

## **Dear Members and Friends of our Parish Christuskirchengemeinde,**

50 years of our Christuskirche church – the anniversary of our church and parish centre buildings was shown by many events all year long. In the very beginning let's say thank you very much to all volunteers and employees who helped to make all this possible. On October 7 we celebrated exactly the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the inauguration of our church with many choirs from our town. One of our worship bands, in the meantime a constituent part of our Sunday services, was participating and Simon Harden was playing the organ. The sermon was given by Prof. Stefan Claass from Herborn. He thanked us for the positive and inviting influence of our parish far beyond Bad Vilbel, indicating that Jesus Christ was the foundation of faith and parishes; our church and parish was named after him in 1962. We were particularly happy to welcome three former ministers of our parish on that special day: Rudolf Trey, Hans Siebert, and Konrad Schulz.

### Employees of our Parish

Dr. Jens Martin Sautter did not participate in our celebratory service as he is no longer a minister in our parish, but is now being employed by a parish in Mainz. He was a minister in Bad Vilbel for five years, helping to shape the parish: ecumenical work and work with senior citizens, home circles and, above all, religious seminars and the evenings and weekends about "things that do you good" will always be related to him. We thank him for his stimuli, his lively sermons and his calm and reliable character. – Since early November Ingo Schütz has been employed as a half-time minister in our parish. We are looking forward to cooperating with him and welcome him heartily.

Since spring 2012 Patrick Smith has been working as a curate in our parish. After his theological studies he is now preparing to be a minister. Ulrike Mey will accompany him as his teaching minister until November 2013. Since January 2012 Simon Harden has been a new member of our team as a concert organist. We were able to enjoy his brilliant performance when he was playing the organ during services and concerts. A new parish choir for classical music was formed under his direction. They have already participated in several services and concerts. Simon Harden's merry and musical personality is having audible effects and further singers will be given a warm welcome. Let's thank all the donators of the organization to support Christuskirchengemeinde, who enable us to employ Simon Harden in our parish.

### Parish Committees

For more than a decade the leadership structure of our parish has proved to be good. About 70 teams have been planning the specific activities of our parish, their work has been coordinated by 15 committees. As far as possible, these committees are being directed by volunteers. The committees' minutes and fundamental questions are then dealt with by the Parish Council.

During the last few years some committees have expanded their areas considerably. In this context the music committee and the committees for children and youth work as well as for family work are worth mentioning. The festival committee worked temporarily for the church anniversary only. For many years the committee for voluntary work has been forming our identity as a parish involving many volunteers. The stimuli given by that committee have in the meantime been adopted by all areas, so that this committee could be dissolved this year – a grateful recognition to all of its members, in particular to Ingrid Faludi. The same applies to the technical committee, that was building up a high level of electrical and IT equipment, as far as sound and lighting engineering unique for a parish. In this respect we are extremely grateful to Kai Schneider and Martina Radgen. Of course, this work will be continued, too, but there will no longer be a separate committee. This area will be integrated into the administrative committee.

### We Are One of the Main Prizewinning Parishes of the Chrismon Magazine “chrismon-Gemeinde 2012”

It started with an internet vote keeping some hundred networked people of our parish on tenterhooks in spring 2012: Among about 200 German parishes you could vote for your parish. After four weeks we reached the sixth place. A jury then awarded several individual prizes and three main prizes. A delegation of our parish accepted one of these main prizes – and we were happy about the parish's voting enthusiasm and the recognition of our work done during the last few years from outside.

### Anniversary Year “50 Years Christuskirche”

Let's now turn to the many highlights of the anniversary year! The motto “to be in the centre” with our new parish emblem (see the front page of this annual report) became the guiding principle for an active year “in the centre” of our town Bad Vilbel. So it was a good start when at our alternative service “**Kirche anders**” Bad Vilbel's mayor Dr. Thomas Stoehr and our minister Dr. Klaus Neumeier were giving the sermon together about the church, the state, and openly confessing to be a Christian. As **special guests** there were two members of the Regional Church preaching at our Sunday service: Christine Noschka, member of the Regional Church Assembly, and Provost Matthias Schmidt. Last year Hesse Church Leader Volker Jung was our guest at *Kirche anders*. We are glad about the recognition and appreciation shown by these visits. Christuskirchengemeinde is also “in the centre” of the Church of Hesse – but let's deal with this further below.

Early this year our **ZACK** magazine was distributed to all households within the city of Bad Vilbel, advertising all the celebration activities. Again and again the following ZACK magazines dealt with the anniversary: the history of the building, the celebration around the church, the musical show “The 10 Commandments”. We are proud to have ZACK as appreciated means of communication reaching all households of our parish, which won the competition of the best parish magazine in the Land of Hesse in autumn 2011. We also distributed our new **parish book “In the centre”** to all parish

members. 80 pages about our parish: Photos and an interview with Rudolf Trey, the minister then building the church, portraits of various people from our parish, a presentation of manifold activities of the parish – and many photos and very personal impressions ... The editors really accomplished an excellent documentation of our parish's work, that met with extremely positive response.

The “**church as a space of experience**” invited parish members and school forms to a very special experience. Several parish circles had built creative stations as regards baptismal font, altar, pulpit, church windows, organ or bells. A film by Thomas Zatschker especially made for this occasion gives an impression of services and all kinds of religious life taking place in our Christuskirche church. You can click it at our homepage and watch it, together with historical film sequences from the time when the church was built (from cutting the first sod to the transport and inauguration of the bells), or you can acquire a DVD.

A large Storytelling Café dealt with the architect of churches Gulbransson. On this occasion Christuskirche was transformed into a real Café.

In June we had a party **around Christuskirche**. Our day nursery “Arche Noah” (Noah’s Ark) and all the other partners of our “family centre” Christuskirche participated in this celebration, as well as many other teams: One-World-Stall, a book stall, graffiti ... - With wonderful weather the street in front of our church became a fairground, where the city of Bad Vilbel had built a large stage for the jazz band (MSS Bigband from Seulberg). Two parallel services for adults and for children started the day, our choirs and Die anders Band were performing by turns on the stage. As was the case at former parish parties at the place in front of the Bad Vilbel assembly hall – which in 2012 has been a large building site – there were lots of food and drink offered and many games and activities for children. For the first time we had a concert performed by the “Jesus House Band” and Samuel Harfst on the evening before our party, where many visitors were present in spite of continuous rain. To our great delight there were guests from India and England and from other Bad Vilbel parishes, even the Muslim parish.

Everyone could see that we are all getting along well on the occasion of the first Bad Vilbel **Night of Churches** on the eve of our celebratory service. All of the churches of our town were open and in spite of the rain many people from all parishes were on their way visiting lots of activities and performances. Of course, our two churches participated, too. Our old church Auferstehungskirche, which was beautifully illuminated, turned into a centre of literature with music and readings. The children choirs, a worship concert, theatre sketches, and prayers for young people at the end attracted many people to Christuskirche.

One year of intensive rehearsals led about 100 performers to four musical shows early November: Thorsten Mebus presented the **pop oratorio “The 10 Commandments”** on stage at the Dortelweil Kulturforum. The performers comprised the Gospeltrain, the Youth Choir, string players from Frankfurt,

wind players of the Bad Vilbel School of Music, a band of our parish, and several other people. It was Thorsten Mebus's third musical production, the largest by far. He received a lot of well-earned enthusiasm and appreciation.

The anniversary year was concluded by a weekend of welfare and social work. Having the motto **"We have time – for you"**, many activities took place, and many people with very different needs received help from other people of our parish, e.g. confirmation candidates helped to dispose of leaves or rubbish. At the Sunday service the next morning Klaus Neumeier emphasized that helping other people is an important Christian virtue.

The efforts of all the participants in the anniversary year deserve lots of recognition. But particularly worth mentioning are the district volunteers, who, in addition to our ZACK magazine, distributed the new parish book and many extra invitations, as well as our technical team, that long before and long after every event was present and did extremely professional work. And we must not forget the funds: many things during this anniversary year would not have been possible without our organization to support Christuskirche, and the Protestant Deanery of Wetterau announced its support, too.

### Christuskirche Beyond the Boundaries of the Parish

- "To be in the centre", that's not only the motto of the anniversary year but the motto of our parish as a whole. So in spring the synod (church parliament) of the Deanery took place in our parish centre and Judith Reitz (member of the parish council and youth leader) was giving the sermon at the synod service.
- The "Christuskirche Family Centre" - officially recognized by the Land of Hesse – comprises the parish, the day nursery "Arche Noah", the day nursery for children under the age of three, "Kleine Strolche", the day care institution for primary school children "FIBS", and the Protestant Family Education Institution. They all came together for the first family centre meeting.
- Our parish is a member of the Protestant Youth Association of Bad Vilbel – Karben, which celebrated its tenth anniversary and a celebratory service at our parish centre.
- Of course, we also took part in the Youth Church Congress at Michelstadt, Odenwald, and our youth team arranged the central closing service.
- A large group from our parish presented five projects at the Fair of Ideas on the occasion of the church congress of the Church of the Land of Hesse in Wiesbaden, and together with others made us "keen on our parishes".
- And when on October 3<sup>rd</sup> the NPD (National Party of Germany) called to protest against the Bad Vilbel mosque parish, we spontaneously appealed for a counterdemonstration with the motto "We are colourful".

## 2012 Everyday Life of the Parish

Of course, 2012 also included the so-called everyday life of the parish with its services, christenings and weddings, confirmations and funerals, house circles and various holiday camps. It's in the nature of an annual report, that the day-to-day matters are not mentioned particularly, but they should at least be recognized in this way.

In February our **visiting service team** celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary: For two decades they have been visiting lonely and sick people of our parish and, on behalf of the parish, have given them their time.

For the first time there has been a CK **cultural trip** on Martin Luther's trail, leading us to Wittenberg, Erfurt, and other places connected with Martin Luther. Additionally, there were eight father-child weekends, three family-ski-camps, four summer camps for children and teens, the third bible week for children, and various other short trips and camps in 2012.

Our old church Auferstehungskirche was awarded the prize of "**habitat church**" because of the barn owls living in its spire. At the "Day of the Open Monument" many people from Bad Vilbel, too, visited the church and its spire.

The visiting service team, the CK cultural trip, the old church Auferstehungskirche, - everywhere **Marlene Schroeder-Greim** was participating. She was awarded the special certificate of honours for the long years of many kinds of voluntary work by the Protestant Church of Hesse and Nassau. Tobias Utter, being the Head of the Synod of the Deanery of Wetterau, handed it over to her.

In 2012 there were also many activities taking place in the background. For example, a new heating system was installed at Christuskirche and the parish centre, and a new solar system on the old and the new day nursery.

Our ecumenical glance beyond Bad Vilbel's boundaries focussed above all on the children's homes in India supported by us and on the work done by the Dutch doctor Hugo Tempelman in South Africa. Helen Thanapackiam, the head of the children's home at Kamuthi, India, was visiting Uschi Szczes and, of course, our parish. Hartmuth Schroeder visited our friends in India in 2012. – For the first time Hugo and Liesje Tempelman came to our parish to inform us about their work. In their South African sphere of activity the very impressing film "Life, above all", that won several prizes, for example in Cannes, about life in the presence of AIDS was made. Together with the "Alte Mühle" Cinema we invited school classes to free performances of the film. While the J.-F.-Kennedy School made extensive use of this offer, the Georg-Büchner Grammar School did not show much interest.

## Outlook to 2013

2013 will be a year without any anniversaries, but with many special services and events. For the first time we will have a programme of concerts and

musical services. In fact our musical activities have been extended substantially and have attracted many people. In 2013 the restoration of the Christuskirche organ will lead to an enormous challenge for us – especially as regards raising funds. We will organize concerts with the motto "keen on sounds" and ask for donations for our organ.

At the very beginning of the year there will be a change in the caretaker work: After many years in our parish, Willi Steinleitner will retire at the end of this year and Alex Linke will succeed him.

**"Things that do you good"** will be offered twice in 2013: At the start of the advent season the third parish weekend in the Rhoen mountains will take place. During Lent we will already invite people six times on Wednesday night to enjoy dinner, input, and conversations. They will have the motto "Jesus Christ".

**"Jesus Christ"**. That will also be the topic of the year 2013 and the central topic of our ZACK magazine, the alternative service Kirche anders, Sunday services, etc. Our Church and Parish was named after Jesus Christ 50 years ago. What does that mean to our parish? Who is Jesus Christ for me and my life?

A very eventful year is coming to its end, and looking back we see, how much has really happened in our parish. We hope, that this annual report can once more make this clear to us. While in the last few years the report was available at our parish centre only, it will now be distributed to all of our parish members together with the ZACK magazine. Thank you very much for reading it – and, above all, for being in the centre with us in our, in your parish, for we all together want to be and are a Christian parish.

On behalf of the Parish Council at the start of the advent season 2012  
 Werner Kristeller, Chairman of the Parish Council  
 Dr. Klaus Neumeier, Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council and Minister

Fotos in the german edition of the annual report:

- 01 Ministers Siebert, Mey, Trey, Neumeier, Schulz
- 02 Jens Martin Sautter at a religious seminar
- 03 Minister Ingo Schuetz
- 03b Ministers asking God to bless their new colleague
  
- 05 Simon Harden
- 07 Mayor Thomas Stoehr and Minister Klaus Neumeier
- 09 Theatre play about a christening at the "church as a space of experience"
- 10 Film about Christuskirche
- 11 Christuskirche as a large Storytelling Café
- 12 Service at the anniversary party
- 13 Reception of ecumenical guests
- 14 Harp and reading at Auferstehungskirche
- 15 Children's choirs at Christuskirche
  
- 18 Christuskirche Family Centre
- 19a Final service at the Youth Church Congress
- 19b Bad Vilbel sermon theatre play "Jesus' Communion"
- 20 Members of the youth team leading the demonstration against the German National Party