



Edition 222 – March 2024

Good News: Nationwide's First Loneliness Commissioner

On February 1st, Annabell Paris started her work in Reinickendorf as Germany's first loneliness commissioner. The 39-year-old will investigate the manifestations of loneliness in the district. Where are there lonely people in Reinickendorf? What contact points are there already for you? Which offers are still missing? In addition, among other things, specialist forums and public relations work on the topic of loneliness are planned, explained district mayor Emine Demirbükten-Wegner (CDU). In Berlin, one in ten residents lives in loneliness - many people are also affected by poverty in old age.

Prayer: Thank God for

- **the perspective and heart of those responsible for lonely people in Reinickendorf**
- **a position that has the potential to make a positive difference for lonely people in the long term**
- **a position that might be imitated throughout Berlin or even Germany**

New Series: Christian Social Services Straßenkinder e.V. (Street Kids)

We are starting a new series in which we introduce and pray for a selection of Christian institutions and services that care for special socially disadvantaged groups in Berlin. We are starting with the work of Straßenkinder e.V.

Up to 6,500 children and young people live on the streets in Germany, and depending on the time of year, several hundred of them live in Berlin. However, it is likely that the number of unreported cases is significantly higher. More and more outwardly inconspicuous children and young people from socially disadvantaged families end up on the streets sooner or later, at least for a certain period of time. Young street kids in particular are exposed to numerous dangers – sexual assault, poor hygienic conditions, neglect, etc. Straßenkinder e.V. visits relevant locations throughout Berlin with a mobile counselling vehicle and on foot. There is also emergency care with warm food, practical life support and advice at the contact points in Friedrichshain. The BUTZE street kids' home, a 19

million project at Lichtenberg train station, is currently under construction. The association also runs the large children's and youth centre BOLLE in Marzahn. Up to 120 children and young people are looked after there five days a week through coordinated leisure and educational activities. Another branch has been integration work with refugee children and their families in Marzahn since 2015. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Straßenkinder e.V. has massively expanded its existing relationships with Ukraine and currently supports seven children and youth centres. In addition to the programme for the children, humanitarian emergency aid (food, medicine, generators) is also provided there for the population. The association was founded in 2000 and receives almost 100% of its funds from donations from individuals and foundations: www.strassenkinder-ev.de

Prayer:

- **Pray that new, good staff for all areas of work will be found**
- **Pray for favour in politics and protection for the construction of the BUTZE street children's home**
- **Pray for commitments to cover future costs during ongoing operations**
- **Pray for protection from Russian attacks and blessing for work in Ukraine**

Consequences of the Signa Bankruptcy for Berlin

In the wake of the insolvency of the parent Austrian Signa Holding, more and more of the group's subsidiaries have declared insolvency in recent weeks. In Berlin, the construction projects on Hermannplatz and Kurfürstendamm are affected by insolvency. The Signa Group planned to build, among other things, high-rise buildings on the site of the Karstadt department store on Kurfürstendamm. The Karstadt location on Hermannplatz was to be upgraded with a new building in the style of the original building from the 1920s. The urban development administration is committed to the development of both locations. In addition, the upscale department store KaDeWe, which is part of the holding company, has filed for "insolvency under self-administration". But the chances of preserving it are good.

Prayer:

- **Pray that a new investor can be found**
- **Pray for a solution for both locations that preserves jobs and creates living space**
- **Pray for a good solution for KaDeWe**

Illegal Dumping of Waste

Illegal waste disposal is a big problem, especially in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and Neukölln. Across Berlin, the removal of illegal waste costs residents 4.7 million euros. There are corners of the city where new garbage is dumped almost every night. However, the public order office is not staffed well enough to detect the perpetrators. Theoretically there are high penalties, but they are almost never implemented. In the future, responsibility for all types of waste and for all places, including green spaces, will lie with the BSR. There is also help with waste disposal for people without a car through the Tiptapp APP.

Prayer:

- **Pray that people would have a guilty conscience about illegal waste disposal**
- **Pray for good ideas on how to get rid of trash even if you don't have a car and have little money**
- **Pray that the cost of illegal waste disposal will be reduced**

Violence Against Staff in Emergency Rescue Centres

At the end of January, the Berliner Zeitung reported 1,000 crimes in 2023. Attacks against nursing staff have increased sharply. The perpetrators are often drunk or members of large migrant families. On New Year's Eve in Lichtenberg, a nurse was knocked unconscious. The perpetrators were released just a few hours later.

Prayer:

- **Pray for respect and regard for nursing staff, paramedics and doctors**
- **Pray for prompt, appropriate punishment for violent individuals**
- **Pray for more staff and good solutions for overcrowded emergency rescue centres**

Demonstrations Against Right-Wing Extremism

The revelations by the research network "Correctiv" about a secret meeting between AfD politicians and neo-Nazis have sparked nationwide protests. Since mid-January, more than 2.5 million people have demonstrated against the right-wing radical threat at more than 600 events across the country.

In Berlin, two large demonstrations took place around the Reichstag building with, according to the police, at least 100,000 and 150,000 people respectively, according to the organizers significantly more. They came primarily from the middle of society. From the perspective of biblical values, these demonstrations deserve support. That is why our prayer can only support all efforts against the dangerous tendencies of contempt for humanity, exclusion, hatred and anti-Semitism. It is important that hate is not met with hate. The German Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Protestant Churches in Germany are now warning against the election of the AfD.

Prayer:

- **Pray that God's love and acceptance overcome hatred and exclusion, also through the witness of Christians**
- **Pray that right-wing radical and right-wing populist parties also lose support in Berlin**
- **Pray that divisions in our society will be overcome**

Keeping On: School Renovation

Mold, crumbling ceilings, smelly toilets - many students in Berlin have to study in dilapidated buildings. The Berlin school building offensive is intended to provide a remedy: new buildings are to be built and old ones renovated. A number of projects have already been started in the summer of 2023. By 2026, the capital wants to invest around 5.5 billion euros in converting and building new schools.

Let's keep praying ...

- **That those who have political responsibility make dilapidated schools a priority, especially in social hot spots**
- **That students can attend school in buildings that are not dilapidated and rather that Berlin can provide them with a pleasant learning atmosphere**
- **That sufficient funds flow into the renovation and construction of new school buildings**

Dates

March 8: Intercultural Day of Prayer for Women
from 10am-6pm, in the St. Lukas Kirche, Bernburger Str. 3-5, 10963 Berlin

March 13: Prayer for City Politics, 6-7pm, Rotes Rathaus, in front of the main entrance

March 16: Prayer for Ukraine, 7pm in the Kreuzkirche Lankwitz, Zietenstraße 11, 12249 Berlin