Dr. Andrea Klimt: Longtime Friend to Virginia Baptists

For many years, Virginia Baptists have had a mutually beneficial relationship with Austrian Baptists. One of the most important keys to the success of that relationship has been, and continues to be, Dr. Andrea Klimt.

Klimt and her husband, Walter, moved to Vienna, Austria in 1992 and started the Free Church Project, a Baptist dormitory and collegiate ministry that focused on life together and on being authentically connected to the surrounding community. That project gave birth to a church plant called project:gemeinde (Project:Church). During a partnership between the BGAV and Austria Baptists in the early 2000s, many volunteers helped renovate the dormitory, which houses the collegiate ministry and church as well as the Austria Baptist Union’s office.

“Virginia Baptists have also explored the value of mutuality by receiving volunteer teams from Austria,” she explained. Two Strudelteams engaged in outreach ministry in many churches and on college campuses. Several youth teams have participated in Impact Mission Camps (formerly Impact! Virginia) and other local ministries. Austrians and Virginians worked together in a disaster relief team that responded to Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua.

By always having an open door, Klimt has imprinted radical hospitality on the church that she started and co-pastored with her husband. That church has reached out to refugees, ministering to individuals and families by aiding them in integration and resettlement.

“The project:gemeinde church has always appreciated the contributions of our interns from Virginia. They have been of great help in developing our church. Currently we have seven interns, four of whom are from Virginia,” explained Klimt. The church has demonstrated how a church can be part of a wider community, embracing people from all backgrounds.

Dr. Andrea Klimt

“Virginia Baptists have also explored the value of mutuality by receiving volunteer teams from Austria,” she explained. Two Strudelteams engaged in outreach ministry in many churches and on college campuses. Several youth teams have participated in Impact Mission Camps (formerly Impact! Virginia) and other local ministries. Austrians and Virginians worked together in a disaster relief team that responded to Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua.

By always having an open door, Klimt has imprinted radical hospitality on the church that she started and co-pastored with her husband. That church has reached out to refugees, ministering to individuals and families by aiding them in integration and resettlement.

“The project:gemeinde church has always appreciated the contributions of our interns from Virginia. They have been of great help in developing our church. Currently we have seven interns, four of whom are from Virginia,” explained Klimt. The church has demonstrated how a church can be part of a wider community, embracing people from all backgrounds.
“Intercultural exchange helps open your perspectives, and the BGAV has benefited from its relationship with Baptists in Austria by experiencing how Christians in another culture live out their faith.”

Klimt now serves as professor at the German Baptist Seminary in Elstal, near Berlin. During her most recent research semester in late 2017, Klimt traveled to Virginia, where she stayed and worked for seven weeks among many Virginia Baptists. She attended the Baptist Collegiate Ministries fall gathering at Eagle Eyrie, the BGAV annual meeting in Hampton, and an Uptick meeting. She also visited and spoke at several churches, where she dialogued with leaders and laypeople about ministries to immigrants and refugees.

Klimt is particularly grateful for the interaction she had with the students and faculty at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR). She attended some lectures there and also at Union Presbyterian Seminary, gaining inspiration for her own lectures related to supervised ministry, pastoral care, Christianity and culture, and urban ministry and social justice.

A personal note from Andrea to Virginia Baptists:
Project: Vienna is our internship program for young people that includes church ministry, community work, and theological reflection. We would like to have more participants from Virginia. If you are interested, please contact Glenn Maddox, BGAV missions mobilizer, at 800.255.2428, ext. 7269, or glenn.maddox@bgav.org.

For more information about Partnership Missions, contact:
Craig Waddell
Partnership and Short-Term Volunteer Coordinator
Baptist General Association of Virginia
800.255.2428, ext. 7263
craig.waddell@bgav.org

For more information about Partnership Missions, contact:
Craig Waddell
Partnership and Short-Term Volunteer Coordinator
Baptist General Association of Virginia
800.255.2428, ext. 7263
craig.waddell@bgav.org