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## **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EKIÖ AND THE PCG PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2013 TO JUNE 2014**

### **Preamble**

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." Psalm 127:1

### **Introduction**

By the grace of God Almighty another year has ended and we are very grateful. The year under review has been very exciting and fruitful and I am happy to report on my stewardship as Ecumenical co-worker and minister of the Ghanaian Protestant Congregation in Vienna. This report covers all that has been done in the context of the Partnership work as well as the Ghanaian Protestant Congregation, for the period of September 2013 to June 2014.

### **Thanksgiving Service in Dornbirn**

This was my first official worship service in the Reformed Church in Austria, and it was in Dornbirn close to the border of Switzerland on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 2013. It was an annual harvest thanksgiving service where the congregation thanked God for harvest and food security. I preached on the theme "go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks and send some to those who have nothing prepared" Nehemiah 8:10. We taught the congregation and we sang "*Danase*" and danced during the offering. Part of the offering was to be donated to funds being raised to help purchase drums for the Brigade in Manyakpongonor. There was congregational feast after the service.

### **Vienna Ministers Fall Conference**

This conference came on from the Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> of September to Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2013 in Innsbruck. Topics discussed at the conference included congregational development, youth ministry, religious education and preparations for the 500 years anniversary of the Reformation. We also visited interesting places like the Golden roof in Innsbruck, the first building that house a protestant church and school after the Counter Reformation. The winter Olympic stadium and Panorama was also visited. The most interesting part of the visits was when we visited the "Grassmayr", this is where Church bells are made and sent to all places the world over. We were taken round their museum and given the history of bells and Church bells. I bought a little bell as a souvenir.

### **Missions Festival - EAWM**

This year's mission festival and annual general meeting of the EAWM was held in Salzburg from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 2013. I gave a report of my work and the Ghana partnership, while Elisabeth Pausz gave updates about volunteers who have been to Ghana

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in the year under review. Dr Armin Zimmermann from “Mission 21” reported on Cameroun and South Sudan. I also did a children’s programme where I talked about children in Ghana and the church. I also showed a cocoa fruit and seed and the children were very happy to touch and feel the cocoa from which their chocolates are made. We also played the “Oware” game. The day dinner was prepared by a Ghanaian family living in Salzburg.

On Sunday we had the thanksgiving service. The sermon was preached by Dr Zimmermann and the offering was given to the EAWM for its projects in Africa. After the service the general meeting continued and the annual report of the board and accounts were received and approved by delegates.

### **Visit to Kärnten**

From Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> to Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 2013, I visited the Diocese of Kärnten. I was hosted by Birgit Meindl who is in charge of Feffernitz and also a representative of the Diocese on the EAWM board. The itinerary was as follows;

**Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> October**, 19:00- 20:00 devotion and presentation of the partnership to the Presbyters at Klagenfurt. I took my text from 1 Tim.4:8. After the short devotion, the meeting formally declared opened and I presented an update of the partnership and projects. The presbyters were very happy about the presentation and promised to invite me in the near future.

**Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> October**, at Bad Bleiberg, I did a presentation on the topic “*Ghana ein Land stellt sich vor: soziales and kirchliches Leben*” between 19:00-20:00 hours. After the presentation were also had some snacks.

**Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 10:30-12:30 School visit.** In the company of Vikarin Esther Scheuchl, I visited the Volksschule in Zlan, where I did had two lessons with the 3&4 classes and the 5&6 classes respectively. The lessons were on how children in villages and cities in Ghana live. I used some pictures and short videos and after that answered questions from the pupils who were interested in the topic.

**17:00-18:00 Seniorratssitzung** in Feffernitz: I was introduced to this meeting by my host Birgit Meindl as the colleague from the Partner Church. The Superintendent Manfred Sauer, whom I met last year during the familiarisation tour also welcomed me on behalf of the Diocese and expressed their gratitude for my weeklong visit and wished me and my family. I also greeted the meeting expressed my hope that the partnership between our churches will continue to flourish. After the meeting there was supper and I tasted for first Gulyas which was very palatable. I have since then been a fan of Gulyas.

**Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> October, visit Volkshochschule Feffernitz:** With the company of Birgit I visited the high school and had two class sessions from 08:30- 09:30 and 11:30- 13:30



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respectively. The topic for both classes was general information about Ghana, Land, People, Languages, Culture, Religion and Sports. I also present some photos and artefacts from Ghana. The students were also excited to see, touch and feel the cocoa fruit and seeds.

**19:00 in Feffernitz evening presentation hosted by the youth of the Congregation:** In the evening I did a presentation on how the extended family lives in Ghana and the fight against HIV/ Aids. They very interested about the extended family system and were very impressed to know that in Ghana the National HIV prevalent rate is below 2% and availability of Anti Retro Viral Drugs which are distributed for free for all PLWHAs. After the presentation there was refreshment which was prepared by the youth.

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October Morning:** I worshipped in the Spittal congregation where I was introduced to the Congregation and was also asked to pronounce the Benediction in the Ghanaian language. So I did benediction in Ga and Twi. After the service I was invited to the house of ... who once taught at the erstwhile Presbyterian Vocational School in Dormaa Ahenkro. I was in the company of Melitta and Frieda Burgstaller. After the lunch Freda and Melita took round to visit a few interesting places in Kärnten. We visited the churches in Eisentrachten, Fischertrachten and Dornbach. We also visited the waterfall in Maltatal.

**18:00 in the evening:** I attended with Birgit the "Regenbogengottesdienst" which is a youth friendly evening serving with modern music and band. They sang gospel songs from every part of the world. I preached the sermon based on Micah 6:8 and also taught and sang with the famous Ghanaian song "Danase".

**Workshop for Religious Education teachers:** on Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, the first of two workshops for teacher of Protestant religion in North and south Burgenland come off at Großpetersdorf between 15:00 – 18:30pm. This was with collaboration with Moritz Stroh Resi Schmall. The topic of the workshop was "That they all may be one". The purpose of the workshop was to promote the partnership between the PCG and EKiÖ to the religion teachers so that they can invite us to their schools as visiting teachers.

Moritz opened the workshop with a "*Kwaku Ananse*" story and prayer. Matilda talked about the school system in Ghana, I spoke about culture, religion and the church in Ghana, and Resi gave a photo report of the recent visit to Ghana and the projects. There were also artefacts from Ghana. There were 12 teachers in attendance in the School inspector for Protestant religious education. We also had a Ghanaian dinner with fried yams, plantain, fish and tomato source.

**School Visit, 11<sup>th</sup> November:** I was invited by Pfr. Sepp Lager to visit his classes at the Evangelische Gymnasium in Gasometer between the hours of 11:00 to 13:00. I had one hour lesson the Classes 1A and 1B respectively. In all the classes they pupil were interested to about school children in Ghana. They were also interested in knowing something about the languages we speak in Ghana. I also taught them the naming of children according to the day

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of birth so we the all search for the day of their birth and the corresponding name like “Adwoa or Kwadwo” etc. they wrote down the new names to promised to tell their about their “new names”.

**Visit to Timelkam 15<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> November:** I visited the churches and schools in Timelkam as follows;

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> @ 19:30 – Photo presentation about Ghana. I did a presentation in the church hall in Timelkam about the land, the people, the culture and the church in Ghana.
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> from 14:00-17:00 – Meeting with confirmants from Timelkam, Vöcklabruck and Rosenau at Vöcklabruck. I did a one hour presentation about Ghana: the Nation, the people and their faith. I also taught and sang with “Danase”.
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Church Service at Timelkam @ 7:30am. I preached the sermon based on Jeremiah 8:4-7. We also sang the song Danase with guitar accompaniment.
- @09:00 church service at Frankenmarkt it was a Kathreinfest. Here I did the intercessory prayers and pronounced the benediction. After the service there was a special feast with special sausages.
- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> @13:10 – Neue Mittelschule Timelkam classes 2-4: I used maps and photos to present Ghana, the people and their faith to the pupils. We also sang “Danase” with some Ghanaian percussion instruments with taught them how to play and the Religion teacher played the guitar.
- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> from 08:00 to 13:00 in the Gymnasium with Pfr. Fraiss. I had three different classes where I talked Ghana, the people, culture and religion. Here also I used maps, photos and “Adinkra” symbols for the presentation.
- @ 14:10: I was back to the NMS Timelkam for another class session with the 1,2and 4 classes for a similar presentation of Ghana, the people and their faith. I also spoke about the names by day of birth and kids were all happy to know their names according to the day of birth. For those who did not know the actual day they were born, we used the mobile phones to check for them.

**Workshop for Religious Education teachers II:** on Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> of November between the hours of 15:00 to 18:30 the second part of the workshop for religious education teachers come on at Gols. The theme and topics discussed was the same as the first one. Attendance here was nine teachers of protestant religion and the school inspector. This time Matilda could not make it, so I took up her topic in addition to mine. As usual there was also a Ghanaian dinner.

**School visit, 29<sup>th</sup> November:** I was invited by the religious education teacher at the HTL in Mödling, Barbara Saile-Leeb to visit her religion classes between 08:00 to 12:00. We had two classes from 08:30 to 09:30 and 10:30 to 11:30. In both classes I told them about Ghana, the



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people, the religion and football. I talked about the meaning and significance of the colours of the Ghana National flag.

**14:00- 20:00, Partnerschaftsmesse “Bridging the Gap”:** I joined Pfr. Manfred Golda to represent the EAWM and the Church Partnership outfit at this one day exhibition and workshop organised by the “CoMiDe” at the Albert Schweitzer Haus. There was a sharing of good practices on Bridging the Gap between Diaspora communities or Organisations with their countries of origin. One of the best practices that presented was the Ghana Diaspora Unit and Miss Patricia Odai was the resource person. We also mounted a table where the Partnership information brochures and Brücke the newsletter of the EAWM was given out.

**International Weihnachtsfeier, 6<sup>th</sup> December @11am:** I and Mama Matilda represented the Ghanaian Congregation at the Christmas service for International Congregations at the Church Head Office. Representatives from the entire international congregation which we are one were present to worship and pray together for peace in the world which is the real essence of the Advent. The service was led by OKR Schiefermair and the sermon was given by Landessuperintendent Hennefeld. There was refreshment after the service.

**Introduction and Blessing of Martina Schomaker, 11<sup>th</sup> December @ 18:30:** I represented the Congregation at the formal introduction and blessing of the Public Relations Officer of the Vienna Diocese in the person of Martina Schomaker. The introduction was done by the Superintendent Hans-Jörg Lein. She was blessed by OKR Dr. Hannelore Reiner. There were goodwill messages from her family and friends as well other officers of the Vienna Diocese. A dinner was hosted in her honour.

**Synod service and induction of OKR Gerhild Herrgesell, 13<sup>th</sup> December 18:30 – 21:00:** I was invited to join the Bishop and order officers of the Protestant Church in Austria to bless the newly appointed Oberkirchenrätin for Church Development at the opening service of the Synod at the Friedenskirche in Lainz. It was a very moving and touching service and I was very glad to be part of the officiant. There were goodwill messages from family and friends. There was a dinner in her honour.

**School Christmas service, 20<sup>th</sup> December:** I joined Pfr. Moritz Stroh and Pfr. Sepp Lager for the Christmas service of their schools respectively. The first one was at 08:00am with Moritz in the Pauluskirche for students from the third district while the second one was at 09:00am with Sepp for the students in the Evangelisches Gymnasium in Gasometer. I did the sermon in the first service and gave the benediction in the second.

**Visit to Traiskirchen, 11<sup>th</sup> January:** On Saturday between the hours of 09:30 to 11:30, I visited the Evangelische Kirche A.u.H.B in Traiskirchen for their monthly brunch meeting as a special guest. I did a presentation of the Church in Ghana, the Partnership and my work in Austria and Ghanaian Congregation. The members and the leaders were so happy to hear

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about the congregation, they promised to invite me and the Minstrel Choir for a Sunday service. We had brunch during the presentation.

**Welcome Dameki, 21<sup>st</sup> January:** on the morning of this Tuesday, we were blessed with the smile of our first baby. At about 7:30am Dameki was safely delivered at the Krankenhaus Göttlicher Heiland in the Dornbacherstraße 20-28, in the seventeenth district of Vienna. Oh what a joy it was on that day and has always been thereafter. Mother and child were discharged from the hospital on the third.

**Naming Ceremony, 28<sup>th</sup> January:** In accordance to Dangme tradition the little girl was named on the eighth day early before sunrise in the house with our Austrian and Ghanaian family in attendance. After consultations with family in Ghana, she was named Dameki Adzokatse. There was breakfast for all invited friends and family members. Dameki was on this day formally welcomed into the family with blessing and gifts.

**Africa Project Interview, 29<sup>th</sup> January:** I was invited to be among interview partners from Africa during the Africa Project Week of the Gymnasium in the Alfred Wegenergasse in the nineteenth district of Vienna. I was interviewed by four students about Ghana, myself, my work in Austria and my family. The students were surprised when I told them that I have been in Austria for a year and two months because of I spoke in German throughout the interview. There other interview partners from Africa as well, so after the interviews we all came together and the students share what they have learn from the interview. They also gave a welcome gift to me to be given to Dameki on their behalf.

**Joint service with Reformed Church in South Vienna, 23<sup>rd</sup> February:** we had a joint service the reformed church in south Vienna. The Ghana Minstrel choir was in attendance. I did the liturgy together with Pfr. Johannes Wittich. I also did the sermon and the intercessory prayers were done by members of our church and the reformed church. The service was very moving and the congregation were very happy to have us and choir worshipping with them. An offering was taken in aid of toilet facility for the Asakraka Kindergarten.

**Suptur Wien Pfarrkonferenz, 19<sup>th</sup> March:** I attended this meeting of all Pastors in Vienna in the office of the Diocese. The main topic for discussion was the change in the pension scheme of Pastors from the old scheme to a new one being proposed by the association of Protestant Pastors in Austria (VEPPEO). The resource person was the Chairman of the VEPPEO. There were also discussions on other activities and plans of the Diocese like Ordinations, Gustav Adolf Fest and others.

**School visit Atzbach 21<sup>st</sup> March:** I was invited by Daniela Mühlleitner, a teacher in the Volksschule in Atzbach in Niederösterreich to visit their school during their Africa Week Project where I met with the various classes to talk about Ghana, the people, the culture and religion. I used some artefacts, maps and Photos from Ghana in presentations. I also mounted a Ghana table for the parents who were invited to see and have a feel of Ghana as

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well. There was a performance of singing, drumming and dancing by the pupils. They also sang “Danase”. There were a variety of African foods which the pupils learnt how to prepare during the week for the guest and parent to enjoy. There were also chocolates from Ghana. Miss Mühlleitner and the school are gathering used bicycles which they repair and ship to Boob Diolaso in Burkina Faso and School bag and exercise books which they sent to the Presbyterian School in Kokrobite.

**Confirmants Day in Leopoldstadt and Brigittenau, 28<sup>th</sup> March:** I was invited by Pfr. Willi Thaler to have a time with the confirmation candidates in their district between the hours of 17:30 to 19:00. I did a presentation of Ghana with emphasis to Christianity and the youth. As usual I used photos in the presentation. We also learnt and sang together “Danase”. The young people were happy and wished that I come again.

EAWM Board Meetings: I attended all board meetings of the EAWM as follows.

- 9<sup>th</sup> November
- 11<sup>th</sup> January
- 29<sup>th</sup> March
- 28<sup>th</sup> June

Beirat Meetings:

- 23<sup>rd</sup> January
- 12<sup>th</sup> June

**Einsatz für eine Welt 29<sup>th</sup> March:** together with Elisabeth Pausz we attended this one workshop organised by the youth of Catholic Archdiocese of Vienna for organisation and individuals that have projects in other parts of the world or have been serving as mission workers in various countries. We worked in small groups to share experiences and ideas from our engagements. Topics such volunteering, education, health, mission and spirituality were discussed both in plenary and in workshops. We also had a buffet with food from various countries represented. We prepared Ghanaian doughnuts and meat pie for the buffet.

**IPCA Conference, Strasbourg – France 31<sup>st</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April:** I attended this year’s International Prison Chaplains Association, Europe Conference in Strasbourg France. I and Pfr. Matthias Geist were the only delegates from Austria. The theme of the conference was “Rights of Prisoners a Theological Imperative”. As part of the conference we visit the Council of Europe and the Europe court of Justice where we met with one of the judges who introduced to what they and how it affects our work as Chaplains. She said prisoners also have rights to fair trial and so as chaplains we can counsel inmates on how to seek redress they are being treated fairly. We also visited had interactions with the Anti-torture and Human Rights commissioner of Europe.



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### **Visit to Schlaining and Oberschützen – 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April:**

I was invited by Pfr. Dr. Gerhard Harkam to visit Stadt Schlaining on the above dates. While there, I stayed in the house of Resi Schmall. On Tuesday I visited with Gerhard the HTL in Pinkafeld.

**School Easter Service with Moritz: 11<sup>th</sup> April:** before the Easter break, I joined Moritz Stroh and his students at the Pauluskirche in the third district for a school. I preached on the theme; “It is finished”. Together with Moritz we officiated the communion.

**School visit with Moritz, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April:** on the said dates I visited two schools with Moritz Stroh for religious education classes. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April I visited the Abendgymnasium in Henriettenplatz from 16:00 to 18:30 pm, and on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April I visited the HTL in Leberstrasse from 09:00 to 11:00am respectively. In both schools I spoke about Ghana, the culture and religion using maps and photos. I also spoke about the partnership and why I am here in Austria. In both schools the classes were combined with the Catholics.

**Lange Nacht der Kirchen 24<sup>th</sup> May:** this year I joined together with the Ghana Minstrel Choir to celebrate the “Lange Nacht der Kirchen” in the Auferstehungskirche in the 10<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna. The theme for the celebration and prayer was “Global Justice”. I did a presentation on Ghana and also took part in the intercessory prayer for justice in the world. The Minstrel choir treated the guest with Ghanaian music and choruses. This was cooperation between the Congregation, the EAWM and the Church Partnership Office. A donation was made for projects in Ghana.

**Mission synod and Festival in Basel 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June:** I represented the Protestant Association of World Missions in Austria (EAWM) at this year’s mission’s synod of the Mission 21 in Basel. The synod which discussed the new strategy of the Mission 21 also made a significant change of adding theological studies to its educational mandate because with theological studies there will be no meaningful mission. The synod also received reports from the continental assemblies and the 200 years jubilee of the founding of the Basel Mission committee. The theme for the celebration which is in 2015 is “**200 years of hope unlimited**” from Romans 1:16-17. The Symbol for the anniversary is the “**Sankofa**” symbol from Ghana which literally means that if you forget something and go back to take it, is not a taboo. The Synod ended on Sunday with a Church service where all past missionaries and their families were present. After the service there was a feast with food from all the continents that the Basel Missionaries once worked.

### **Gustav Adolf fest in Bleiberg and Return Service in Villach North 18<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> June:**

I and my family were invited by the planning committee of the Gustav Adolf fest in Kärnten to participate as a special guest. It was hosted by the Congregation in Bad Bleiberg. On the

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opening day, I was introduced to the delegates where I was asked bring greetings. I greeted the delegate and told also spoke about the partnership and the support that Gustav Adolf Club gives to support Adumasa link project.

On the day of the festival where there approximately about 800 people in attendance, I conducted the service with Pfr Dr. Zangerl and the wife of the Superintendent Pfr. Renate Sauer. It was a very lively service with brass band music. After the service there delegates continued to sit in plenary and voted on projects that will receive funding for the coming year. There was also food for sale to raise funds for the club. We had a very nice time and enjoyed the hospitality.

We continued to from Bleiberg to Villach North where we took part in the service to thank God for the safe return of Hanna Kirchmeir who was in Ghana as a volunteer with the Adumasa Link Project for six months. I preached the sermon and Hannah did the liturgy. After the service we had some Ghanaian refreshment with fried plantain and tomato source which Mama Matilda prepared. The host minister was so helpful and friendly showing us around town and allowing us to watch the football match between Ghana and Germany in house before taking us to our Hostel.

**Prisons Ministry:** During the year under review I continued with the prison ministry in the Vienna Central Prison, working with Pfr. Matthias Geist and team. I joined mostly on Thursdays for services and then individual visits thereafter. I most did sermons in English and then the intercessory prayers.

**Christmas Service:** This year's Christmas service in the Prison come on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December with Superintendent Mag. Hans-Jörg Lein and Supkuratorin Dr Inge Troch. In attendance was Miss Victoria Aikins first consular secretary of the Ghana Embassy in Bern. The sermon was done in German by Sup. Hans-Jörg Lein and I did it in English. Christmas gifts were given to the inmates who attended our services.

**Volunteers and Ecumenical Work in Ghana:** In the year under review, two volunteers Hanna Kirchmeir and Simone Hackl were in Adumasa for six months to work in Adumasa Link Project in Adumasa, Chiransa and Bedaase. They have all returned safely to Austria and are very grateful for experience and are continuing to promote the project. Through the cooperation of the Director of Ecumenical Relations, the General Assembly Council and the Consistory of the Protestant Church in Austria, Rev. Markus Lintner and his family are now serving as short ecumenical worker in the Dangme Tongou Presbytery. Reports reaching me from both the Lintner Family and the PCG officials, shows that they are really enjoying the stay and work in Ghana so far. This development is very good for the partnership.

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**Projects:** Projects in the PCG that still received support from the EKiÖ through the EAWM in the year under review are;

- Dormaa Ahenkro Midwifery School
- Dormaa Ahenkro Vocational School
- Adumasa Link project
- Kindergarten and Nursery building in Asakraka
- Abokobi Women's Centre

**The Ghanaian Congregation, Church Life:** In the year under review, church life in the Ghanaian continued with enthusiasm and vibrancy. The following capture the activities undertaken.

- ❖ Devine services continued every first Sunday of the month with communion. Averaged attendance in the year was 35.
- ❖ Eight new members joined in the year under review.
- ❖ Two adults were baptised on January 5<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ Easter Revival from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of April
- ❖ Easter Service on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April
- ❖ Children and youth Sunday was celebrated on May 4<sup>th</sup> with theme "Nurturing the Child".
- ❖ Two infants were baptised on May 18<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ Pentecost joint service with the Glaubenskirche and Ghana Minstrel Choir on 8<sup>th</sup> of June

**Projections:** The following are projections for the congregation in the coming year

- To run a leadership training programme
- To involve more people in the activities of the Congregation like Bible readings, singing of choruses and bidding prayers.
- To celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation
- To discuss the possibility of worship on every Sunday
- To design a website for the congregation.



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### **Appreciation and conclusion:**

My first gratitude goes to God almighty for his protection and sustenance. I am also grateful to OKR Schiefermair, Mag. Elisabeth Pausz, Pfr. Manfred Golda, Mag. Moritz Stroh, OKR Johannes Wittich, Bischof Bünker, Pfr. Sepp Lager, the GPC Presbyterium, all the board members of the EAWM and Beirat Members, All minister and teachers who invited us to their schools and my wife Matilda for your co-operation, support and understanding .Not forgetting the GAC of the PCG and all family members and friends for your Prayers.

May the name of the Lord be praised now and forever!

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