



Edition 163 – April 2018

Good News: Community Organizing Platform Spandau

Initiatives, associations and religious communities are joining together in so-called Civic Platforms to work together on solutions for their neighbourhood or district. Following Neukölln, Berlin Südost and Moabit-Wedding, the fourth Berlin Civic Platform was founded in the district of Spandau. Christians are taking part. A number of churches are involved as well as some mosque communities. They want to tackle issues together that are on the hearts of many in Spandau and negotiate with politicians face-to-face about solutions. Around 450 people from 15 groups came to the founding meeting.

Prayer:

- **Thank God that Christians and other people of good will are working together for better quality of life**
- **Thank God that in this way they are serving the city and its residents**

Personnel Emergency in the Courts

The Berlin judiciary has been overburdened for years, and the situation is still tense. The district court in Berlin-Moabit is particularly affected – Too few staff for too many cases and in addition, not enough courtrooms. This often leads to long delays in court cases, in part those concerning serious crimes. Proceedings cannot be completed quickly due to increasing numbers of offenses. Due to the delay in beginning the trials, prisoners are released from pre-trial detention because the duration of the legally allowed pre-trial detention has been exceeded. 19 out of 40 criminal chambers are officially overburdened. By summer, five new criminal court divisions will be set up, and new jobs will be filled – aiming for relaxing the overall situation. New high-security courtrooms are planned, but the building permit has not been granted yet.

Prayer:

- **Pray for the relief in the current workload of judges and prosecutors**
- **Pray for timely filling of new posts in the criminal courts**
- **Pray for rapid processing of the cases that have been postponed**
- **Pray for a decline in the number of crimes in Berlin**

Stumbling Blocks

The stumbling blocks are originally a project of the artist Gunter Demnig. The small commemorative plaques are intended to commemorate the people who were persecuted, murdered or deported during the National Socialist era. Around 7,800 stones have been laid in Berlin. On March 20, a nationwide "spring cleaning of the stumbling blocks" took place. The stumbling blocks and the cleaning action are directed against the forgetting and suppression of our German history. It means pausing in hectic everyday life to decipher the writing on the ground. It requires humility to kneel down on the street to keep the memory present by brushing. What has happened may be repeated if we do not learn from past experiences. In Berlin, for example, in recent months, stumbling blocks have been torn out and an Israeli restaurant owner was verbally violently attacked with anti-Semitic rhetoric. It takes courage to practically implement the motto "Never again". Everyone is called to oppose anti-Semitic sayings or prejudices in their everyday lives. Another way to take action is to participate in the "March of Life", which is directed against forgetting and against modern anti-Semitism. The march begins on April 18 at 6pm at George-Grosz-Platz (corner of Kurfürstendamm and Schlüterstraße).

Prayer:

- **That people will remain conscious of our special German and Christian responsibility for Jews and Israel**
- **Pray for the protection of Israeli and Jewish citizens and institutions**
- **Pray for courage and determination to stand up against anti-Semitism**
- **Pray for a large number of participants and public impact from the "March of Life"**

Business Location Berlin

There is good news from the business sector in Berlin. New jobs will be created (55,000 in 2017) and this will reduce unemployment. Berlin is an attractive location for companies from the digital economy, tourism and the media sectors. In recent years, economic growth in Berlin has repeatedly exceeded that of the rest of the Federal Republic. But from an all-German point of view, Berlin's economic contribution does not look so glorious. Berlin contributes only four percent to the gross domestic product and even pushes the average

per capita income down. Current surveys show that the potential of the business location Berlin is very different between Berlin and other federal states. In order for the economy of Berlin to continue to grow and the business location to become more attractive, executives cite in particular better education, optimization of administration, more openness, more investment and better infrastructure as areas of needed growth.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the economic growth and the new jobs**
- **Pray for politics which look to the future and address the areas of needed growth in Berlin**
- **Pray that new companies gain a foothold and existing ones remain stable**

Kreuzberg and May 1st

For many years May 1st in Kreuzberg meant riots and unrest. Since 2003, Christians have been promoting a peaceful May 1st - with local public church services, street prayer teams, and worship times. How will it be this year?

As in previous years, the district and local residents are organizing the *MyFest* with eight stages from 11am to 10 pm around the Oranienstraße. The *MaiGörli* from noon to 11pm on two stages in the Görli park with extensive entrance controls is new this year. The *Revolutionary May 1st demonstration* has been announced, but once again will probably not be *officially registered*. The demonstration under the motto of "For social revolution" and "Make the rebellious city visible" is supposed to start at the Oranienplatz.

Christian groups are planning the following:

"BURN" from April 30, noon to May 1st, midnight: Praise and worship in the prayer cellar at Kottbusser Tor, for 36 hours. **Intercession** times embedded in BURN (April 30, 8 pm, May 1st, noon, 4 pm and 8pm).

On-site Prayer coming up to and during the demonstration: Monday, April 30, 6pm, along the demo route and May 1st beginning about 5pm parallel to the demo.

Evangelization in small teams on May 1st from 1pm at *MyFest*; joint start with a sending worship service. If you want to join, please contact info@gfberlin.de

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the years of significant decline in violence and riots surrounding May 1st**
- **Pray for a peaceful day at the *MyFest* and *MaiGörli***
- **Pray for a peaceful 6pm demonstration (and any other demos)**
- **Pray for wise, deescalating and effective action on the part of the police**

Better Air Quality Through Temp 30

In Berlin, as in many other cities, the level of nitrogen dioxide pollution on busy roads is above the permissible limit. This endangers the health (not only) of local residents, pedestrians and cyclists. Studies show that slower, evenly rolling traffic reduces the pollution level. For example, over three years of testing in Berlin Tempo 30 resulted in a reduction of between seven and 13 percent. In the case of fine dust and the toxic soot it contains, the effects were lower, but also measurable. After the Easter holidays, the Senator for the Environment Regine Günther (independent, for the Greens) wants to take the matter seriously. She wants to dictate Tempo 30 only where it makes sense. The test phase begins at Leipziger Straße in Mitte. There, the limit has been exceeded by 65 percent, more than at any other of the approximately 30 measuring points on major arteries operated by the Senate. (Der Tagesspiegel 03/22/2018)

Prayer:

- **Pray for effective and sensible measures to reduce pollutants**
- **Pray that the often emotionally and ideologically overloaded discussion will become more objective**
- **Pray that the air quality in Berlin improves in the short-term term - and thus also health**

Keeping On: Anti-Semitism

In a Tempelhofer elementary school (with 95 percent pupils with migrant background!), a Jewish girl was insulted and threatened by a Muslim classmate because she does not believe in Allah. The case is making waves all the way up to in federal politics. During his inaugural visit to Israel, the new Foreign Minister Heiko Maas condemned the incident and any kind of anti-Semitism in general. In addition, Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble commented accordingly. In the affected school, the problem will be addressed pedagogically after the Easter holidays with external assistance. Such an incident is probably just the "tip of the iceberg". There is open anti-Semitism both in Muslim circles and among Germans with right-wing sentiments.

Our prayer and practical work against anti-Semitism and hatred of the Jews reflects an unfortunate continuing need.

Dates:

April 11, 6pm: Prayer for the City, Rotes Rathaus

April 18, 6pm: March for Life (see article above),

George-Grosz-Platz, Charlottenburg,

<https://www.facebook.com/events/167260303984412/>

April 30 and May 1: Prayer Surrounding May 1st

(Details in the article above)