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Photo on the cover page: Our student Mekdelawit Belay wears a crown made of cardboard with the inscription 'The Honor of the Disabled' on World Disability Day (Photo: J. Klein). All other photos: Ermias Gashu / Jürgen Klein.

Evangelical Church of German Speaking in Ethiopia

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Pastor Dr. Jürgen Klein

Empowering the least

On the evening of the visit of the Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture, Cem Özdemir, on November 4, he surprised me as we said goodbye with the Bible verse from Matthew 25:40:

Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

As a Muslim, he heard this verse during his training at the Protestant College for Social Work and never forgot it. When he visited our school, it came back to him. He was very moved when he saw the children singing and when the blind students demonstrated karate exercises.

For me, there is nothing more meaningful than being able to help the smallest, most insignificant, powerless and poorest people. I personally feel a deep connection to these groups because of my history.



In them, I encounter Jesus Christ directly. Here, I experience how God reveals Himself as a seeker of justice, balance, and equality. He is truly searching for people of integrity and asking what can be done so that all can lead the life He has envisioned for them since the beginning.

I am indescribably grateful to God, that He has led me back to Ethiopia again after many years, and now to the German Speaking Evangelical Church in Ethiopia, with its unique

school, the German Church School.

From 1998 to 2012, I worked as an ecumenical staff member through the Church of Hanover (Landeskirche Hannovers) and the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Hermannsburg, collaborating with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

During this time, I helped establish and support many schools and kindergartens while accompanying communities in Muslim areas. From this grassroots work,



"School tour for the delegation 'Humanitarian Aid and Science'."



I am familiar with the needs of the children and their families. I speak the official national language, Amharic fluently, and I am well acquainted with the country, its people and different cultures.

From 2010 to 2012, I worked in the Central Office of the Mekane Yesus Church and was a member of the church council of the Kreuzkirche church.

Back then, we were already working on central issues related to church and school work.



Furthermore, I have often represented the pastors since my arrival in Ethiopia, so I am familiar with what awaits me now.

From 2013 to 2024, I worked again with various congregations in the Church of Hanover.

From 2016 to 2018, I was an Advisor on Religion and churches in Africa.

After this I earned my doctorate (PhD) in Intercultural Theology and Religious Studies at the Protestant University at Wuppertal/Bethel in 2020. My dissertation focused on 'Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia' and was published in 2021 by LIT Verlag.

Over the years, I have frequently been in Ethiopia and stayed connected to the country in various ways, most recently in the church district of Wolfsburg through my chairmanship of the partnership committee.

I feel blessed to be able to contribute to my second home and this fulfilling work.



Karate performance of a student in a wheelchair

The **inclusive approach** of educating children from the poorest families and children with disabilities from our neighborhood together has long set a model character not only for Addis Ababa but for all of Ethiopia, receiving many awards and signs of appreciation.

It deeply moved us all and sent shivers down our spines when the blind children demonstrated karate show during the minister's visit. Their cries were filled with self-confidence and newfound strength. Our current 298 children in grades 1-8 are finding pathways to a life of dignity and prospects that bring them closer to the life that God originally intended for all people.

Dear donors, to participate in or contribute to this work, is a privilege and carries the promise of God's blessing that flows back to us.



Federal Minister Cem Özdemir receives a scarf a



Every year at Christmas, we hear the story of how God became man and continues to do so. We do not need to look far to witness this: God becomes man in the insignificant, in the poorest of the poor, in the powerless and those in various needs. This includes our children, whom we care for at the German Church School as best as we can. Here we see His face, His countenance.

Thank you very much!



as a gift

Today, we thank you, dear friends of the German-speaking Evangelical Church with its school, for every support and for creative ideas on how we can improve, promote, and support the work on the ground.

Therefore, I once again say most cordially THANK YOU – on behalf of the German Speaking Evangelical Church in Ethiopia and on behalf of the German Church School.

Yours,

Pastor Dr Jürgen Klein



Inspiring Visits at the German Church School

Compared to previous years, the new school year in Addis and surrounding areas began without so many fears and uncertainties. We were able to prepare well for the year 2017 according to the Ethiopian calendar (2024/25).

For the German-speaking Evangelical Congregation in Ethiopia, the school year was marked by some changes, including the change of pastors. Pastor Matthias Rohlfing and his family moved away and Pastor Dr Jürgen Klein started anew as pastor. The welcome ceremony and induction took place at the same time as the introduction of two new teachers and the farewell of three departing staff members.

The GCS was also honored this school year with visits from prominent personalities. We are pleased that the school exerts an attraction and bears witness to its unique work. This included the visit of MdB Hermann Gröhe, Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Sub-Saharan Africa, and Dr Dominique Schlupkothén, CBID Director of CBM,

followed by Federal Minister Cem Özdemir, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Education. The school had the privilege of being visited by Member of Parliament Hermann Gröhe on Saturday, October 5, 2024.



Member of Parliament Hermann Gröhe (left) visits the German Church School.

In addition to visiting the school, he also held discussions with the school management. He met students from different grades, mainly those from secondary school.

The discussion with the group of students who had passed the university entrance exam and were waiting to be accepted into various regional



universities was particularly intense. They had the opportunity to express their ambitions, dreams and challenges. They reported problems with meeting schedules, financial hurdles and unstable family circumstances due to the demolition work of the "Corridor Project" in large parts of the city. Especially in the run-down



our school

districts where most of them live. His openness and encouraging words were extremely inspiring for the students, and especially his suggestions on how they can be successful. The encounter left a lasting impression and the hope it aroused will certainly help to shape their future with greater strength.

In addition, another highlight was the visit of the Oktoberfest music band at the Hilton from Bavaria, under the direction of Mr. Herbert Maurer, with the support of the engineering office Bayern Plan and the renowned company HABA-BETON. Not only the considerable donation of 10,000 €, but also the special music concert with accordion and guitar for the students thrilled everyone.

The international CBID director, Dr. Dominique Schlupkothen, together with the country director of CBM, Abenet Leykun Berhanu, also visited our school on October 7, 2024.

In addition to the visit to the school, it was a very good opportunity for discussions to strengthen the partnership and develop more in the field of inclusive education, which is part of CBM's initiatives for community-based inclusive development (CBID initiative).

Besides visiting the school, there was a very good opportunity for discussions to strengthen the partnership and further develop inclusive education, which is part of CBM's community-based inclusive development (CBID initiative).



This event was followed by a thank-you event for CBM supporters in Ethiopia on October 10, 2024, to honor the long-standing commitment of donors.

A video featuring the story of one of our schoolgirls during the event highlighted how the GCS represented a turning point in this girl's life in the second grade. This video shows that our inclusive school has provided her with a chance for a better future,

a school where many children with visual impairments and other disabilities have the opportunity to be productive when given the chance.

Furthermore, the Church with its school was visited by the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture, Cem Özdemir, as part of an official state visit to Ethiopia.

H.E. Cem Özdemir was accompanied by the new German ambassador, Jens Hanefeld, a number of



The school choir sings for Federal Minister Cem Özdemir



secretaries, and delegations with representatives from humanitarian aid, science, and business (see photos on pages 4-5). The children of our school sang, and the blind students performed a karate presentation.

After visiting the school and our bakery, Özdemir attended an exhibition, set up in the church compound, of about ten UN and other NGO aid organizations, speaking with their representatives.



The minister was deeply moved by the children’s performance and the warm welcome that he and his team received at the school. He played briefly with the children and mentioned that he had previously worked as an educator.

He also emphasized that he was happy to visit Ethiopia and to have the opportunity to contribute to the fight for a world where everyone can lead a dignified life.

He stressed that everyone, including children, should have the opportunity to make a contribution to avert the climate crisis and to fight for a world where everyone can live with dignity and no one has to go hungry.

H.E. Cem Özdemir also mentioned that he had been a kindergarten teacher by training and joked that he felt like he was returning to his roots as a teacher. He immediately invited the children to play two hand games with him, which the children enjoyed and found participatory.



Our Strength — Inclusion

In fact, we were surprised and delighted to learn that he was appointed to become the German Minister of Education on his way back from the visit in Addis.

Honestly, these are special and lasting learning opportunities for the entire school and church community to host such esteemed visitors. The school continues to enjoy such refreshing connections and collaborations, and networks further with many friends, donors, and visitors.

This gives us hope, strengthens us, and creates continuity in light of the various challenges we face here and there.

Teklu Tafesse Barki
School Director



For 35 years, the German Church School has been recognized in the country as a model school for inclusive education.

By admitting visually impaired students and applying inclusive teaching methods. The school has enabled children with disabilities to graduate from university.

As a result, these graduates can support themselves and their families through quality education.

Originally established as a school for the blind, the institution has gradually expanded to include children with various disabilities, making it the first comprehensive model school in the country.



Training for teachers from cl



By sharing their experiences, it significantly contributes to the implementation of inclusive education in cluster-level schools in Addis Ababa and promotes collaboration between students with and without disabilities.

establishing resource centers with learning materials for students with special needs.

Teachers continuously improve their skills through training programs to support students with disabilities alongside their peers.



The school shares its knowledge not only among cluster schools in Addis Ababa but also with various regional schools across the country.

It supports these cluster schools in

Although many special education teachers have completed their training at universities, they often lack practical knowledge.



Our school provides them with a system to gain practical experience during their training.

Currently, many children with disabilities cannot attend school, leaving their families to face various challenges, including the search for work and income.

Our school aims to transform more schools nationwide into inclusive institutions, thereby promoting equal opportunities and integration.

The school is also committed to raising awareness of disabilities in society and encouraging the active participation of individuals with children who have disabilities.

Due to space constraints, our school cannot accommodate more children with disabilities. To address this challenge, the school has implemented a home rehabilitation program that provides families with expertise and support at home.

This initiative reduces the impact of disabilities for the children, enabling them to attend regular schools. Additionally, parents learn how to care for their disabled children at home to ease their lives.

Ultimately, our school has established itself as a practical research and study center for inclusive education in the country.

Teshome Assefa

Deputy Director - GCS





"Learning is difficult on an empty stomach"

We all know this truism. At our school, the children receive a high-quality 100g bun and a banana produced by our bakery every day. This helps our children who often start the school day without any breakfast.

In an interview which I conducted on September 20, 2024, with two first-grade students and their parents, the following questions and answers emerged:



Photo Page 16: Mahlet Bahiru with her father Bahiru Kassa

Photo Page 17: Arsema Tsegaye with her mother Meseret Alemu

Jürgen Klein: What are your thoughts about the children starting here at our school?

Bahiru Kassa: We live in poor conditions; we don't have a proper roof over our heads, just a plastic sheet. Our wish is for Mahlet to have a better life.

Meseret Alemu: I feel similarly. I don't have a house; my husband doesn't have a job. We live under a plastic roof, basically on the ground, have little to eat, and I can't provide my daughter Arsema with the life she should have. Therefore, I hope she will have a better life and be able to lead a good life herself.

Jürgen: Do you have a bed at home? What kind of bed is it?

Mahlet: We don't have a bed. We only have a mattress.

Bahiru: What she calls a mattress is actually a blanket, a wool blanket.

We are four at home, with brothers and sisters. I don't have a job.

Mahlet: I have two brothers and one sister. There are six of us.

Jürgen: How about food? What do you eat?

Arsema: We mostly eat shiro with injera.

(Injera is a soft sour flatbread made from „teff“ flour, which originates in Ethiopia. It is served with shiro, a type of chickpea curry paste with various spices.)





Jürgen: Do you also eat bread?

Arsema: We rarely eat bread.

Mahlet: We also have shiro. Sometimes chechebsa.

(Chechebsa is a type of flatbread made from wheat flour, butter, honey, and spices.)

Jürgen: Don't you ever have fruits?

Arsema: No [there are none].

Mahlet: No

Jürgen: Bananas or oranges?

Mahlet: Sometimes a banana, but no oranges.

Arsema: We don't have any fruit. Only shiro.

Jürgen: Do you have any vegetables, like potatoes, tomatoes, or other vegetables?



Mahlet: No

Jürgen: Then I have to ask you as parents what you think about this. Don't you give your children any fruit or vegetables?

Meseret: Very rarely. Maybe once or twice a month. A banana on bread. We can't afford vegetables or anything else.

Tomatoes are in the shiro paste. An egg, for example, costs 12 or 15 Ethiopian birr (0.18€) – where are we supposed to get that money?

We have no fixed income; we live hand to mouth.

Bahiru: I have no job. My wife is a street vendor at a small market on the street. There isn't much money there. She can't find anything else.

I can't work either. So we try to survive as a family of six.



We would like to give our children more, but it's not enough. We hope that my daughter being here will improve things a bit. Here she can play with other children, receive school materials, and a uniform. We are very happy about that.

Jürgen: What do you do to earn some money?

Meseret: I work whenever there is an opportunity, as a cleaner in people's homes or doing their laundry. Only a few days a month.

My husband has only casual jobs in cafés or restaurants. It hardly suffices to pay the rent. An apartment costs about 2000 Ethiopian birr a month (15.63€).

Jürgen: What do you have at home? A TV? A radio? A mobile phone?

Mahlet and Arsema: Yellem. We don't have any of that. Only a small phone, but no smartphone.

Meseret: We have a radio.

Jürgen: Do you have any messages

or greetings for the friends of the German Church School in Germany that you would like to share?

Meseret: I just want to say that I am very happy that my child can attend school here and that they are helped with food and provided with materials and other support.

Bahiru: I was very happy when I learned that my daughter could go to school here. I hope she will have a good life. I wish the German friends a good life and that God blesses them.

Thank you very much for the conversation.

Pastor Dr. Jürgen Klein





The PASCH initiative at our school

The PASCH initiative began in 2008. By September 2011, it was recognized by the Goethe-Institut at three schools in Addis Ababa. Initially, 23 students aged 12-14 began learning German. Since then, we have significantly expanded our program.

Currently, about 75 students learn German each year in regular school classes and Saturday courses. The school offers targeted German instruction for selected fifth graders who are interested and suitable.

Additionally, the German Embassy provides scholarships every two years for students who can study in Germany. Each year, two or three high-achieving students are selected for a 20-day language training program in Germany. This program enables them to connect with peers from around the world and share their culture.

Celebrating the successes of the PASCH Initiative

Since I joined the GCS PASCH unit, I have had a variety of experiences—some humorous, others challenging. All have all contributed to a remarkable journey. I am grateful for the lessons I have learned along the way.

One outstanding experience from last year involved our talented blind student, Bisrat Ermias, and our insightful student, Addis Sharew. Their trip to Germany was a significant milestone, especially for Bisrat, who traveled abroad for the first time. Coordinating this visit with the Goethe-Institut in Bamberg required extensive communication, and we received valuable support from Ermias, the head of the language department at Goethe-Institut, Addis Ababa.

During our stay in Germany, I participated in a valuable training on language teaching methods in Munich.



My experience in Germany

To our delight, Bisrat and Addis quickly became popular among their classmates and teachers, representing our school with pride and returning home with honor.

In an unexpected turn of events, Bisrat, who was scheduled to take the A1 exam in German, impressed everyone by passing the A2 exam. Addis also performed excellently, passing the A1 exam with outstanding results. These successes underscored the effectiveness of our program in Germany.

Tekolla Aklilu

GCS PASCH Coordinator



Hello everyone,

I am Bisrat Ermias, and I would like to share my experiences in Germany with you today. First, I want to thank the Goethe-Institut and my school for giving me the opportunity to participate in the summer language course in Germany.

I am proud to be the first blind student to take part in this scholarship program for the summer.



This was my first time outside my home country, Ethiopia, and also the first time I traveled without my family.

The camp lasted 21 days, from August 4 to August 24, 2024. Initially, the weather conditions were challenging for me during the first three days, but after that, I was able to adapt to the conditions.

ded German classes. I also had the pleasure of trying some new dishes, which are delicious! A highlight was visiting a university in Bamberg, which was close to our camp. We also took a three-hour bus ride to Nuremberg, where we explored several historical sites and a museum.

Overall, my time in Germany was a



Bisrat and his friends in Germany

The experience of meeting peers from all over the world and making new friends was incredibly enriching. During the camp, I atten-

fantastic experience. I am deeply grateful to all the teachers, staff, and everyone who encouraged me.

Thank you!



The electrical power system of our compound

Our facilities consist of seven building blocks, including the church, the pastor's residence, and the school. Additionally, there are smaller service buildings such as our bakery with guesthouse, offices, storage rooms, and a library. All these facilities receive their power from a central electrical station, which is intended to ensure a reliable power supply.

Several issues have arisen, particularly regarding the state power line in conjunction with the solar system. The main goal of the alternative power supply is to ensure smooth operation around the clock. To achieve this, it is essential to address the problems with the generator and the solar system. A preventive and corrective maintenance program, along with a



Solar batteries and electrical power room



budget for spare parts and regular services for the effective operation of the system, is crucial. This includes inspections, maintenance and minor repairs in all main and ancillary buildings, the appropriate tools and measuring instruments for the on-call technician.

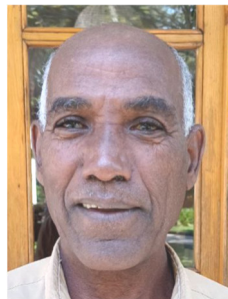
Currently, the central power supply system lacks wiring diagrams and electrical drawings, which complicates troubleshooting and poses risks to personnel and equipment. During power outages, all connected loads are supplied by the solar system, which places a significant strain on the batteries, especially during the rainy season.

Furthermore, the loads of the bakery and guesthouse were not considered in the original project proposal for the solar system, which would require an

independent power source.

Therefore, a revision of the power system to accommodate these additional loads was necessary. The power supply system is intended to operate with three independent energy sources. However, due to the faulty generator, all consumers are currently reliant on grid and solar power in the mean time we are working on it. During periods of low sunlight, it is crucial that the batteries are charged via the grid to ensure supply. To avoid unnecessary disruptions within the solar system, we require guidance from the solar consulting office or solar equipment providers to prevent unnecessary interruptions.

Tefera Mamo
Electrical Supervisor



A new Chess Club

Chess can positively influence the lives of our children. Essential character traits, skills, and values are imparted. They can develop qualities that help them grow into successful and content individuals.



They learn to make thoughtful decisions in daily life.

We believe that chess has a direct impact on academic success, which is why we have integrated it into our school co-curricular activities.

Research shows that children who play chess can enhance their intelligence.

Focus: Chess teaches children the importance of attention and concentration. Regardless of their intelligence, they must observe the game carefully to respond effectively.

Visualization: Players are encouraged to visualize a series of moves before they happen. By mentally moving the pieces step by step, children significantly improve their visualization skills.



Concrete Analysis: Chess helps children evaluate the outcomes of specific actions and patterns. They begin to understand whether a sequence is advantageous or disadvantageous, realizing that logic often guides better decisions than emotions.

Thinking Ahead: Chess encourages children to think before they act. They learn to ask themselves, "If I do this, what could happen, and how can I respond?"

Abstract Thinking: Children are stimulated to look beyond the details and consider the bigger picture.



They learn to apply patterns from one context to related situations, enhancing their ability for abstract thinking.

Setting Long-Term Goals: Children learn the importance of developing

long-term goals and taking concrete steps to achieve them. They also understand that plans need to be re-evaluated when circumstances change.

Children discover that they do not have to act impulsively. They gain the ability to recognize different options and weigh the pros and cons of various courses of action.

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Weighing Options: Children discover that they do not have to act impulsively. They gain the ability to recognize different options and weigh the pros and cons of various courses of action.

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Our bakery with the new master baker

These skills, which are not limited to chess, make the game an excellent teaching tool. Chess challenges children's minds and allows them to develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and independent decision-making—all while having fun.

Tewodros Mehari
GCS - Chess Club Coordinator



It has been almost 6 months now since we stopped buying bread from other bakeries and started baking our own.

Local residents and the school children smell the fresh bread smell coming from our bakery every morning. We have six baker women who work in shifts. By the time the children of our school arrive at the school premises, they are finished with the breakfast rolls.

Most of the GCS children love the bread as it is freshly baked and contains some valuable ingredients. One of the girls from grade 2 said, "When the smell reaches me, I close my eyes and enjoy it", and it is true that the bakery has a special place in everyone's heart.

Since the first week of November 2024, another master baker, Mr. Stefan Kehne, from "Brot gegen Not" from Germany, has joined our



baking team. He is highly qualified We are grateful for his presence. Stefan brings experience from other countries. From our observation, he is very sociable and works hard. Oliver Flodman from "Brot gegen Not" fan came on the recommendation of Not".



This year's Christmas bazaar on November 30th was a great success for the German congregation and for our school. As has been the tradition for many years, the event created a Christmas atmosphere before the first Advent.

Everyone did their best to make this charity bazaar even more successful.

Stefan loves to show others what he knows. He is in our midst to share his knowledge and skills with us. The bazaar united the employees of GC and GCS. Everyone rushed to do their duty.



said it was far better than industrially produced ones. Everything sold out.

During Baker Stefan's stay, small baking workshops are offered for our bakers, schoolchildren, and parents, as well as for the wider church and school community.

In closing, I would like to end my article with Stefan's statement: "I work best when I collaborate with my team!"

The bazaar not only creates a Christmas atmosphere on the premises, but also helps the children of our school enormously through the proceeds.

Christmas stollen, gingerbread, and holiday pastries baked by master baker Mr. Stefan and his team.

Many visitors appreciated the quality and taste of the stollen, some

**Merdassa Kassaye
Social Worker**





Impressions from the German Christmas Charity Bazaar, 30.11.2024

Thousands of people flocked to our compound to experience the unique German Christmas atmosphere in Ethiopia.

Around our church (Kreuzkirche), 60 stalls were set up, offering mulled wine, bratwursts, beer, and freshly baked Christstollen. Additionally, all the self-made Advent wreaths, crafted by Ethiopian wood carriers

and decorated by our volunteers from the community, sold out quickly. The Advent calendars and many sweets and other items, flown in from Germany over the weeks, also found many buyers.

The circus group 'My Way Circus' delighted the audience, as did the school choirs from GCS and the embassy school. The adult choir also shone with Advent and Christmas songs, particularly with the Amharic song 'Joy to the World'. The market was a great success, and we raised over 1.5 million Birr for our school.



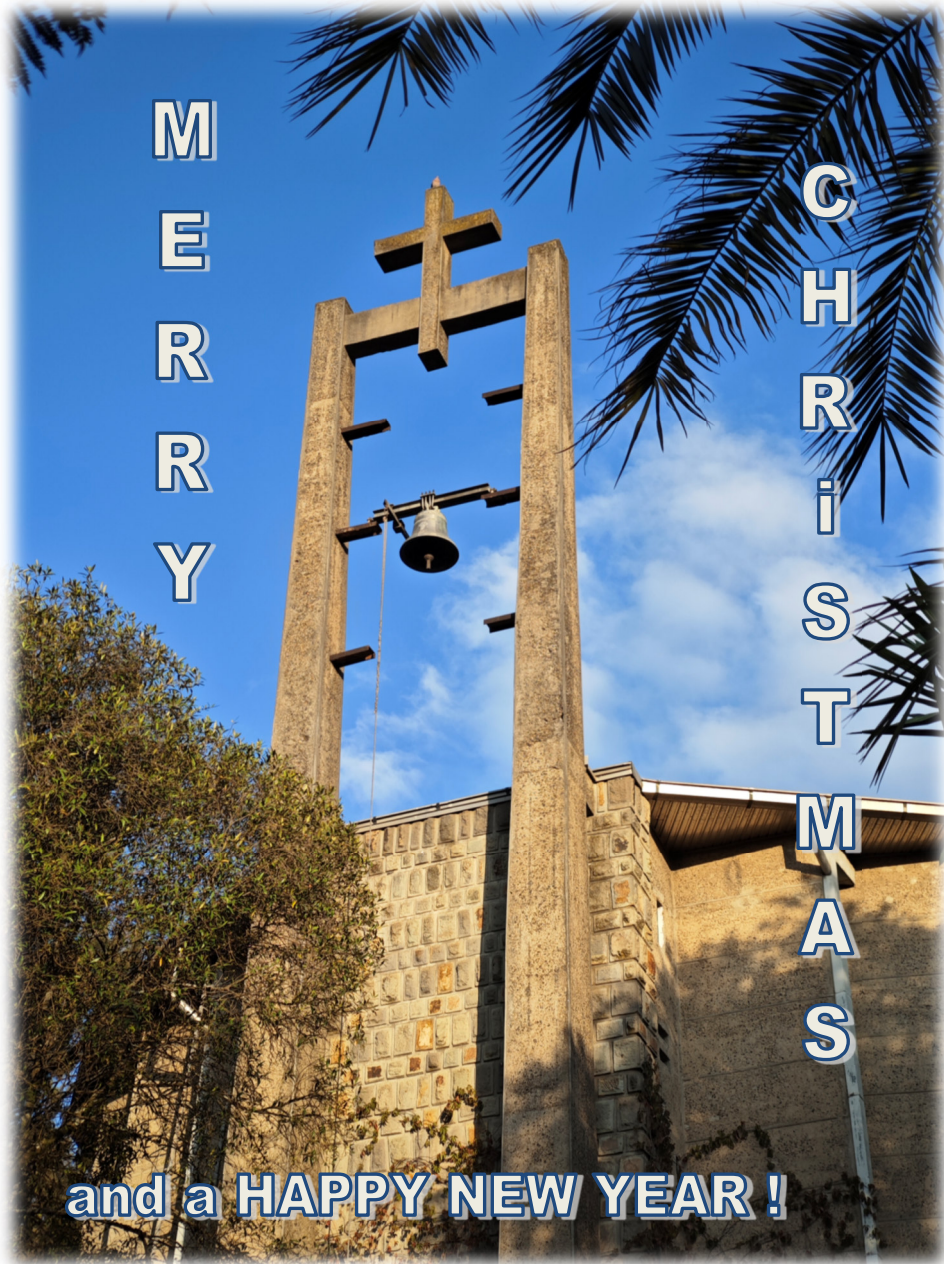
The portrait artist, face painters, Santa Claus, and the puppet show also contributed to a colorful program for both children and adults. Our Christmas market has become an unbeatable hallmark of our community over many decades, one that many international and Ethiopian guests do not want to miss.

The bazaar was prepared and organized by a large number of helpers from the community. The team of employees at the compound in particular put all their energy into making this bazaar such a success.



We would like to thank all of them, as well as the sponsors of the vouchers for the silent auction and other kind of support! **Pastor Dr Jürgen Klein**





Our Support Association - Melkam Edil e.V.

In 2015, our support association Melkam Edil e.V. was founded in Germany. Since early 2017, it has actively supported the German Church School, primarily by facilitating contact with our donors in Germany and Europe. All contacts with European donors are organized by Melkam Edil e.V. For inquiries regarding donation receipts and other information, please contact the office in Ludwigshafen directly:

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