



Summary of PRAYER WAVES for December 2017

Austria

Jean Ellis has served in Austria for many years, reaching out to the deaf community. Jean first went to Austria in the 1980's to work amongst children, but was drawn into friendships with the Deaf, and learnt sign language to be able to reach them.

Jean's main role is in the Thursday evening meetings where they go through the passages that will be looked at on the Sunday. She makes sure that they have properly understood the passage that is being looked at. This requires lots of bible work for Jean as she gets stuck into the Bible; fortunately studying the bible is something that Jean loves.

Deaf services are always very different from those for the hearing, with singing taking place in relative silence. Stories are sometimes acted out and then recapped with pictures to make sure everyone has understood what is going on.

The need for this is made acute by the fact that in the education system that many of the deaf adults grew up in they were not taught written German or allowed to use their sign language to communicate. But they had to learn to lip read and speak German as well as they could. As such none of the deaf adults have got fluent German and their comprehension of written texts varies greatly.

This is also the reason why Jean carries on working with the deaf even though she is past retirement age. There is no current easy way to get the bible into sign language as easy and accessible as a book is. It is possible to record videos of bible passage in sign language, but if you had to try and find a verse you didn't properly remember by having to hunt through hundreds of videos, you can imagine how hard it would be.

Jean plans to retire in 2019, which means that where the work amongst the Deaf will develop from here is a challenge. The average age of the group is fairly high with only one young person in the group. But the need for younger men to become believers who are fluent in sign language and German for the future is big.

Prayer Points:

- **For the future of the work amongst the Deaf as Jean retires.**
- **For young men fluent in sign language and German to be saved.**
- **For the group as they reach out into the deaf community in Austria.**
- **For Jean's preparations for the Thursday meetings.**