

## WFWP Stuttgart, Germany's New Year program, The Year of Gratitude

Ute Lemme  
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WFWP Stuttgart/Germany share this report about the event on 1 Jan 2016 on the topic 'The Year of Gratitude', which has been conducted in cooperation with UPF in Stuttgart:

'What more suitable topic for an event to begin 2016 than the theme of the project 'The Year of Gratitude'?

This project was established by various Christian (especially Protestant) churches, organisations and publishers in Germany and Switzerland during the time period between 03. October 2015 until 02. October 2016.

Fifteen people, members of the WFWP and UPF in Stuttgart and ten guests, met to discuss this topic. Ute Lemme greeted the audience and with the help of a short video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwOwprrvw4Q>, explained what the year of gratitude was all about: it is to contribute to a culture of gratitude.

The short music video of a peppy rendering of the well known song 'Thank You' set the atmosphere

for the programme. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMCeBIDHHhU>.

Next, with the participants sitting in a circle, each person drew one small card from a stack of thirty. On each card was written a quote from a (mostly) well known person on the topic of gratitude. Each read what was written out loud and made a comment about his or her understanding of the quote. Then followed the introduction to Jürgen Werth's book „It does you good to say thank you“. He writes that 'to thank comes from to think' and explains that 'a life of gratitude is a healthy life'. Hubert Arnoldi sang the song "Grace of the Holy Garden" to his own guitar accompaniment. This song expresses gratitude especially to God. We were all very impressed by the short film from a naturopathy practice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyLjRNO4B1Q>, 'motivation – it is so easy to be happy – gratitude opens the heart'. The first two minutes are dealing with the idea that the way to a fulfilled life is to be happy-and that happiness can be learnt. At that point the film was put on pause and pieces of paper were distributed with instructions to complete two tasks: each person was to reflect and to write down for what and whom he is grateful, and why. Everyone took the tasks very seriously. Each had the opportunity to read out his notes, which was most inspiring. Then we watched the rest of the video. In the second part, various tips were given about finding reasons for gratitude, and guidance about how to practice gratitude and find happiness.

Then Ute Lemme distributed some samples of the booklet with ideas on the project 'The Year of Gratitude', and gave a short overview of the contents: [http://jahr-der-dankbarkeit.net/.../JDD\\_Ideenheft\\_Schlussvers...](http://jahr-der-dankbarkeit.net/.../JDD_Ideenheft_Schlussvers...) We paid special attention to the survey '10 astonishing facts about gratitude' and the article from Pastor Uwe Holmer, who took Erich Honnecker and his wife into his home for several weeks after the end of the DDR (former German Democratic Republic) when they were homeless and had nowhere to go.

The comprehensive programme was rounded off by two further contributions: a reading from the book „It does you good to say thank you' - an excerpt from the chapter „rich but dissatisfied“, where it was made clear to us that we belong to the 8 % of the world's population who are well off and privileged, and a short filmed excerpt from Wolfgang Schäuble's speech <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khlWnTIjjuY> given at the Millennium Bambi Awards 2015, in which he impressively warns of overindulgence and excess and makes a plea for gratitude.

The formal part of the programme was followed by lively discussion over coffee and cake. The guests took their leave, with gratitude for a successful event right at the beginning of the New Year.

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