

Week 52, December 2009

## In Focus...

Beate Kleber



Recently Beate visited Hong Kong. In Focus quizzed her about this trip.

Q: Was this your first visit to Hong Kong and what impressed you?

A: In November I spent 2 weeks in Hong Kong visiting my friend Margaret. It was my second visit; the first was 18 years ago. The very tall apartments impressed me and one should avoid the Underground at rush hour as people push everywhere!

Q: What about church, Beate?

A: On Sunday we went to church in Discovery Bay. In many ways it reminded me of SICC. The Lady Pastor was from England, the congregation international and the preaching in English. My friend was invited to participate in the 100-year anniversary of the YMCA in Guangzhou, China, and I joined her. It was a wonderful time with many speeches and several banquets. The final service was in a church and it was very touching when the church choir sang Händel's Messiah.

Q: What memory stays with you?

A: The warm hospitality of my friend and our prayer times. We visited a nearby island and I was shocked to see the idol worship. People place the idols at their gates and put mirrors on the balcony to keep the evil spirits

away. I thought to myself, Who will bring them the Good News about Salvation and the Kingdom of God? A: Thank you, Beate!

## SICC CALENDER

Sunday, 11am – **Advent Worship**, followed by Coffee time

Tuesday – **Prayer group**, will resume in January.

Wednesday – **Women's Bible Study Group**, will resume in January

Wednesday – **Students' Bible Study**, will resume in January

Thursday, 1 pm – **Sacred Space**, hospitality lunch at the Mozarteum Cafe

## SICC COMING EVENTS

December 25, 11 am – **Christmas Day Service**

December 31, 7 pm – **Open House at Pastor's home, Strubergasse 49/5/12**

January 24 – **Annual General Meeting**

## HAPPENINGS AT SICC

### Tea, Coffee, Hot Punch and Sacher Cake

On Saturday afternoon, December 5th, a small group of women gathered at the home of Chris Prentice for afternoon tea.

Accompanied by much laughter and story telling, we enjoyed a feast of food and drink

courtesy of Chrissie. It was a fun afternoon that no doubt will be on next year's calendar too.

Chrissie has since broken her arm and has been in hospital. This was totally unrelated to the afternoon but serves as a warning that when you do go out, watch those steps into



Restaurants - they are out to get you!

### Visit to Wärmestube



Barbara, Moira and Glynthea visited the Wärmestube to drop off the tins of food and donations that

had been collected by the congregation during November. Moira's car was packed to overflowing – "The best collection of food I have ever taken to Wärmestube," says Moira. Whilst there, we enjoyed coffee and chatted with some of the helpers and with the gentleman who began this work, Herr Ernst Flatscher.



It was difficult to hear and to understand that there is very little government help and they are reliant on the help of congregations like SICC. It was heartbreaking to hear many homeless die on the streets of Salzburg during winter due to the lack of shelters.

### 'A Magical Night of Carol Singing and Readings!'

...was how some described our International Carols and Readings programme on 9th December.



Carols from Spain, France, USA, Italy and Iceland echoed through Christuskirche

as we sang carols and listened with delight to the singers, musicians and readers and lived afresh the story of Christmas.

This year, from the donations collected, we will support the project



'Sonneninsel' (Island of the sun) and the ongoing work of SICC. 'Sonneninsel' will be the first and only Aftercare Center of the Austrian Children's Cancer Help and will be built in Seekirchen am Wallersee.



*Jottings from the Pastor's Desk*

Hope, Peace, Love and Joy are symbolized by the lighting of the four candles of the Advent Wreath. What an important place they have, not only in our own lives, but also for the Church and our world. But how very difficult it is to keep them alight! The flame of Peace flutters uneasily amidst the winds of war and terrorism. The flame of Love flickers as shouting voices and raised fists create a wall of hate. And Joy's glow fades as we rush around with rising anxiety and stress levels. Hope is the source of Peace, Love and Joy. But even its light waivers as many ask "Hope! What is Hope? Show me Hope in the midst of anger, hate, violence!"

On Christmas Day we light the fifth candle, the Christ Candle, when we celebrate afresh the story of the coming of the babe of Bethlehem: heralded by the angels in Luke and declared by the writers of the Gospels to be the long awaited Messiah – the Prince of Peace and the one who would bring God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus of Nazareth and his Good News is found the Source of Hope that no earthly force can extinguish. And it is Hope that keeps Joy, Peace and Love burning brightly in the darkness. May you each enjoy a Blessed Christmas and find your Hope in the Christ of Christmas.

God bless,

*Glynthea*