

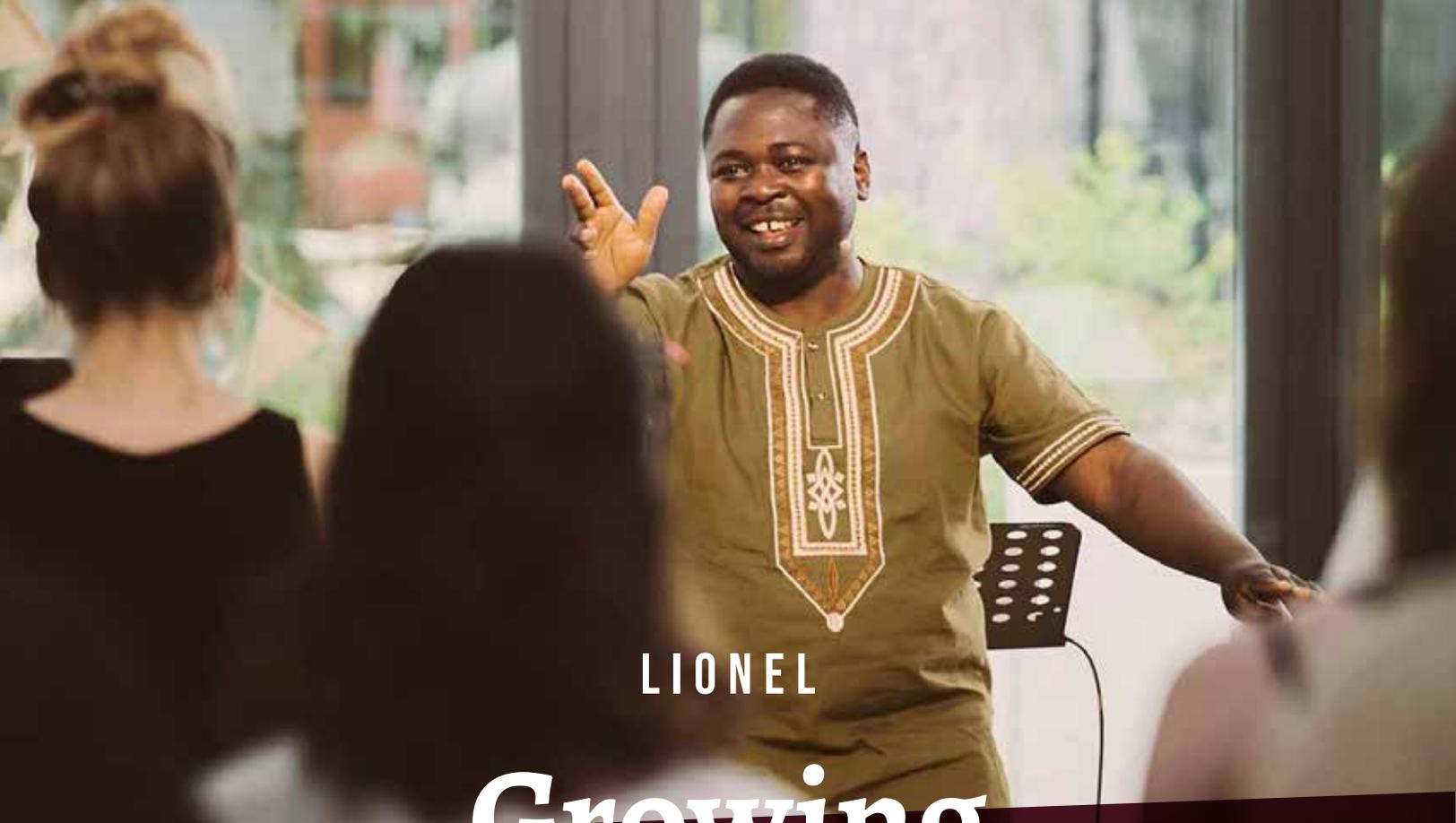
ANNUAL REPORT

2022
2022
2022



KIRCHE AM START

... und die Stadt blüht auf!



LIONEL

Growing with Jesus

Dear friends of „Kirche am Start“,

Up to now, we have tried every year to implement our motto, that Offenbach should flourish, and in doing so, we have always tried to set new milestones. When we sat down together at the beginning of last year, it became clear to us that this time we would need Jesus more than ever before to implement the next step. We had so much planned, that there was no way we could do it alone. We wanted to open our new location in Offenbach as a neighborhood center and at the same time plant a new church in Obertshausen. Those were the external goals. At the same time, we wanted individuals to step forward with Jesus and grow. It was really too much. But God had laid it before our feet, so we were excited to see what He would do. At the end of the year, we held a testimony service as KaS.

This was my personal highlight of the year. We had no sermon, but instead, listened to what God did in the lives of our members. And it was wonderful! It was clear from the reports that the past year was not about buildings, but about people. Many people had been touched and quite a few at KaS had a big part in that. This makes me happy and grateful. At the same time, it shows me that God has even more plans for us in the future. He continues to use KaS to further His Kingdom. Welcome to the Annual Report 2022.

Lionel Bendobal

ALICIA & CLEMENS

When cups change lives



Alicia and Clemens have been walking with Jesus for quite a while, experiencing a typical Christian „career.“ „In the beginning, my faith was on fire, but later on there always seemed to be a standstill,“ explains Alicia, „so quiet, that at times it felt like death.”

Shortly before the two met, both had already decided for themselves: „Such a thing could not and should not be.“ „Consistent growth in our relationship with God, no matter what life circumstances come, should be of the utmost importance in our lives.“

In 2020, they went through very difficult times (conflicts with family, health problems, lost jobs, housing problems, ...) but they held on to God and got what they call a „miracle apartment“ in 2021. „Hallelujah,“ Alicia underlines the blessing. Filled with gratitude, they began to retreat in their new apartment, causing things to come to a spiritual standstill again.

At the end of every year, they write down goals and visions together for the coming year. This was also the case for the year 2022. At the top of the list was: Spiritual growth! At that time, KaS started the campaign „Growing with Jesus“ and when the young couple had the cups in front of them, which were stamped with this motto, they felt encouraged by God to put their resolutions into action. They looked at each other, „Wow, this is a perfect fit!“ It made them realize how important church is. It is one of the most important channels they believe God uses to meet, encourage, and bless His children.

Alicia went on to say that they didn't yet have a solution in mind for all the other problems, but they wanted to be challenged and still deepen their relationship with God. So they began to change their prayer life e.g. fasting, studying the Bible regularly...etc. They realized that they would only get to a new level if they got rid of the permanent excuses of why it was not pos-



sible for them, right here and now, to do something with and for God. This was a difficult step, because Alicia was very ill at the time and was actually limited for a long period of time. Today she says, „In the last year, I’ve experienced a lot of healing, but more than that, I’ve gotten a new perspective from God about the other problems that are not solved now.“ Clemens realized, „For me, testifying to others had always been a challenge.“ He wanted to change that. He wanted to do it without coercion and pressure. He didn’t want to talk about Jesus because that’s what you have to do as a Christian, but because, like a man in love, he simply can’t stop raving about his love. In fact, he developed this frankness.

Whether in his circle of acquaintances or at work - he told others about Jesus and what he himself experienced. And he realized that this was a blessing with a return ticket. He was able to bless others but, in the process, he received blessings himself. One of the year’s highlights

for Alicia and Clemens was talking with a friend they had been praying for for some time. After the small talk, they began to discuss spiritual topics and at some point they reached the point where the other person wanted to entrust his life to Jesus.

Now, she is a Christian and is full of enthusiasm and joy in getting to know the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. „Growing with Jesus“ may start on the inside, but it changes everything, even on the outside“ - Alicia and Clemens have long been convinced of this.

The KaS Team



Dr. Didrot Nguempjoug

ELDER

... is married to Grace and the father of 4 children. He works as a consultant for minerals and mining resources. Besides his job, he has agreed to be an elder at KaS. For him, this is a way to get involved in God's house locally. Here he can exercise his gifts, develop them further and make them available to the Christian community. He is involved in this particular church due to the diversity of the congregation: the different nationalities, age groups and cultures give him a glimpse of God's kingdom in heaven. Here he can develop himself, meet new people and also gain new perspectives. He also appreciates the opportunity to get involved in social and diaconal work at KaS.



Lars Stockmann

ELDER

... is married to Marie and they have 2 children. After studying Protestant religion and history in Frankfurt am Main, he came to Offenbach for Marie. Since then, he has been teaching at the catholic Marienschule Offenbach. The Lord called him to be an elder at KaS at the end of 2022 after 2 years of preparation. Lars loves his neighborhood, the Mathildenviertel in Offenbach, and leads a house church there. What excites him about Kirche am Start is that KaS is vibrant. Not only do different nations find a place here, which is almost normal in Offenbach, but also very different styles of faith come together here. For Lars, it's wonderful how enriching that can be.



Lionel Bendobal

PASTOR - OBERTSHAUSEN CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

... has been with KaS as lead pastor from the beginning. With his wife Naemi and their 4 children, he lives in the inner city of Offenbach. Lionel has a huge heart for people who have nothing to do with faith. In his opinion, church should always be such that the people around them would miss it if it no longer existed. Lionel also loves to help people reach their full potential. That's why he likes to invest himself in others and enjoys seeing people grow beyond themselves.



Marie Susann Stockmann

PASTOR

... is also one of the founding pastors of KaS and has been involved from the beginning. She lives with her husband Lars (see above) and their two children in the Mathildenviertel in Offenbach. After her return to work from maternity leave, God confirmed to her that she should continue to invest herself here. Marie's heart has been beating for Offenbach from day one, because it is so vibrant and there is a diverse togetherness in the city. This is also reflected at KaS, not only in terms of the different cultures, but also in the different ways of believing. The fact that KaS is not a church that tries to attract people to itself, but lives faith naturally in everyday life and thus makes a difference, fascinated Marie from the beginning. Marie also thinks it's great that KaS networks a lot with others. It's not the idea of doing everything alone that is the priority, but rather building the kingdom of God together.



Thorben Kreienberg

VICAR - HEAD OF DEPARTMENT "EXPERIENCING GOD"

... moved to Offenbach with his wife Kathrin in December 2021. He has known

KaS for a long time, because he already completed some internships of his theology studies at the Theological Seminary Erzhausen at KaS. For his vicariate, he is now an „Offenbacher“ and has since been responsible for the department „Experiencing God“. The vision „...and the city flourishes“ touched Thorben, because he himself was „made to flourish“ by God’s love a few years ago. That is exactly what he wants for the residents of Offenbach and Obertshausen, and that is why he is building God’s kingdom at KaS.



Hannah Trommer

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT "ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER"

... has been part of the KaS family since September 2021. After her dual studies of

theology, she moved to Obertshausen to accompany the foundation of the second campus. Since March 2022, she has been responsible for managing the area of „Encouraging One Another“. Hannah’s dream of church is that people recognize their God-given potential and use it for Him, thereby coming to „flourish“ themselves. She wants to accompany people in this process and show them how they can make their whole environment and their city flourish.



Christopher Falk

VICAR - HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT "NEXTGEN"

... first started as an intern at KaS. During his theology studies at the Theological

Seminary Erzhausen, he came to KaS for his last internship and thus to Offenbach and he will stay here to complete his vicariate. His tasks revolve around the next generation in Offenbach and Obertshausen. For him there is nothing more beautiful than children and teens experiencing and getting to know Jesus. Every child should be allowed to discover how uniquely and wonderfully they were made by God.



Sandy Führer

MANAGING DIRECTOR "AM START GUG" AND
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT "HIER HANDELN"

... lives with her family in Obertshausen.

With her husband, she has 2 girls who somehow have to do with the fact that they are now at KaS. Because of the lack of childcare places in Obertshausen, Sandy was looking for a provider with whom she could establish a daycare center herself. At KaS, in addition to managing Am Start gUG, she is also in charge of our daycare center and the development of the family center (formerly the „Hier handeln“ department). What she likes about KaS is that it is a modern congregation with a variety of offerings, even for people who have just come into contact with faith. Everyone can get involved here - and Sandy thinks that’s great.



Heike Jung

ADMINISTRATION

... has been a part of KaS for a long time and almost since the beginning. She lives

in the Offenbach district of Rumpenheim with her husband and her two children who are now grown up. Heike always looks forward to the church services and the people she can meet there. Because what excites her most about KaS is that it’s vibrant and diverse. This is always particularly visible at the church services. To make sure that everything runs smoothly at KaS, Heike takes care of all the office work that arises, such as invoices, emails, answering mail, ordering materials, bookkeeping, etc. In this way she supports the pastors and department leaders.



Jana Gutmann

PR COORDINATOR

... has been in the city of Offenbach since 2013. She is married to Jonathan and they

have 3 children between 4 and 9 years old. Together with her family, she has been at KaS since 2017 and since 2021 she has been responsible for communication on the staff team. Jana and her husband have always desired a church that shares their love for the city of Offenbach and their neighborhood. She leads a house church in the suburb called Bürgel. Jana feels that church needs to be visible to the outside world, whether it be through relationships and contacts or through offerings and commitment. That’s exactly what Jana wants to live out at Kirche am Start.

LIONEL

Obertshausen site foundation



„The establishment of a church in Obertshausen is completely different from any other I’ve been a part of.“ Lionel makes that very clear. The focus in 2022 was on the new community center in Offenbach, and a couple who had previously been primarily involved with Obertshausen also moved on. This left the work virtually orphaned. „How do we continue here?“ the strategy team from Offenbach asked itself at the beginning of the year. The reaction was clear: Strategically, it didn’t seem to be the right time, but the local people wanted it to continue. „Then I’ll continue to accompany this foundation,“ Lionel said at the time. But how was that going to work?

The Taylor family came as missionaries with a heart for Obertshausen and many local families became more involved, so it moved forward, step by step. At the same time, Lionel says, „It was clear to me that we had to be fully committed to this church plant, but I don’t have the energy right now.“ So what would happen? Without any huge advertising campaigns, the church started in Obertshausen.



The first service took place in the small arts hall of the community center - and it was full. No flyers were distributed and no special invitations were issued. All those present belonged to



the core team or had been personally invited. So only friends and friends of friends came - can church building happen more missionally?

A week later, the official launch took place. Invitations were extended to the celebration and, in addition to many guests, the mayor and other officials also appeared. Why? Because KaS did not just appear on the horizon with this event, but was already an integral part of the town through the daycare center in Obertshausen and many other activities before the first service. „We simply belong,“ Lionel notes. And what has the community work in Obertshausen looked like since then? A quarter of the congregation in Offenbach now meets in Obertshausen, but no one in Offenbach is missing because new people are joining. Lionel is especially happy about the parents of a woman from the congregation who have recently started coming to Obertshausen. „They were critical at first, but since they’ve been there once, they keep coming back.“ That’s how church planting works!

Obertshausen holds regular church services - as the congregation can provide them. This is not about filling out a church schedule. If worship is not possible, a psalm is read or otherwise improvised instead. Instead, the focus is on relationships with the people who come. This is how God is moving in Obertshausen.



A neighborhood

In spring of 2022 we got with the conversion of our new premises. An old workshop was to be turned into a community and neighborhood center:



MARCH 22
THE FIRST
CONSTRUCTION
OUTREACH WITH
MEMBERS FROM THE
CHURCH INVOLVED
KNOCKING TILE OFF
WALLS AND BREAKING
THROUGH WALLS FOR
DOORS, WINDOWS,
ETC.



MARCH 26, 22
ON THE SECOND OUTREACH, THIS WORK
CONTINUED AND TILES WERE TORN OFF THE
FLOOR. MANY HELPED REMOVE THE DEBRIS.



JUNE 22
THE OWNERS PUT
IN NEW DOORS AND
WINDOWS.

JUNE 22
THE EXTERIOR FACADE IS
ALSO BEING REPLASTERED
ON BEHALF OF THE
OWNERS



center is being built



JULY 22
PLUMBING AND
ELECTRICAL
LINES ARE
INSTALLED



JULY 22
THE ROOM AFTER REMOVING ALL TILES,
DEBRIS, ETC.

JULY 30, 22
BACK-BREAKING
JOB - ON KNEES
THE INSULATION
MATERIAL IS
PLACED IN THE
FALSE CEILING BY
THIS TEAM



SEP22
ANOTHER
PLACING
CONSTRUCTION JOB INVOLVES
THE PROFILES FOR THE WALLS

NOV22
THE STAGE
IS
CARPENTERED



DEC 22
THE HALL MAY BE
USED PUBLICLY FOR A
TOPPING-OUT CEREMONY.
WE COMBINE THE TOPPING-
OUT CEREMONY WITH OUR
CHRISTMAS SERVICES. BUT
BEFORE THAT, CLEANING IS
THE ORDER OF THE DAY.



DEC 22
A FESTIVE HALL THAT HARDLY
LOOKS LIKE A CONSTRUCTION
SITE.



ANIKA

The best year of my life



„I have had seasons characterized by struggle,“ is how Anika sums up the last few years for herself. This involved her personally, a professional reorientation and also leaving KaS as a volunteer. Her life was simply exhausting. „Fighting is my great strength,“ she explains, „but if you’re only in fight mode, you lose sight of the good and beautiful things God gives.“ Of course, she knew that dry times are a part of life, but she felt she couldn’t get out of the desert.

In the KaS testimony service, Anika stood up front and shared that things changed in 2022. Her life had not become objectively easier at all, but she was suddenly able to let go of things that burdened her. Anika started athletics again as a „senior,“ something she had enjoyed a lot as a teenager, and now, too, a new lightness came into her life through sports. She passed her final exam in education and enjoyed knowing that she was in the right place professionally. Looking back, there is no one event for her that pulled the lever around. She was only

able to reap all at once what she had previously sown, experiencing a new closeness to God in the midst of everyday life. As she danced joyfully at a wedding, she thought of the verse from the Psalms: „You have turned my mourning into a dance of joy. The garment of mourning you have taken off me and put on me a garment of celebration.“ (Psalm 30:12) That’s exactly what Anika experienced. This gift from God made 2022 the best year of her life.

IRENE & ROMANO

Everything simply fit



When Christians move to a new city, they usually take their time to look around for a suitable church, visit a few, compare them, visit for a while, and eventually become members. That was different for Romano and Irene. Already on the first Sunday in Offenbach, Romano stood in front as worship leader at KaS - and it stayed that way. Irene worked in the children's service soon after. Both say, „It just fit. We are amazed at how God has led us here.“

Their story with KaS began when Romano had business in Offenbach and was first connected with the church. But only later did they break down their tents at Lake Starnberg and move to Offenbach together. It was a time of reorientation for them. They found their dream apartment on the outskirts of the city, „with a roof terrace, which we had always wanted. Now they were looking for a community to join. They had already liked the internationality and openness of KaS, so they asked if there was a house church in their district. Lionel contacted them directly. „It was a great welcome. It touched our hearts to this day,“ Romano says. When the

conversation turned to Romano playing music, Lionel spontaneously asked him, „This Sunday we don't have anyone in charge of worship yet. Could you see yourself doing that?“ „Yeah, sure.“ „By yourself, too?“ „Of course.“

Much faster than expected, Romano and Irene had thus found a new spiritual home and for KaS the two were an answer to prayer: the previous worship leader had moved away and no successor was in sight. There was also a gap in the children's service. The church had been praying for a solution for some time - and the couple's spontaneous entry was a win-win for both sides. At the moment, they are thinking about how they can expand their involvement in the church. Romano dreams of a music team that meets regularly for rehearsals and is also open to people who do not yet know God, and Irene will soon open a counseling center for women from immigrant families who are threatened by domestic violence or forced marriage. There is no doubt about it: the two have arrived in Offenbach.

JANA

Kids, cooking, creativity



„How can we create more contact with our neighbors in Bürgel?“ Jana thought about that at the beginning of the year. The best ideas always come to her when she’s washing up in the kitchen - and that’s how it was this time, too. It was as if God was telling her, „Think about what’s on your mind right now.“ That was easy. She had just been thinking about teaching her kids to cook. Should she invite other kids to do it? Jana asked four families in the neighborhood and they all enthusiastically agreed - the kids cooking club was born.

Once a month, Jana cooked together with the children with the support of two friends. It was time-consuming, but everyone had a lot of fun. They learned a lot about nutrition and always came up with something delicious. At the beginning, Jana had thought about not doing a

Christian program, she just wanted to pray before the meal to show gratitude for what was on the table. But the children came with their own questions, and so spiritual conversations kept happening, and when she once forgot to pray in the heat of the moment, the children demanded, „Stop! We have to pray first.“

Because cooking together with eight children was relatively time-consuming, the kids’ cooking club is currently on pause, but while washing up, Jana had another idea: „How about I invite a few neighbor girls over in the evening to knit and we’ll be creative together?“ That was a lot less effort. Since then, Jana puts a pot of tea on the table every 14 days and opens the door to women who come to knit or paint. „Umgarnt“ is what it’s called - and again, good conversations and deep encounters are included.

ABOUT THE

TOBIAS

Hauskirche ist mehr



When someone asks him why he calls his house group a „house church,“ Tobias has to smile: „Because it’s a house church ...“ The church educator welcomes the difference for himself and his family. In the past, he got to know church life in such a way that relatively few employees concentrated with full commitment on the church services, offering the other active people and some guests as attractive a program as possible. This took place week after week. No wonder that there was hardly any energy left to make contacts with the outside world.

House church at KaS takes place with neighbors and friends of people from the church or beyond. Every 14 days it replaces the central church service with a time for each group to find its own ways to encounter God and each other. „Our house church is in the toddler stage right

now. That’s why we don’t meet late in the evening, but in such a way that we can play and eat together. After that there is a story for the kids and in the meantime there is also a time when the adults can go into deeper conversation with each other. When it’s time for the kids to go to sleep, everyone goes home.“ A nice side effect of this life-sharing is that families can also check on each other’s children once in a while because everyone knows each other well. The spiritual highlight of the year was Lent. Everyone had thought about what they wanted to do without for a while during those weeks - computers, social media, chocolate, etc. - and Tobias explains, „When we met, we were able to go straight into a deep conversation about what really makes us and our lives tick. That was very exciting.“

HOUSE CHURCHES

CHRIS

A children's musical during the summer vacations



A week of romping, singing, and spending time with 20 kids is something you have to like, otherwise you wouldn't do it. Chris likes it! When the theologian came to KaS in the spring to do his vicariate, the date was already on his calendar: children's musical during the school's summer break. Through the city, parents could register their children, for a small fee, so that they were „taken care of“ from morning to afternoon all week. Some families from the community took advantage of the opportunity, but also just as many families without contact to KaS.

The children rehearsed all week for „One World“ - a musical about appreciation and building bridges to one another. These values also determined the togetherness in the group.

They practiced lyrics and songs with a lot of joy and excitement and then, they performed the musical on Sunday for parents, relatives and acquaintances. Chris was amazed at how the kids grew during the week and gave their all during their performance. He was especially happy about a six-year-old girl. Her single mother was desperate to find somewhere to put her this week, but the little girl was terrified of any offer. Not a single tear flowed at KaS, however - she immediately felt at home. After Chris and the other helpers recovered from that week, it was clear to everyone, „We have to do this again in 2023. Absolutely!“

REGINA

When dreams come true



You'll see: Seligenstadt is beautiful." That's how Regina raved to her husband José, who wanted to start an education there. After a few years in the Black Forest, the theologian and educator planned to move back near her old home. Now she just needed a suitable job for herself. Her sister gave her a tip: „Try KaS in Offenbach. They even have their own daycare center - that would be just right for you.“ Regina found out more and was thrilled. She quickly applied, but the daycare center „Kids am Start“ only had half a position for her. „No problem,“ she heard, „we can hire you full-time. In the other half of your working time, you can work on a social project for children in the community.“ Regina could hardly believe it. It had long been her dream to work on a project for elementary school children. „What kind of project is it?“ she inquires. „Can I take a look at it?“ „Not yet,“ was the answer. „You have to set it up first.“

Before, Regina would have rejected an offer like this: Yes, it was her dream, but she didn't have enough professional experience yet. Maybe later ... But a week before her interview, she heard a sentence in her church in the Black Forest that

stuck with her: „God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called.“ Then she realized that God was not primarily looking for competence, but for her availability. She promised him that - and a week later she knew she couldn't take back this availability, especially because the project idea matched her dream: A place where children can feel safe and also get to know Jesus. This was suddenly going to become reality? She was going to offer lunch-time care for children from the neighborhood, who would get something to eat, help with their homework and be allowed to play on the side?

Regina asked for more time to think about it. Actually, she didn't need it, because everything inside her was screaming, „Yes, this is the way to go!“ So the young couple moved not to quiet Seligenstadt, but to lively Offenbach. José can easily reach his job and Regina is at the daycare center in the mornings and in the afternoons she plans the social project, visits offices and schools, and soon it will be a matter of finding employees. A dream come true.

HANNAH

Welcome to Kirche am Start



Hannah is one of those people who sees people. It's no wonder that she heads the „Encouraging One Another“ department at KaS. When she visited Offenbach for the first time two years ago, she immediately noticed how hospitable and helpful the church was. She knew it should stay that way! But how could guests get to know the community better as soon as possible?

All „newcomers“ who visited any KaS events should be welcomed. They should experience that they were warmly welcome, receive a small present and information about the church. This was already happening, but how could it continue? Because many of these guests came regularly. This question was the starting point for the „Welcome Fiesta“ at KaS. Hannah and the other people in charge wanted to deepen the contacts with the guests. So, they have been organizing a welcome fiesta twice a year since 2022. In April and October, thirty guests attended each time.

It was an exciting and happy evening together. In addition to games, good food and music, there was information about KaS and its values. Employees also introduced themselves. The newcomers were able to tell briefly what had brought them to Offenbach and to KaS. Everyone received a small gift. The greatest gift of the evening, however, was to connect the individuals with each other. Those who had children in their teens found parents like them, and those who had just moved to the center got to know others who lived just a few streets away, and quite a few arranged to meet each other. „Wow, I feel welcome and seen here,“ was a common feedback. Hannah is pleased: „The Welcome Fiesta is a complete success. Our guests find their way into the church very quickly and contact with them is made by many KaS members, not just the welcome team. That's how it should be!



SANDRA

Dancing teens in the harbor district



One of KaS's strengths is that it's easy to try something crazy here without committing to it being in the community program for the next three years. This is true, for example, of the dance workshop that a team of three women started. When Sandra moved to Offenbach in early summer, the young Christian was looking for a church. KaS met very close to her apartment - she went to try it out and stayed. „I immediately felt at home there and found a home in a house church,“ she comments. Soon, she considered joining. Since kids and teens are especially close to her heart, she asked about NextGen. They were looking for people to organize a dance workshop. Sandra was right there with them.

Franzi came from the Ruhr area and was the professional woman on the team, the others had fun dancing and spending time with the

teens. In the end, the number of participants fell short of expectations, but a dozen young people experienced a wonderful workshop. From 10 am to 4 pm they warmed up, danced, rehearsed, ate pizza and talked. Franzi shared about her life, how she discovered her gift of dance, and most importantly, how she came to know Jesus. One Muslim girl in particular couldn't hear enough about this God who could be experienced personally. After a short break, everyone went to the harbor district in the evening, where they were joined by other KaS staff and all together they invited people to Jesus with a vibrant program of Afrobeat, artistry, a flash mob and short speeches. The participants were enthusiastic and so was the audience. When asked if she would be back for the next dance workshop, Sandra said without hesitation, „Absolutely!“



LUI SA

The think tank



The think tank started with a cup of coffee with Lionel. Luisa discussed her own ideas with him and the values and visions of KaS. She had just finished her studies in social work and practical theology and was looking for a church where she could get involved. She had heard about KaS through a friend who already lived in Offenbach. Luisa liked the coffee and Lionel's ideas matched hers well, so she moved to Offenbach shortly after.

She had already been part of the KaS family for a while when things got serious about the new community center in Bismarckstraße. And Luisa was there from the beginning when it came to thinking about how the community center could become a neighborhood center. To do this, she met with a few others and created the think tank: How can we reach out to our neighborhood and be there for them? How do we best address their needs? How can KaS design a place for more people than those who come to worship? Luisa laughs. „And along with that come such uncomfortable questions as: Who's going to do the work, and how do we pay for it all?“ From the start, the think tank worked with

down-to-earth dreams. Some ideas they developed themselves, such as the plan to offer an exhibition with Offenbach artists in the rooms a few times a year. Others came to the team from outside, as with Regina, who would like to offer an after-school program for elementary school children (see p. 17, When dreams come true).

The fact that neither KaS nor any other Christian provider can cover all the possibilities alone is a real blessing, because it initiates and encourages collaboration. Luisa explains, „In addition to our own actions and projects, we also want to make the building available for other groups and initiatives. That ranges from training offers to district work to foodsharing.“ And she is pleased: „We will not be out of anytime soon in the think tank, because on one hand we will have to accompany the concrete projects as contact people, and on the other hand we will continue to look for new opportunities in the future. In this way, the community center will become a place by neighbors for neighbors.“

THORBEN

“Blessed” and the consequences



Retreats with the leadership team often have exciting consequences. Suddenly the question came up, „What if everyone at KaS only took on the tasks they were passionate and enthusiastic about doing? The ones that match their gifts?“ Immediately, two answers came to mind: „That would be fantastic and free up a lot of employees.“ „It could be disastrous, if certain departments no longer have anyone to contribute.“ It quickly became clear to all involved that implementation would take courage and consistency. It had to be well accompanied, but the idea of a congregation truly working in the realm of its gifts was too attractive.

With that, „blessed“ was born. This was the motto of the sermons at the beginning of 2022, focusing on the fact that God has entrusted all with gifts, how to discover them and how to use them. It was about discovering that the KaS family was blessed - and that Offenbach is not the only thing that should flourish, but they themselves as well. At the same time, Lionel offered a personality test to anyone interested to get to the bottom of their interests and abilities. Thorben interviewed individuals about their findings and shot film clips for them, which he made available to KaS.

He notes: „The result was many aha experiences and team changes. One of those was with

my wife, Kathrin. She had already been on the welcome team of the church for a while because someone was needed there and she was looking for a task that would not mean a long preparation time at home. Now she realized that she is rather introverted and would rather be creative – Now, she is in the production and design team of KaS and designs, for example, slides for the church service.“ Others have similar stories. Despite the risk, no ministry of the church remained unfilled; however, this began a questioning of church life, which at some point takes on a life of its own, seemingly always demanding the maximum solution. „Is this really necessary?“ This question is asked more often now than it used to be, and sometimes it turns out that a box and a microphone are completely sufficient as a small technical solution for an event, and that you don't need a technical team including full equipment.

When Thorben reflects on whether the „blessed“ campaign was worth it, he is certain: „Absolutely. But we're still in the midst of it. Our view as a church of the individual ministries and teams has changed. We no longer take a deficit-oriented approach to what we need to fulfill our ministries, but see ourselves as blessed and gifted and use our gifts and strengths. This perspective is good for us.“

JANA

A cooperation with potential



Missional life is not theology at a desk; it is an attitude that shapes our everyday life. This became clear to Jana once again when she was shopping at the supermarket around the corner. She still had the images of growing hunger in the world in her mind. As she saw food with packaging that was dented or produce was close to its best-before date, she realized this food was being thrown away. For a while, she deliberately bought food „on the date“ so that it didn't end up in the trash, but then a friend introduced her to „foodsharing“. So-called food savers work with local retailers or restaurants to „rescue“ food. They pick it up, consume it themselves or distribute it to others. When her friend asked her, „Wouldn't that be something for you?“, Jana was already convinced. She had to complete a short training to be certified as a foodsaver, and then she was off. Jana rescued food and offered it in her neighborhood. Picking up a carton of eggs sometimes resulted in a quick hello, sometimes in a deep conversation, but equally in prayer for a person who was just

stuck. Missional life has its roots in everyday life.

When she started talking to the head of „Food-sharing Offenbach“ about KaS's new community center, his eyes lit up: „We are currently looking for rooms to rent where we can revive our „Kitchen for All“ that used to exist. We cooked there something once a week from saved food and 80-100 people regularly came to eat. Would that be possible in your place?“ A few conversations later, it was clear that this was a new collaboration for KaS. It probably won't stop at the kitchen for everyone, because the rooms also lend themselves to a so-called FAIRteiler - a cupboard where food can be deposited for everyone to pick up. There are many families living near the neighborhood center who depend on such support. This is how KaS can help them. Jana is already thinking about the many contacts and opportunities that will arise and says, „I'm excited to see what else will come of it.“



Vision 23

GOD'S COLORFUL GARDEN FOR ALL SENSES

2023 completes the first chapter of our story with God. We experience church as God's colorful garden where He is at work: everyone may experience how the gardener brings forth her/his personal beauty. Everyone enjoys the work of the gardener through mutual enrichment. Our cities/neighbors/friends enjoy the beauty of the entire garden and seeing the gardener.

GOD, THE GARDENER, SEES ME AND BRINGS FORTH MY BEAUTY.

God meets me as I am. He points out my beauty and brings about my unfolding. I learn with what strengths, passions and needs I was created and realize how I can use it.

WE ENJOY GOD'S COLORFUL GARDEN.

We enjoy God's beauty among ourselves: we experience our different gifts, life and faith experiences as enrichment.

THE CITY ENJOYS GOD'S COLORFUL GARDEN.

I live aware of showing my beauty and pointing to the gardener. I point my neighbors to God's beauty in them. I enrich my neighbors with my strengths and encourage them to enrich others as well.



**KIRCHE
AM START**

... und die Stadt blüht auf!

EDITOR

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