



Edition 211 – February 2023

Good News: 120.000 Student Tablets

The education administration wants to equip all 120,000 students in grades 7 to 10 with tablets or laptops to borrow by 2025. At the last meeting before the election, the main committee approved 20 million euros for the leasing model for public schools, which was initially set to run for four years. The first devices are to be handed out to the 7th and 8th graders in autumn. Approval was only given after the request had been improved.

Prayer: Thank God for this great investment in the digitization of schools and pray for good resulting effects

Prayer for the Districts: Spandau

Starting in February, the Evangelical Alliance Berlin will start a monthly prayer for each district together with Together for Berlin. An informative article and specific prayer requests for the particular district will be included each month in our prayer mail. We are starting with the westernmost district of Spandau.

Spandau stretches almost 20 km from the Spandau Forest in the extreme north-west to Kladow on the border with Potsdam-Sacrow. In between there are nine boroughs with very different profiles. There is the historic old town with Stresow, Kolk, Citadel and Juliusturm, then the new town, the Falkenhagener Feld and the high-rise region Heerstraße Nord, which previously offered inexpensive housing for people with a low income. With Gatow, Kladow, Staaken and Pichelsdorf there are old, idyllic village centres with fields, forests and beautiful banks on the Havel. They make the district attractive for both day tourists and those looking for accommodation; because in addition to the water town of Oberhavel, another 20,000 apartments are to be built, ranging from the Carossa district to the island of Gartenfeld. The absolute highlight for Spandau is the current planning for a joint 1.2 billion project by Siemens and the Berlin Senate. On the border to Charlottenburg, the Siemensstadt 2.0 technology park will be created with new working and living environments. For this reason, some journalists already see Spandau on the threshold of becoming a trend district in Berlin

Prayer:

- **Pray for social peace between different population groups, without vandalism and**

arson, especially in the Heerstraße Nord district

- **Pray for affordable housing for families and people on low incomes**
- **Pray for better transport connections for the new residential areas in the north of Spandau**
- **Pray for the Improvement of the social infrastructure in all neighbourhoods through new day-care centres, schools, meeting centres and the urgent expansion of the Spandau Clinic**
- **Pray for churches to be planted and neighbourhood meeting points in the new residential areas of Spandau**

Thousands of Students are Waiting for Places in Student Dormitories

More than 5,000 university students in Berlin are waiting for a place in a residence hall. The situation is becoming more and more challenging for various reasons: 1st: Overall, there is not enough affordable living space in Berlin. 2nd: The previous residents cannot find their own apartment. 3rd: There are only 12,800 places in dormitories in Berlin. 4th: New construction is progressing slowly in this area as well. Of the 5,000 planned places, only 2,750 were built by 2022.

Prayer:

- **Pray that new construction progresses quickly**
- **Pray that previous tenants find an apartment**
- **Pray that other creative ways to find affordable housing can be found, such as senior citizens subletting a room in their large apartments to students**

Dealing with the New Year's Riots

According to the official figures, the police recorded a total of 126 criminal charges and 44 suspects on New Year's Eve. During this period, the police were attacked 46 times with pyrotechnics such as New Year's rockets or firecrackers, and the fire brigades 35 times. Of the 44 suspects, 43 are male. Of all the suspects, 16 have only German citizenship, ten have German citizenship and one other citizenship. 18 suspects do not have German citizenship. Reporting aimed at having a big

"impact" gave the impression that only young people with a migration background had instigated the riots. The figures now published say otherwise. In Neukölln, 50% of the population aged 15 to 20 has a migration background. For this reason alone, the probability is higher that people with a migration background will be arrested by the police. The causes of youth and young adult violence are not simple. They are multifaceted. A simplification to a migration background and corresponding prejudice is not helpful.

Prayer:

- **Pray that young people realize that government entities such as rescue services, the fire brigade and the police are not their enemies**
- **Pray for effective consequences for the perpetrators**
- **Pray for determined research into the causes and new investment in the support of young people**

Lack of Top Personnel in Politics and Administration

After the New Year's Eve riots, the question arises again why Berlin seems so chaotic and ungovernable. Undoubtedly, the city-state has a certain organizational and responsibility problem. One thesis is that there is a lack of community spirit. This is also reflected in the (lack of) top personnel in politics and administration. In fact, one can say across all parties that there is a lack of personalities like Willy Brandt or Richard von Weizsäcker from earlier decades. There is a lack of young talent in politics and also in administration. Berlin suffers from a "political shortage of skilled workers" (Daniel Böldt, Tagesspiegel). "The fact that the Greens and the CDU have not managed to challenge a truly not brilliant SPD for the office of Governing Mayor for years is another indication." On the other hand, numerous referendums were initiated and were successful. In addition, 800,000 volunteers are more involved than almost anywhere else. So, what's the problem? On the one hand, Berlin lacks not only top political personnel but also enough top civil servants. The competition with the state administration makes the district administrations suffer; the competition with the federal administration makes things difficult for the state administration. And with all this, there is often a lack of a common perspective and even a love for Berlin.

Prayer:

- **Pray for more community spirit and responsibility for the city as a whole**
- **Pray for more capable top-level political and administrative staff**
- **Pray that Christians and churches lead by example with prayer and love for the city**

New Warning Strike for Smaller Classes

In addition to the large shortage of teachers, classes that are too large are also a problem in Berlin. The Education and Training Union (GEW) is therefore calling for a warning strike again. It is the eighth strike since the summer of 2022, and for the first time it is now expected to last two days. According to GEW, there will be a strike on February 7th and 8th after the end of the winter holidays. The walkout is intended to remind the parties of their election programs, explained GEW board member Anne Albers. The aim of the strikes is a "collective agreement on health protection". The GEW requires about one social work post for every 150 pupils. Even small schools should have at least one social worker. Employed teachers as well as school social workers and school psychologists can take part in the strike. Recently, however, the willingness to strike has fallen considerably. The schools justify this, among other things, by saying that it seems "too utopian" to demand smaller classes in view of the serious shortage of teachers.

Prayer:

- **Pray for more teachers for Berlin's schools**
- **Pray for patience on the part of the parents whose children are affected by the strike**
- **Pray that politicians rethink the situation and find a more sustainable and far-sighted education policy with sufficient investments in schools and childcare facilities**

Keeping On: Repetition of the Election

The February 12 repeat elections for the State House of Representatives and district parliaments is imminent. The preparations for the election are in full swing and so far, there have only been a few small glitches. The last survey showed that Franziska Giffey (SPD) was ahead of her competitors when asked about the desired Governing Mayor; but in terms of party preference, the CDU was ahead of the Greens and the SPD. Since the Greens definitely do not want to form a coalition with the CDU, the SPD does not make any coalition statements and the Left only want to be red-green, it will be exciting. The question of a stable governing majority is open.

Let's keep praying for a trouble-free election and an outcome that enables Berlin to have a stable governing coalition that is beneficial to the city.

Dates

February 2: Prayer for City Politics, 6-7 pm, Rotes Rathaus, in front of the main entrance

February 13: Prayer for Spandau, 7:30 pm in the LKG Radelandstr. 6