

## DIAKONIA Prayer letter December

*„Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!“*  
(Luke 2, 14)

Today, DIAKONIA Weltbund e.V. is based in the small, peaceful town of Neuendettelsau. The roots of diaconal work here date back to the 14th century, when pious monks in the nearby monastery baked the first **"Lebkuchen"** for the needy and poor. Even today, the whole region is known for this Christmas speciality.

*„Lebkuchen“ are roughly comparable to the english „gingerbread“. However, the sweet round biscuits are much more flavoursome and moist.*



Originally, these „Lebkuchen“ were more than just sweet delicacies - they were "life cakes" (The german word contains this translation). During Advent, they were given to those who were particularly dependent on support in the cold of winter: the weak, the elderly and children. Out of Christian charity, monks distributed the flavoursome biscuits to those in need and wanted to make God's love tangible among people and pass it on. Gingerbread contains many different spices, which were expensive and unaffordable for most people in the past.

**Ginger**, which warms from the inside and heals colds. It warms the heart, heals our inner cold and old wounds.

**Aniseed** has a loosening effect and is good for when breathing is difficult and we can't breathe. Our inner vitality should not come to a standstill, we should not experience disappointments and fears.

**Clove**, which soothes the stomach and relieves pain, leads us to our inner centre and opens the mind to trust and serenity.

**Cinnamon** is sweet and encourages us to embrace the sweetness in life and to continue to open ourselves to the joy of life despite the bitterness.

Finally, **coriander**, as a memory booster and stimulant for the mind and brain, helps us to walk through the world with an alert mind and show genuine interest in our fellow human beings.

In dark times, when we think we are in the shadows, we can trust that Jesus is with us – *"I am the bread of life"* - as Jesus says about himself in the Bible.

The bread of life that provides us with everything we need. This hope unites us Christians during the Advent season. In this way, we too become bakers of the bread of life, which not only fills our stomachs, but also warms our souls and brings the light of hope into the world.

**A prayer:**

Loving God,  
when we are lonely and alone,  
when we are depressed and sad,  
we are desperate and without hope,  
then you are there.

Turn our weeping into laughter,  
our worry into confidence,  
our darkness into light  
and give our lives meaning again.

Through Jesus Christ,  
who shows us the way,  
which we can walk, trusting in the power of your Spirit,  
who guides and accompanies us from morning to evening,  
from the beginning to the end  
for ever and ever.

Amen.

*May God bless us and let us arrive with Him, just as He arrives with us.*

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DIAKONIA Weltbund e.V.