

UEM International Devotion

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Trilateral partnership Meeting of young adults in Brno, Czech Republik

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A bible verse that explains very good the joy of international partnership is Psalm 133, 1:
„How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”

I want to tell you about an international gathering of three church partners who met two weeks ago. Young adults aged between 20 and 40 from Namibia, Germany and the Czech Republic spent a week in Brno getting to know one another and learning about the Hussite Church.

The church District Essen, Germany has two partnerships:

- Diocese Brno of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church in Czech Republik
- Andreas-Kukuri-Centre, an Education Center of the ELCRN

Some years ago the idea came up to bring together young adults from these churches.

In 2022 the Andreas Kukuri Centre organized an invitation to young adults to Namibia. So I had the pleasure of accompanying a group from Essen, Germany and Brno, Czechia to Namibia.

Two years later the group from Essen invited the Czechian and Namibian siblings to come to Germany. It was a warm welcome to cold Germany in November 2024.

This year the third meeting of the partners took place: The Hussite Church invited the German and the Namibian young adults to Brno. We spent a week in the second biggest city in Czechia. They prepared a great program, we learned a lot about the Czech culture, Christianity in the heart of Europe and the special situation of the Hussite church.

The Hussite Church refers back to the Reformer Jan Hus, but the church is just around 100 years old. Christianity doesn't play a big role in the Czech Society and only a half of the whole population are Christians and of those the majority are Roman-Catholics. The Hussite church has very few members and the numbers continues to decline.

We met the Bishop of the Diocese Brno, Bishop Juraj Dovala, we sang together and discussed the differences and similarities of our churches.



One thing we have in common in all three partner churches is that the young adults question their churches: Where is our place in the church, between youth work

ministries and elderly ministries. Or: How should a church be, that makes young people feel home?

They also discussed the partnerships, how can they improve the communication, how can we move on and which goals can we set for ourselves for the future?

One worship service we attended was a Pentecost celebration in a forest near Brno. The group walked a long pilgrimage through the woods, around 5 kilometers. We celebrated a nice Open-Air Service in the forest, got signs of the Holy Spirit and prayed together in many different languages.



The Hussite sisters and brothers also showed us the beauty of the Moravian landscape around Brno, like here in a vineyard, where I remembered the biblical story of the workers in the vineyard. No matter how different they were, at the end they were treated equally. The 3 Groups also were different at some points. For example the Namibians didn't enjoy the walking as much as the European participants.

One of the Highlights was the singing together, like here in a workshop in a hussite Church, where we sang international Hymns. We were amazed, how beautiful the Namibians can sing. And even the Czechs were wondering: "Why can the Germans not sing?"



At the end we celebrated an international worship service in a Hussite Church with a lot of music. And even though we invited many people, just few came to the church. There were around 15 people in the church, which is a normal number of visitors in a Hussitan Church. But the Namibians asked the Checks: “Why are so few people coming into the church and what are you doing to change this?”

So we are different and diverse. And even though the Namibians don´t enjoy walking, the Germans can not sing and the Czechs have few people in their Church – we are called to be one in Christ. In this week the young people got to look beyond the differences, they tried to understand their partners and they learned a lot. They learned what it means to be a unity in Christ, even if it is just for one week. The partnership goes on; they meet constantly every month in video calls and stay in contact via whatsapp and Instagram.

„How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” (Psalm 133,1)

