



Wisconsin Gossellers Jul/Aug 2019 Newsletter

Building bridges across countries through the shared love of gospel music



Notes from Don Tubesing about the picture: The picture I take back home with me in my soul. Seven gorgeous people (ah, but those two words are redundant!) from right to left are as follows. In the chaos and without a pen, I did not get their names down, but the beauty is there.

German Host mom (Wiese) and refugee women/sisters/daughters
Home country.....

- Afganistan
- Eritrea
- Brother KC -- Wisconsin
- Sister Carolyn -- New York
- Iraq
- Syria



This is what God's created world looks like!
...and this is our job to make it so over and over again.

Notes from Cathy Jones:

Not a day goes by that I don't tell another person (many times total strangers) about our amazing experience in Germany.

I say experience rather than trip because the experience was as high for me as the most amazing memory I have of summer camp as a child.

So many relationship levels were and are - touched for me - personally, between WI Gossellers, between New York and Wisconsin Gossellers, Germans and Americans, Americans and host families, the young and young at heart ...!



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Notes from Martin about the 2019 Germany trip

I just wanted to thank you all for doing such an amazing job, both musically and socially! You sounded great, and have formed some fantastic new relationships.

We have quite an amazing ministry here, when you consider that we are doing is just what our mission envisions: to bridge cultural divides and touch souls.

Some of the moments that will remain in my memory for a long time.

- the fire in the eyes of the Frankenberg orchestral musicians during He Never Failed Me
- the open-mouthed awe of the little girl in the front row in Kalkar when KC and Carolyn were singing the Never Failed Me Vamp
- the unbridled joy of the people in Wiehe as we Broke Bratwürste Together
- of course, that coming together of those young women in the picture below, all of whom have felt both the tragedy of displacement and the tenuous hope of a new belonging
- the gorgeous tone quality of the sopranos and altos at the beginning of Dirait-on
- the moment when the tenors finally nailed what Jesus said to Dicodemus
- when Markus Wagener in Frankenberg said "I didn't expect you to be THAT good"
- when so many of you said how close you had gotten to your host families
- the tears in the eyes of some of the hosts when we left Frankenberg, and Essen

We now have a musical ministry that is working on bridging the divides between African-American and (sort of) German-American, US and Germany, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq and Syria.

Thank you to those who traveled and those at home.

We were all together in Spirit!

Thank you to everyone who was able to go on the Germany Trip. Thank you to everyone at home as well. Your spirit was with us through song & prayers. Thank you to everyone who followed the Germany trip through emails or through facebook. We couldn't have done this trip without your support! The travelers look forward to connecting with the rest of the choir to share lessons they learned and share pictures of those we met so that everyone feels as though they were part of the mission.

---Alicia Gardner





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“Seeing with the Heart” by Reverend Ralph van Otterlo from Schlosskirche zu Moyland July 7, 2019

1st Samuel 16:7 *But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

A person sees what’s right in front of them. The visible. But God sees what’s in our hearts. The invisible.

What’s visible?

- A person’s façade
- The life they live.
- Their physical body
- How they present themselves
- What they say
- If they are—at least according to our social norms—beautiful or unattractive or even ugly.

In this life, for sure, a lot depends on external appearances, on keeping up appearances, and on the perceptions of others.

I once met a young woman—someone others knew only on the surface. People saw:

- A happy woman
- A good mother of two small children
- Capable. Successful. Smart. Accomplished.

No one wanted to see the state of her heart:

- The betrayal of her children’s father, who’d walked out and gone back to his homeland.
- The betrayal of her new partner
- Her fear of negotiating life on her own
- Her deep loneliness

No one wanted to—or could—see into her heart. This young mother didn’t want to live anymore. It had become too hard to carry the weight of life all by herself. She longed for someone to see past the façade, into her heart.

Maybe you know this feeling. The longing for someone to see past the visible, to see the state of your heart.

- Your joys
- Your burdens.
- Your delight.
- Your worry.
- Your challenges.
- Your inconsistencies, invisible wounds and uncertainties.

God sees what moves us. God sees what weighs down our hearts. God sees what makes our hearts beat faster. I believe God also saw into the heart of this young woman. And God promises to see into each of our hearts, to notice how we’re really doing, deep down. God sees you—those parts of you no person can or will see.

God does see us, just as we are: Outside and inside. The visible and the invisible. The façades we project... and our hidden uncertainties. And this is God’s promise: To not judge us by appearances, by public perceptions, or accomplishments. To weigh neither our mistakes, nor our good deeds.

God uses different standards:

How we engage the truths of our hearts.

How we receive grace for ourselves--and extend it to others.

- Reverend Ralph van Otterlo
Schlosskirche zu Moyland, 7 July 2019



Mission Statement: To bridge cultural divides and touch souls through the transformative power of gospel music

Vision Statement: A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch by</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Sat Sept 14 2019	10am-3pm rehearsal	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd Neenah, WI 54956	sopranos	Rehearsal
Sat Oct 12 2019	10am-3pm rehearsal	Olivet UCC 313 W Prairie St, Columbus, WI 53925	altos	Rehearsal
Sat Nov 9 - Sun Nov 10 2019	10am-3pm Rehearsal 10am Worship	Grace Congregational UCC 2801 Garfield St, Two Rivers, WI 54241	men	Rehearsal Concert/Worship *Over night stay available
Sat Dec 14th 2019	10am-3pm rehearsal	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd Neenah, WI 54956	sopranos	Rehearsal
Sat Jan 11th 2020	10am-3pm 3pm concert	Cedar Ridge 113 Cedar Ridge Dr West Bend WI 53095	Cedar Ridge	Rehearsal/ workshop & Concert
Tentatively Jun 29-Jul 10 2020	"Gospel&More" Choir from Germany visits	Various churches throughout wisconsin	n/a	Rehearsal & concerts & touring

? = still tentative and could change. Stay tuned! Will be updated at a later date or via email.

***Over night stay available = Let the Leadership team know if you need a place to stay**

Music-based assignment for the month

Stay tuned for homework assignments each month.

This month listen to:

- One gospel song you've never heard before
- One Wisconsin Gospellers song that you haven't heard in a while

Mission-based assignment for the year

Intentional conversations with someone you might not know well.

This next 2019-2020 year, stay tuned for ideas & techniques to help work on intentional conversations with people you may not know. We're striving to give you the tools to build bridges with people!