



Edition 188 – October 2020

Good News: New Anti-bullying Officer for Schools

When children or young people are bullied at school, those affected often suffer a lot. The students and often also their parents feel helpless and often do not know where to turn. In order to improve this situation, the new position of an anti-bullying officer has now been filled by Doreen Beer. When she started in April, the corona pandemic was already in full swing and schools were already closed. Therefore, the education administration has only now invited people to a meeting to introduce Beer and her tasks.

Prayer: Thank God and ask for His blessing for her new responsibilities

Series Berlin Districts: Lichtenberg (2)

The political situation has been fraught with conflict over the past three years of this electoral term. The initially strong, later moderately destructive role of the comparatively strong AfD parliamentary group would have required constructive cooperation between the clearly democratic parties. Instead, however, there was strong competition between the LINKE as the strongest force and the SPD. From 2011 to 2016, the latter held the district mayor's post for the first time in over 20 years by combining candidate lists with the CDU and Bündnis90/Die Grünen, which has been held by the left since the beginning of this electoral term. At the moment the situation is tending to improve, for instance a former free church pastor is now also responsible in the district office, but overall a better understanding seems to be desired. Since Lichtenberg is a district in East Berlin, secularism is highly prevalent in a large segment of the population. At the same time, both state and free churches have grown into a serving role within the community, which is quite appreciated, also by politicians, and have taken on responsibility in the social area and have opened up to the district and community. They host district conferences, hold public services in the context of district festivals and take part in public life. The Coptic Church is an important Orthodox church in the district.

Prayer:

- **Pray for a constructive, cooperative collaboration between the parliamentary groups that is oriented towards the wellbeing of the district**

- **Pray for an internal revitalization of the churches that leads to becoming relevant in their surroundings by perceiving the needs of the neighbourhood**
- **Pray for the emergence of stronger cooperation between the churches, which, despite differences, act and bless the district and its people**

New Campaign #WirsindEINBerlin (WeareONEBerlin)

Berlin has a new branding since September 2020, which was developed on the basis of a two-and-a-half-year mission statement process. It is the official state signet of Berlin (with the bear) and at the same time the communicative roof for all capital city advertising. The focus is on a new way of living together among Berliners, which is being advertised as part of the campaign under the new #WIRSINDEINBERLIN brand. Every single person in Berlin makes the city what it is: tolerant, diverse, colourful. The new campaign offers opportunities for participation with numerous campaigns and elements that you can design yourself.

We who pray for the city are particularly pleased with this new motto because it gives new momentum to our longstanding prayers for more unity - between East and West, locals and immigrants, young and old, poor and rich. The plan is to develop posters with the same layout: two differences ultimately result in a togetherness. Together for Berlin e.V. is also modelling this impulse (see graphic).



Prayer:

- **Thank God for the new campaign designed to build bridges between opposites**
- **Pray that the East-West-unity will deepen in the minds of people**
- **Pray for more togetherness between old and young, locals and immigrants**
- **Pray that Christians and churches also contribute to a reconciled coexistence in the city**

Antisemitism in Connection with Corona in Berlin

The Antisemitism Research and Information Center Berlin (RIAS Berlin) has been recording the threats posed by anti-Semitic conspiracy stories online and in German living rooms since the beginning of the Corona crisis. Since March, 75 anti-Semitic incidents explicitly related to Corona have been documented in the capital. Anti-Semites have apparently found new forms of discrimination and disturbance online. In April, digital events organized by Jewish or Israeli organizations were repeatedly hijacked by strangers and flooded with anti-Semitic or pornographic images.

RIAS assessed 25 coronavirus-related meetings as anti-Semitic. These include the so-called "hygiene demos" held weekly from March to July and the "Querdenken" demonstrations in August. The visibility of conspiracy myths is very high there, and the transitions to anti-Semitic positions are fluid.

Prayer:

- **Pray for an end to the baseless theories, slander and "hate speech" against Jews and Israel**
- **Pray for protection for Jewish citizens and institutions**
- **Pray for courage and determination for all who actively oppose hatred and exclusion**

Proposals for Administrative Reform

Berlin, the capital of organized incompetence? "Authorities' ping pong" prevents construction work and urgent permits and confuses citizens? "It cannot go on like this!" Politicians from the three governing parties, the Greens (Monika Herrmann), Linke (Sören Benn) and SPD (Frank Nägele) have presented an initiative with new, not entirely new and occasionally unconvincing ideas. But since the direction is right, it is to be hoped that their initiative will be taken seriously across all parties. The aim is an administrative reform with clear delimitation of competencies between senate administrations and district offices as well as the authority of the district mayors to issue instructions. But this means a loss of power for those involved at all levels of administration - personally and for the parties. But without a reorganization of the administration, in addition to the mentioned and known problems, the modernization and digitization of the administration will not progress quickly enough.

Prayer:

- **Pray that God's Spirit guides all ideas, discussions and debates**
- **Pray that the ideas that become part of the administrative reform are heard, accepted and seen as important in all parties**

- **Pray for prompt implementation of good ideas**
- **Pray for insight among politicians and willingness to give up "power" for the good of the city and its citizens**

Right-wing Extremist Series of Attacks in Neukölln

The series of attacks consisted of at least 72 criminal offences, arson attacks, threats and property damage. Intensive research took place over one and a half years, and now a sobering result has been announced in the final report of special commission "Focus". Most of the crimes have not yet been solved. It is believed this might also be because individual police officers are too closely connected to the right-wing scene. Interior Senator Geisel announces the possibility that there will be an investigation committee next year

Prayer:

- **Pray that an inquiry committee will be set up soon**
- **Pray for fast investigation of crimes**
- **Pray that the police can regain the trust they have lost and that the police do not act ideologically**

Keeping On: Rising Corona Numbers

In Berlin, the number of corona infections continues to rise, especially in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Mitte and Neukölln, but thank God the number of sick people is not rising yet. The Senate has passed new measures such as a mask requirement in offices. **Let us continue to pray for God's protection over the development and increased, successful control of measures!**

Dates:

- **Oct. 3, 11:00, "Giving thanks – Celebrating - Praying", Open-air Worship service with prayer walk to the Zionskirche following, beginning at the Kapelle der Versöhnung, Bernauer Str. 111**
- **Oct. 3, 7-9 pm, Steps of the Berliner Dom: Germany sings – Thanksgiving-Demonstration for 30 years of unity**
- **Oct. 4, 4pm, "Reconciliation instead of Hate" – Take to the streets for Israel and Jewish life - Pariser Platz**
- **Oct. 14, 6-7pm, Prayer for City Politicc at the Rote Rathaus**