

Annual Report 2025/2026 Cologne UBF

I. Review of 2025

Annual Key Verse (Phil. 3:10a): “I want to know Christ.”

In the year now coming to a close, we were guided by the word from Philippians chapter 3, verse 10a. In this verse, the apostle Paul expresses the deep desire of his heart: to know Jesus Christ—especially the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings. For Paul had the hope that through this knowledge he himself would also attain the resurrection from the dead.

Knowing the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the highest goal, the highest level of knowledge a human being can reach. As a church, we wanted to create a good environment in which everyone could grow in this holy knowledge.

To this end, we placed the Word of God at the center—especially from the book of Malachi, the Gospel of Matthew, the wonderful “I AM” sayings, the latter part of the Letter to the Romans, and the Advent lessons from the book of Isaiah. The Sunday worship services were a weekly highlight in which Jesus revealed Himself. God appointed Spirit-filled preachers, allowed encouraging praise and worship, and granted us warm fellowship with one another. I clearly sense that God has greatly blessed us this year and made us spiritually more mature.

Several new regular participants also joined us, including Dylan, Lucy, Janet, Chona, Doris, Ottmar, and Dana. We feel at home in God’s church and are ready to follow Jesus, whatever the cost. The foundation of all fellowship is the knowledge of God’s great love in Jesus Christ. Without it, we lack everything. Praise be to God, who has blessed us so abundantly. Let us look back at some of the things God has given us.

January 2025: Malachi

We began the new year with prayer and gathered together as a church. In teams, we shared some of our annual key words and prayed for one another. We also prayed for our city and our country as part of the Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer. At the same time, we attempted to establish an early-morning prayer meeting with breakfast afterward. These were our small efforts to allow God to work in this year.

We started the year with a Bible study from the book of Malachi. Malachi was the bearer of God’s final message in the Old Testament. Through him, God wanted to awaken His people once more. Yet it would take more than 400 years before God would send His Son as the great light of salvation into Israel. God spoke through Malachi to His people: “I have loved you.” The Israelites were to recognize God’s love and no longer offer Him inferior sacrifices. God’s anger was directed especially toward the priests who failed to fulfill their duties and sought the approval of people. God admonished His people to be faithful to Him and to bring the full tithe; then the sun of righteousness would rise for them.

During this year, we met six times for church forums. It is important for our members to come together from time to time to follow the developments of the church and to pray together. In these forums, we were able to hear life testimonies from Anya, Jonathan, and Noah; to be informed about current discussions and decisions of the church council; to hear concerns from Pastor Peter Youk; and to receive updates on Noah’s continued employment as our church musician as well as on the

new church website. May God further develop this opportunity for congregational exchange and grant us His Holy Spirit for it.

February to April: Matthew 15–20

In order to know Jesus better, we naturally need to look at what is reported about His life. From February to April, we therefore examined Jesus' life more closely according to the Gospel of Matthew. In these chapters, Jesus gives instructions to His disciples. What He said and did here carries the greatest weight for us as a church and as Christians today.

We recall Jesus' teaching on true purity; the Canaanite woman who was allowed to receive even a crumb of Jesus' grace; the crucial question to each of us: Who is Jesus to me personally?; the conditions of discipleship (self-denial, taking up the cross, and following Jesus); God's command on the Mount of Transfiguration: "Listen to Him"; the freedom of God's children with regard to worldly obligations; Jesus' teaching to repent and become like children; His urgent plea to forgive one's brother from the heart; the divine joining together in marriage; the danger of dependence on worldly possessions; Jesus' incomprehensible generosity toward everyone who decides to follow Him; and finally, Jesus' invitation to serve others out of grace.

I am deeply grateful to God that He has given us His Holy Spirit to personally accept Jesus' teaching and align our lives accordingly. This is the main difference between the church and any other worldly organization. We trust in the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and in the word from the mouth of our Lord, which nourishes us and keeps our souls from starving.

I am especially thankful for the regular meetings in the small groups. They form the engine of our church. I am always deeply moved when I hear the testimonies of the group members and am allowed to participate in their sincere lives of faith. God works powerfully through our faith in the world, in our families, among our neighbors and loved ones, also through our intercessory prayers and acts of love. We need small group communities to support and admonish one another in the Word and in prayer.

The meetings with the group leaders made it clear to me that each of them cares deeply for their members and seeks to create the best possible environment for them. In a sense, every group leader is a church leader. God also helped us to build friendships through shared barbecues and other activities, which help us treat one another with respect and acceptance. The groups' own worship services revealed their faith and love for one another in an impressive way. Some groups also experienced growth, which is very precious. May God help us to continue developing in the groups and to be a blessing.

In February, I was able to attend the UBF leaders' conferences in Lisbon and in Lachen for Germany. It was encouraging to see how some regions have developed further on their journey to becoming God-pleasing churches. Some regions seem to remain at the same stage, but this too can be God's will for stabilization and renewal.

In the spring, a new government was also elected in Germany, a coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats under the leadership of Friedrich Merz. They have received the difficult task of serving our country. I felt led to pray for these people, that they may recognize God's will and give their best for our nation.

On Rosenmontag, we held a table tennis tournament, which many attended and enjoyed together. At the annual general meeting, we were able to perceive God's work in various areas and be thankful

for the generous donations of our members, which secure our financial situation. We also elected a new chairperson of the church council: Wynelle Nett, succeeding Jan Winand. She has fulfilled this office responsibly and prayerfully this year. It is not always easy to discern the developments of the church and make appropriate decisions, but God has nevertheless blessed us so that we were able to meet every month to talk and pray together. I am very grateful for the commitment of the church council members, who, despite their busy lives, repeatedly took on tasks and thus helped advance our church.

In addition to working with the council, my cooperation with Peter Youk was very important and pleasant to me. We met every week and prayed together for ourselves and for the church. I greatly appreciated hearing his advice and benefiting from both his theological and pastoral expertise. He is willing to give his life for God and His church. He has a great heart for Jesus' urgent concern that people hear the gospel, be saved, and follow Him. Whenever I have ideas or concerns, he is ready to put them into action.

Above all, his ministry is so valuable because he has understood the core of the gospel: the love of God, who gave everything, even His only Son, to save lost people. He has the trust of young people and takes very practical care of the problems and difficulties of individual church members. He also initiated a prayer meeting on Tuesdays, where church concerns are shared and prayed for. This is how I imagine the work of a pastor.

He is wonderfully supported by Annika, who is similarly theologically trained and people-oriented. Her women's fellowship and preaching ministries are deeply moving. Soon they will be welcoming their third child—what a blessing! I pray that we may continue to work well together, endure our weaknesses, and build on our strengths. May God also grant us good health for this.

On April 9, missionary Rebecca Youk passed away after a long struggle. In the end, she went home peacefully to her Lord. The memorial service and the funeral were very dignified. She had decided to dedicate her life to her Lord Jesus and sacrificed her homeland for this calling. She lost her husband early in her mission country and raised her four children alone. How wonderful it is now that one of her children serves us as a pastor and continues her missionary work!

May–July: Easter and the Letter to the Philippians

The highest feast of the year is Easter, in which Jesus' death and resurrection are given their proper place. We commemorated Good Friday with a worship service reflecting on Matthew 27 and celebrated the Lord's Supper. In teams, we studied the resurrection chapter (Matthew 28) and listened to the sermon by Esther Nett: *Jesus is truly risen!* The children went on an Easter outing, and the adults remembered Jesus' forgiving grace at an Easter bonfire. There was also an exhibition by the painting groups of Jeong-Ah Rhee, who studied art and serves us with her gifts.

After Easter, we held a special service from Joshua 23 with Moses Yoon, who visited us on the occasion of Rebecca Youk's memorial service. We also had an Alpha service about the Ethiopian official who, as a seeker, studied the Bible with the apostle Philip and came to faith in Jesus. This marked the starting point of our annually held faith course. Seven members served as hosts (Peter, Paul, David, Jonathan, Sarah, Anya, and Jesin). About seven interested participants attended regularly, including Mirko with his two friends, Lucy, Dylan, Jacobus, and Timo.

Some of our missionaries also traveled to their Korean homeland and returned strengthened after two weeks. Many of them also traveled to Turkey in the fall under the leadership of Jeremia Kim.

Twenty people visited the ruins of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation and reflected on the special messages given to them.

From May 9–11, we held a spring Bible retreat in beautiful Oberwesel under the title “*Encountering Jesus*.” Three sermons from John 2–4 were given by David Yoo, Rene Richelshagen, and Joy Kim from Frankfurt. God gave His blessing. The children participated actively, the weather was perfect for hiking, and the sermons were deeply moving. The lecture on the Book of Revelation was also very interesting. Bible retreats always require a great deal of effort, but they are worthwhile, and we therefore plan to continue them.

We studied Paul’s Letter to the Philippians in depth in nine lessons, Sunday after Sunday, because our annual key verse comes from this letter. Among the important verses and teachings were: “I am confident that God will complete His good work”; “For to me, to live is Christ”; “Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel”; “Unity through the humble mindset of Jesus”; “God works in you to will and to act”; “I want to know Christ”; “Press on toward the goal for the prize”; “The peace of God surpasses all understanding”; “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

This letter is an inspiration for both younger and older Christians to receive Jesus Christ deeply into their hearts and honor Him. God richly blessed this Bible study and brought many of us to spiritual maturity. The conclusion fittingly came with our outdoor worship service overlooking the university, held in beautiful weather and accompanied by an engaging sermon.

The technical and praise teams held an open house where interested people could take a closer look and try things out. The technical team is of great importance to us in presenting everything well. By now, almost as many people participate live online as in person. This helps many who are ill or live outside Cologne to experience the grace of the Word through preaching and music. The praise team has also continued to grow and gain new members. Under Noah’s leadership, they have greatly enriched our worship services. When I can praise God with my voice and body, my soul is expanded, and I can know Jesus even better in His glory. I am very grateful for their faithful service and their deep personal faith. The song lyrics are perfectly matched to the sermon texts. Thanks be to God.

In early summer, Lydia and Lukas Kim announced their move from Finland to Uganda. God gave them the strength to embark on another mission adventure and to reorganize their lives. I am convinced that many Africans will be blessed through them. Walter and Peter Nett attended a Bible conference in Kyiv and served at the conference titled “*Authentic Christian Living*.” We do not want to stop praying for God’s work to bring peace between Ukraine and Russia.

Daniel Yu also officially began his new missionary life with the Karen Mission. He supports a major construction project at the border between Thailand and Myanmar, where young people can come to know faith in Jesus Christ (we will hear his report afterward). I am also very thankful that Henoeh Seok and Paul Groß increasingly promoted sports activities in our church. Through playing soccer and badminton, we not only strengthened our bodies but also got to know one another better and formed friendships. We want to expand this further next year.

On July 9, Lily Yeun and Onyou Kwon got engaged. May God continue to guide them well and unite them in His time.

August–September: Small Group Worship Services with the “I AM” Sayings of Jesus

Through eight small group worship services, we came to know Jesus as the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the True Vine, and the King. We heard wonderful sermons by various speakers and saw a theatrical performance. It was very encouraging to see how the groups grew inwardly and outwardly.

There were also regular prayer meetings as a pillar of church life. Peter Youk participated in further training at the UBF Institute *Healthy Church*, which focuses on keeping the gospel at the center. This is expressed especially through a “gospel culture” (identity in Christ, grace and koinonia, an attitude of worship) and expository preaching as the foundation of a healthy church.

There were personal one-on-one discipleship relationships between Peter and Timo and Jacobus, as well as occasional meetings with other church members. The *Encounter Conference* “Light Within” took place, featuring preaching, testimonies, worship, and fellowship. God’s presence was tangible. There were life changes among young people and heartfelt prayers for one another. The preparation and execution of the Encounter conference were devotedly supported by the Cologne UBF church and sustained through prayer.

The children’s conference took place in Neukirchen under the theme “*Faith in Action*,” with 42 children. Sermons were given by Esther Yoo (Hebrews 11), Judith Pazhavarickal (Mark 11), and Annika Youk (Ephesians 6). Organization was led by Maria Lee and David Yoo. There were Alpha and Beta courses to implement Jesus’ Great Commission, “Make disciples,” in a contemporary way. These courses were practically supported by the church through meal preparation and prayer and were well received by the participants.

Monthly *Lichtblick* worship services were held under the theme “*Rest and Freedom*.” Participants included our own youth, friends of the youth and young adults, and young adults from the wider UBF network (especially Bonn City, but also Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, and others). The LiGo team took responsibility and focused on unity and development. In addition, there were several activities such as game nights that enabled good conversations and initial contact with the church.

Further activities and reasons for gratitude included: repairs to water pipes in the kitchen, restrooms, and stairwell; cleaning of the sanctuary chairs; the blessing of five new schoolchildren on July 1; the birth of Miriam Irene Kim (daughter of Johanna Nett) on September 8; and the neighborhood flea market, through which people in the area were able to get to know our UBF church.

September–November: Romans Chapters 9–16

Romans, Part II: What does it mean for us as a church to live as **one living sacrifice** for Jesus? A living sacrifice for God does not burn out—on the contrary, it becomes truly alive by fully surrendering to God. We thank God for the wonderful sermons week after week. There was a children’s harvest festival with crafts, singing, and much more. We supported Joynity in Heidelberg and were overwhelmed by the participation of many young people.

Further activities and reasons for gratitude included: a visit from Isaak and Rebecca Choi from Canada; the birth of Gloria, daughter of Sharon Kim-Grossenbacher; the Harvest Thanksgiving service with the KBF choir and the choir of young families; a church forum focusing on student and campus ministry; a medical mission in Uganda by Ulrike and Krystian with their 12-member team; the Turkey study trip to the churches of Revelation (Jeremia Kim and Josef Kim); a lecture by Prof. Chung on Jesus in the Old Testament; a student recital in the sanctuary; painting courses by Jeong-Ah; and the senior choir led by Grace-Eunmi.

December: The Book of Isaiah

We studied Isaiah 7 and 9 (parts a and b), focusing on Jesus as the Light in the darkness, Immanuel—the Son through whom everything is given to us, the gifted Son of God. There was a Christmas Tea Time with activities for children and the packing of over 100 gift packages for those in need (in cooperation with the Cologne Food Bank). The men’s event included attending an ice hockey game of the Cologne Sharks with 19 participants. The Christmas worship service (Isaiah 9:5–6) was attended by around 150 people.

There was a monthly women’s fellowship with the theme “*Women in the Bible*,” including special activities such as making and eating mandu and crafting candle jars. A total of 34 different women participated, some of them guests from outside the church. There was a family worship service from Matthew 5, “*Living a Life of Meaning*,” and the UBF Church Camp in Salzburg (December 27–January 3). We also held a New Year’s Eve service with year-end reflections by Eberhard, Peter, Daniel (CWC project), and several small group leaders, followed by Communion and closing prayer. Additionally, there was a senior guest auditor program led by Volker, Rainer, Andreas, and Jeremia.

II. Outlook for 2026

Annual Key Verse (Genesis 12:2b): “You shall be a blessing.”

1. As a church, we want to gratefully accept God’s calling for us to be a blessing this year.
2. We want to develop the gifts God has given us and use them to serve others inside and outside the church.
3. We want to study God’s Word deeply—from the book of Ruth, Genesis, the Gospel of Matthew (chapters 20–26), the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, and the letters of Peter—receive it personally, and pass it on.
4. We pray for God’s work among young people through LiGo activities (Maria and Anya), faith courses (Peter and Paul), worship services (Peter and Noah), Encounter (Becky and Maria), and Church Camp (David).
5. We pray for our fall conference from November 23–25, 2026, in Nideggen (Eifel).
6. Continued good cooperation between Peter and Eberhard in leadership.
7. Noah’s contribution of his gifts in the area of music.
8. Elections for church leadership and the church council, and the establishment of new small groups.
9. New formats for invitation and discipleship.
10. Further development of children’s and youth ministry.