



# Prayer for Berlin

December 2011 / January 2012

## ***Good News 1: Prayer Mail Nr. 100***

Dear Prayer Partners! This is the 100th prayer mail—a reason to give thanks. One hundred prayer mails since 2002...hundreds of impulses for prayer, uncounted numbers of prayers for our city as a result. And, of course, we've seen many answers to prayer. In many cases, we saw situations change or improve after we asked for prayer. Here just a couple of examples from the last months: a peaceful May 1<sup>st</sup>, the arrest of arsonists, and also the smooth building of a new government (see Good News 2).

For this reason, we offer our thanks to God – and to all our prayer partners, some of whom have been our partners for years. This encourages us to continue. We hope you will also. Berlin still needs much prayer!

We wish you a blessed Christmas and a New Year full of hope and confidence. God reigns!

The prayer mail editorial team

*This is a double issue for both December and January. Please continue to pray for these issues throughout January, adding your own requests and those of current events.*

## ***Good News 2: Coalition agreement***

When it comes to politics, not everyone is always happy. Nevertheless, it was striking that the coalition discussions between the SPD and the CDU in Berlin went extremely well, finished within the allotted time, and reached a conclusion which was nearly unanimously accepted by both conventions.

Did God answer the prayers of many Christians, even over the last six weeks in the Rote Rathaus (town hall) in Berlin? One can criticize one or other of the points of the coalition agreement and the budget cuts in Senate—but this should lead us to pray even more for the new Senate, all of which are new, with the exception of the mayor and the Minister of Finance.

## ***New Government in Berlin***

After Klaus Wowereit (SPD) was re-elected as mayor, the new Senators (3 women, 5 men, 4 from the SPD, 4 from the CDU), took their oaths on Dec. 1 and began their work. We will introduce them in the next prayer mails, and ask for prayer for them and their areas of responsibilities.

**Prayer:**

- **Pray for the start of the new coalition and that they will serve the city well**
- **Pray that God will bless the new senators**

## ***Project “Place to live in exchange for help”***

A good idea, which is already successful in other cities, is being tested in Berlin. The project “Place to live in exchange for help” is designed to bring senior citizens with needs who have extra room in their houses together with college students who need a place to live and are available to help. The students get a low-priced or rent-free room in exchange for household help or running errands, 1 hour per month per square meter. The applicants can meet one another during a “speed dating” event. The project begins in January. Senior citizens with room in their houses can apply. 901842662

**Prayer**

- **Pray for a good start for the project**
- **Pray for enough applicants on both sides**
- **Pray that both sides will get along and for clear agreements which protect both sides**

## ***Berlin – the capital city of ideas***

Berlin draws a large number of creative people. We have often written about this. The importance of creativity in relation to income for the city can be seen in numbers—on a national scale, creative industries make up only 2.6% of the entire economy. In Berlin, however, the creative industries comprise 13% of the economy! The creative industries are comprised of companies in the areas of music, visual arts, film, design, games, and books – in other words, all areas in which a creative act is the starting point for an economic process. It's not enough, though, to just be creative, because even a very creative product will be bought only if people really need it. Creative people often need help marketing their ideas. Trade associations and politicians could help more in this area. Banks which are willing to support small, creative projects are also needed.

**Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the gift of creativity and for all who work in the creative industries**
- **Pray for the development of concepts which support small companies**
- **Pray that creative people can discover how they can serve other people with their products**

***Shortage of space in Refugee Centres***

The number of refugees and those applying for asylum coming to Berlin is increasing. Between 2009 and 2011, the number rose from 1350 to 3100. Many centres are at full capacity. So-called emergency reception centres which were designed to be a temporary solution have become a long-term condition. In addition, one must pay attention to the infrastructure and inform the districts about the reception of those seeking asylum. The specialized need for schools, (German) teachers and free-time activities must be considered, so that positive integration can happen.

**Prayer**

- **For solutions for adequate housing**
- **Pray for good cooperation between the Senate and the districts in regards to planning and decisions**

***Keeping On – Violence in the U-Bahn***

Violent attacks on guests of the Berlin S- and U-Bahn continue to happen. Obviously, the perpetrators' inhibition threshold has disappeared. Even security forces are afraid. Let us continue to pray for good strategies for more safety and a decrease in violence.

***Christmas***

“Joy to the world...” – for many people, Christmas is the best time of the year...relaxation, reflection, and time with loved ones. And also time to reflect on the fact that God became man.

“Joy to the world...” – but not for everyone. For many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness. Suicide rates rise and crisis-line telephones are very busy.

Many churches and Christian organisations are very active during this time of year, bringing the Good News to people.

**Prayer**

- **Pray that many people will hear and understand the message of Christmas**

- **Pray that those who are desperate can get help**
- **Pray that God's love will reach people everywhere**

***Citizens Action Platform Neukölln***

On January 25, the third Berlin Citizens Action Platform will be founded, this time in the district Neukölln, which is known nationally as a problem district. Along with clubs, schools, Muslim groups, etc. there are a number of churches taking part – and also the “Friends of Jesus and Neukölln”, where brothers and sisters from immigrant churches and Christian initiatives are ministering to their community. This group works together with Together for Berlin.

A Citizens Action Platform is a volunteer association of groups, centres, and organisations patterned after “Community Organizing” in the USA. The goal is a long-term cooperation to better the quality of life in the district. Thus, in addition to politics and industry, a third entity has been established, which is financially, religiously and politically independent. Presently approximately 30 groups belong to the Platform. By the founding in January, it will probably be 40-45 groups. The process is being accompanied professionally by DICO – German Institute for Community Organizing [www.dico-berlin.org](http://www.dico-berlin.org).

**Prayer:**

- **Pray that the founding will be successful**
- **Pray that the quality of life will be improved, especially in problem areas of Neukölln**
- **Pray for a positive influence on the part of Christians**

***Dates:***

- **Dec. 28-Jan. 1: 34th European Taizé – Youth Congress, Meetings at the Messe and in many Berlin churches**
- **Jan. 8.-15: Week of Prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance, in Berlin nearly 100 prayer events, dates can be viewed at: [www.evangelische-allianz-berlin.de](http://www.evangelische-allianz-berlin.de)**
- **Feb. 23.-25 Transforum Conference from Together for Berlin: “Hinsehen. Aufstehen. Einmischen. Gerechtigkeit für die Stadt“, (Look. Stand up. Get involved. Justice for the city) Christuskirche Hohenschönhausen, [www.transforum-berlin.de](http://www.transforum-berlin.de)**