 and a walk among the DC Monuments at night.

When people turn in faith to Jesus Christ, the way in which they relate to other people changes. Believers seek to function with a compassionate heart for those who don't know God, and those who know God through faith in Jesus become family. The team along with LBC created space to be family to one another. They heard each other's stories and shared about God's work within their lives. They listened and learned from one another. They laughed, cried, and encouraged each other. Smiles were shared and somber faces communicated solidarity as people shared their difficulties. Our time with LBC was pleasant and a good reminder that God is at work in Austria. Hearing Austrians praise God and pray to him in German challenges the believer to consider God's work in revealing himself to people all around the world in ways which are meaningful within their cultures, languages, and lives. Praise God that people from all over the world are brought together under the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Thank you to Linz Baptist Church for hosting the team with great hospitality and love. They enjoyed their time with you immensely.

Let me know if you have any questions, want more information about our partners, or want to talk about missional relationships over some coffee! It's good to be back home.

Go in Peace,

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