

## Dear Members and Friends of our Parish Christuskirchengemeinde,

Since October 31 we have been celebrating the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The twelve months to come will be influenced strongly by the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Martin Luther's Reformation. In 2012 we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church Christuskirche, and 2017 will be a very special year for the Protestant Church in the whole of Germany. The highlight will be the Reformation Day on October 31, 2017, which will be a public holiday in that year. Of course, our Christuskirche congregation will also celebrate the anniversary in very many ways. (01 Logo) In addition to the brochure by the Protestant Deanery of Wetterau, which by now should have arrived at all Bad Vilbel homes, there is Bad Vilbel's own magazine containing thoughts on the Protestant Reformation and Martin Luther as well as many announcements of local events. And as this Magazine will arrive at all Bad Vilbel homes, we would like to add this annual report to the magazines for all the inhabitants of the city of Bad Vilbel. Maybe people who are not members of our congregation are also interested in the things that happened in our Protestant Parish Christuskirchengemeinde in 2016 and like to read this retrospective summary. Our Parish Magazine ZACK is informing regularly of events and on request it is, of course, given to non-Protestants, too. In this respect, please, call our Parish Office (Phone 853 55). Additionally, our homepage is also giving information on current events: [www.ckbv.de](http://www.ckbv.de). There you can also order the regular newsletter ck-aktuell on the right-hand side of the starting page.

But now let's present the most important events of the year 2016 – as usual we are beginning with the persons: Reverend Klaus Neumeier celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a minister in our congregation. On February 10, 1991 he had been ordained by Helga Troesken, then provost, and thus was given the function of a minister in Bad Vilbel. On Pentecost we memorized that by celebrating a special service. (02 Neumeier and Kristeller)

In the years 2016 and 2017 Maurice Meschonat is assisting us and learning in our parish. As a curate he is undergoing the last stage of the formation as a future minister with Ulrike Mey instructing him. He is already holding services in our churches, including baptisms, marriages, and funerals. He is also cooperating in confirmation seminars, at school, and other projects of our parish. You will certainly have the opportunity to get to know him. (03 Meschonat)

Kirche anders and CROSSROAD Anniversaries

(04 Kirche anders anniversary)

At the first Kirche anders alternative service in 2016 our parish hall was crowded. Twenty years ago we started our Sunday afternoon service Kirche anders. Preaching combined with relevant topics of our daily life, colloquial language, modern music played by a big band, gospel choir, or our "Anders Band", amusing theatre plays on a high level, the opportunity to ask questions – everything takes place in a relaxed bistro atmosphere. In February 1996 we

did not imagine that we would be able to celebrate this kind of anniversary now. This alternative kind of service helped many people to find God, faith, and friends in our congregation. Above all we are grateful to the wonderful team, that has arranged and held this work-intensive type of service with all its changes for twenty years now. Britta Betz, Tobias Utter, and Klaus Neumeier have taken part since the beginning, thus showing the joy, Kirche anders is giving. Many guests were celebrating together with us: the Head of the Regional Church Assembly Jens Böhm and the Dean Volkhard Guth, representative of our Protestant church of the Land of Hesse, as well as Karl-Heinz Zimmer, the Head of Willow Creek Germany, and Bad Vilbel's Mayor Dr. Thomas Stöhr – and, of course, guests from neighbouring parishes. One word about Willow Creek: This Congregation is one of the so-called Mega-Churches near Chicago in the USA, inviting many thousands of people to come to their services every weekend. They gave us many valuable stimuli for our alternative service Kirche anders, and for our view of a congregation within the community in general. During the last twenty years our congregation, too, has been developing in many different ways due to Kirche anders.

#### (05 Crossroad Anniversary)

On April 1, 2016 it was 5 years ago that the youth service called CROSSROAD was started. This project was realized by the joint youth teams of our parish and the Protestant parish of Dortelweil in 2011, and so young people are being invited 6 times a year to come to their own service. Since then this team has been working together constantly and has invited young people to the CROSSROAD youth service at different places: open air at the fire brigade building, at the sewage treatment plant, at the Roman well, or at the Dottenfelder Hof farm – and also in the premises of a shoe shop, a car showroom, and the city library. And shortly before Christmas the service always takes place at the edge of the forest to celebrate a “forest Christmas”.

Usually one of our youth bands is playing at a CROSSROAD service (BiG = Believe in God, or the Jesus House Band). Both bands have members of the parishes of Christuskirche and Dortelweil. The bands and CROSSROAD, together with the joint confirmation projects and many children and youth camps, are outstanding examples of the intensive cooperation of both congregations in the field of children, confirmation, and youth work.

#### 150 Times ZACK in 25 Years – New Parish Homepage

#### (06 ZACK title)

The ZACK editing team was celebrating, too – and that even twice. In spring the 150<sup>th</sup> issue of our “Zeitung aus der Christuskirche” (Magazine of Christuskirche) came out and the magazine itself became 25 years old. In the editing team, too, Britta Betz, Klaus Neumeier, and Martina Radgen, our parish pedagogue, have been members from the beginning. The conception of a parish magazine in A3 format has been innovative for a parish newsletter and still is. But the extremely positive feedback is encouraging us to stay on

our way to a good communication in our congregation. And in addition to this, ZACK has been noticed intensively outside and received several awards in the field of parish newsletters. This public relation work is, of course, quite expensive, and so let us take this opportunity to thank all the people and companies who are placing advertisements and thus are helping us to finance ZACK.

(07 Editing Team visits Korbach)

As you may imagine, ZACK has continuously been developed further during the last 25 years. In the beginning we met in the parish office designing the printer's copy by means of scissors and glue. Then the magazine was printed in black and white. For many years now, ZACK is four-colour printed, and since 2000 the printing as well as the layout has been done by Sprenger Printers at Korbach. This was a good opportunity for our printing team to travel to the north of Hesse to visit "our" printers. We were very impressed by the friendly cooperation at that family business and we are very glad to have such good partners.

(08 Homepage)

25 years ago we did not even dream of an internet homepage. Nowadays our parish's homepage is visited very often. In 2016 its layout was changed, so that the website is also well legible on smartphones. Andreas Giese has invested a lot of time and commitment in this respect, and we thank him and all others, who are assisting to keep the homepage going. The homepage is especially visited by people who have moved to Bad Vilbel, persons interested in baptism, or in downloads of flyers for camps etc.. By now it has a very short internet address: [www.ckbv.de](http://www.ckbv.de) (ck being the abbreviation of Christuskirche and bv of Bad Vilbel, of course).

Parish Party in Front of the Kurhaus Assembly Hall

(09 Parish Party in Front of the Kurhaus Assembly Hall)

Once every two years we have a great party – which, according to our motto, we are celebrating with intent in the centre of the city instead of on our own premises. As is the case at every open-air event, the weather is of particular importance. And this year we were really lucky: from the last "advent season in the Castle" till the thanksgiving service in the orchards the sun was shining, and this applied also to the great parish party in the park at the assembly hall on June 5, 2016. It is always very impressing that far more than 100 volunteers help to make this a great day, making services for children and adults possible, putting different music programmes on stage, playing games with children in the park, and, of course, providing lots of food like steaks, cake, Hassia mineral water and beer. The topic of the services dealt with the motto of Church of the Land of Hesse: "We are one family", which did not only mean family connections. The focus is on meeting other people. In this respect it was a good premiere to connect the summer party of our day nursery Arche Noah with the parish party. It was at the start of about 100

balloons, at the latest, that everybody saw, how the children were enjoying it all.

#### Meeting Friends in York and India

Many meetings with friends were the main purpose of this year's Christuskirche cultural trips. They did not only lead us to tourist highlights, as was the case on trips to Poland, Israel, or Andalusia, but they let us get in touch again with congregations we already had relations with.

##### (10 On the medieval city walls of York)

In May a trip in three small buses led us to York, England, with intensive meetings and experiences in the gothic cathedral: service, evensong, devotion within our group, meeting with one of the ministers of the cathedral – and we additionally went to the medieval town, many parts of which are still well preserved, and to the former monastery at Rievaulx. We were particularly impressed when meeting the family of Reverend Walker at Kingston upon Hull. Our youth team had been guests there several times, sometimes even for a whole week. And the friends from Hull had also visited Bad Vilbel on several occasions.

##### (11 a and b Service at Christ Church Cathedral in Amritsar, Bishop Samantaroy and Reverend Vijay Kumar)

In October a group of 38 participants travelled to the Oberhessen partner diocese in Amritsar, North India. Of course, we visited the Golden Temple and many other tourist highlights in Delhi. But in addition to this, we met many Christians of the diocese. In India Christians are a clear minority, who, nevertheless, achieve a lot socially, above all by very well reputed schools. One of the home circles in our parish, with Reinhard Walter as a member, was particularly engaged in strengthening the partnership with Amritsar and was able to bring about a lot of good developments by a micro-credit project. It was impressing to see the fruit of this work. And we were also preparing a partnership with the congregation of our namesake, Christ Church Cathedral, in Amritsar and its reverend Vijay Kumar.

##### (12 Uschi Szczes and Klaus Neumeier with Children at the Kamuthi Children's Home)

A small delegation took the opportunity of the flight to India to also visit the two children's homes at Tranquebar and Kamuthi, both in the State of Tamil Nadu, which to a large extent are funded by our parish in Bad Vilbel. Quite some time ago this relation was started by Reverend Siebert, whose sister is still doing a lot of good things for TELC (Tamil Protestant Lutheran Church) today. We hope very much that even more people are prepared to sponsor a child out of the 200 children in both children's homes. See the information at our church or at the homepage.

#### Refugee Projects in our Parish

While people from our congregation were guests abroad, other people from abroad came to Germany, and also to Bad Vilbel, asking for asylum. A lot of volunteers from our congregation show great commitment to help integrate refugees. Ingo Schütz is coordinating the large number of projects:

(13 MusiX)

For example we are offering a special German language course for women, while we are taking care of their children. The group “musiX” started by us connects the different cultures by music and already filled the audience with enthusiasm at several performances. By commitment in the “bicycle” project about 200 bicycles were given as a donation, which could then be passed on to refugees. In this connection we also offered a bicycle course for women, and 9 ladies from different countries were learning, what they weren’t allowed to experience in their home countries: freedom and independence on two wheels. We enjoyed seeing the happiness in their faces.

Our congregation does not only help refugees, but refugees are now members of our congregation. For several months now some of them have been visiting the services regularly, and two of them were even employed to support the team of caretakers. Hassan Nazari was prepared to hold a weekly break dance course, thus passing on his astonishing abilities in this field.

Finally we gave asylum to a young man from Eritrea in our church. For six months he was living in our church and then he was given the permission to apply for political asylum. A team led by Hartmuth Schröder managed all the organisational details. At Easter he was allowed to move out and is now building up a new life by doing an apprenticeship at a bakery. We are all very happy that we were able to help him by specific measures.

Changes in the Field of Collection Administration and the Community Care Centre

(14 Ingrid Faludi and Anja Schörner)

After more than 25 years Ingrid Faludi gave up her responsibility for the administration of collections this summer. All collections of money during services, concerts, parties and other events are administered by the collection administration. Many large-scale projects, e.g. the organ restoration or the renovation of churches were funded by means of the collection administration, in addition, the Indian partnerships mentioned above, and many other things. As a whole more than 120,000 entries per year were made reliably and voluntarily by Ingrid Faludi, who by profession is a bank clerk. We are aware that donations given to us must be administered very carefully. So we are even more thankful to Ingrid Faludi’s great commitment and countless hours in the background... She will remain active in our congregation holding services as a lay preacher. Let us express our huge gratitude for 25 years of great work.

And we are glad that another reliable bank clerk, Anja Schörner, from our Parish Council was prepared to take over the administration of collections.

Formal changes were also planned and resolved for the Protestant Community Care Centre. The trusteeship by the association of Bad Vilbel's Protestant parishes will be transferred to the Church of the Land of Hesse. This change was due to enormously increased work and more and more complex general conditions. The actual nursing care work in our city, however, remains unchanged, and also the centre of operation in the premises of the Heilsberg Protestant Home for Elderly People will stay there.

#### Mutual Visits with the Protestant Congregation Bad Nauheim

Once every 10 to 20 years the work of our congregations in the Church of the Land of Hesse is being evaluated by visiting delegations. In autumn, this was the case in our Wetterau deanery. The congregation of Bad Nauheim and our congregation were invited to pay each other visits. In early October our delegation (Christoph Diemerling, Astrid Edelmann, Nadine Schwarz, Martina Radgen, and Ulrike Mey) went to Bad Nauheim. In early November a delegation from Bad Nauheim visited us. That's why we held our parish meeting on November 6. An important topic was the question of how to reach families, accompany them lastingly and get them enthusiastic about faith.

At Bad Nauheim we found a large and active congregation with similar questions, chances, and problems like our congregation. We had inspiring conversations and friendly meetings. At the same time we could look at ourselves a bit from the outside, which is always very helpful. Who knows which things may result from these visits.

#### 2017: Celebrating the Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

So much for the year 2016, although there would have been so many more things to report: about camps, concerts, home circles, services, etc.. On this occasion let us thank all the volunteers and employees very much for their commitment in so many fields of the parish. And as to 2017, we do not intend to do less, on the contrary:

(15 Logo Rediscover God)

It is not at all historically sure, whether the posting of Martin Luther's theses took place as was reported on October 31, 1517. But it is sure, that Martin Luther by his 95 printed theses did not only start discussions within the church itself, but he also brought about an extensive renewal of the church, and a new social development in general. Therefore it is quite appropriate to pay tribute to all this in many ways in the year to come.

The enclosed newspaper about the Protestant Reformation anniversary invites you "to rediscover God". That's why we would also like to invite you to come to our congregation – to seminars about the Reformation and Luther's theses, his dinner speeches, or about women during the Protestant

Reformation. We invite you to sermons held by the President of the Parliament of the Land of Hesse, Norbert Kartmann (CDU, Christian Democratic Party) and the President of the Social Democratic Party of Hesse, Thorsten Schäfer-Gümbel, and to presentations and talks with prominent representatives of church and society. We invite you to come to concerts and a musical show about Luther produced for Bad Vilbel and directed by Thorsten Mebus, which will be performed in June 2017 at the Kultur- und Sportforum Bad Vilbel Dortelweil. Of course, we invite you to special services about Luther's songs, about the Reformation principles "faith alone, Christ alone, God's grace alone, the bible alone", and to alternative services at Kirche anders and CROSSROAD dealing with special topics. There will be an event room about the Protestant Reformation, special offers for children, confirmation candidates and young people – and on the public holiday, on October 31, 2017, a great Celebration of the Protestant Reformation with all the Protestant congregations of Bad Vilbel in the centre of the city.

We are very glad, if many people will start to rediscover God in 2017 and if our different programmes will invite them to do so.

Werner Kristeller, Chairman of the Parish Council  
Dr. Klaus Neumeier, Minister and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council