

Neuwied, August 2017

Dear friends of Neuwied,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Shalom,

as in every year we want to send you, your families and friends our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holidays of the year 5777/78: Rosh HaShanah on 21 and 22 September, Yom Kippur on 30 September, and Succoth on 5 and 6 October.

The Jewish Community of Neuwied celebrates these High Holidays in their synagogue in Saffig /Eifel. You can get some information about the community and their activities on their website www.liberale-juden.de/Gemeinden/Neuwied.

First of all, the worst news you may have already learned is that on 2 July our long-time Lord Mayor Nikolaus Roth died suddenly and unexpectedly. The twinning between Neuwied and Drom Hasharon was particularly important to him. His last official trip abroad took him to Israel, and in a conversation he had already announced to me the plans for an official visit of an Israeli delegation to Neuwied.

Now, however, I would like to briefly report about our activities during the past year. On November 9, 2016, as every year, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place in Synagogue Street. Many students and teachers from Neuwied's various schools took part. For me, it remains important that the generation, that knows about these sad events only from story-telling and tuition, is invited to participate in the memory and actually takes part together with their teachers. During this commemorative ceremony students presented texts on the fate of former Jewish families of Neuwied.

Three days before, on Sunday, November 6, 2016, an ecumenical penitential service took place at the Neuwied Marktkirche in memory of November 9th. In addition to Cantor Jürgen Ries from the Jewish Community of Mittelrhein, the Roman Catholic parish of St. Matthias, as well as the Moravian congregation and the Protestant congregation were involved in the liturgy. The service was under the motto "Repentance and Remembrance - I have come to fulfill the Torah and the prophets". Also for the year 2017 such a service has already been arranged on 5 November.

Apart from that, we did not to organize further events to commemorate the pogrom night, with respect to the fact that our German-Israeli Circle of Friends Neuwied will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year.

Last spring, students from Drom Hasharon visited Neuwied. Together with their German partners, they completed an intensive exchange program, including a trip to Berlin, Weimar and the Buchenwald concentration camp. Some of our students told me about the encounters and the shared experiences with the Israeli youths. They felt the exchange was very moving, intense and enriching. I also received much positive feedback from the parents' side.

Also last year, there were numerous contacts with former Jewish families from Neuwied as well as visits of their descendants here in Neuwied. Some of them have visited us several times.

The interest in the website of our Stolperstein project (www.stolpersteine-neuwied.de) remains unbroken. Since the opening of this site in November 2015, there have been a total of 14.994 visitors to the site. The website itself is in a daily process of growth and correction. New information is constantly added by further research and personal contacts. A regular examination, enlargement and supplement has been implemented and

the high number of accesses to the website show that a comprehensive and worldwide exchange of ideas and information with descendants and scientists has begun. The renowned Obermayer Award from Dreadham / Mass. (USA) has officially recognized the website.

There have been some changes on the board our Freundeskreis. Gerd Anhäuser, the deputy for many years, resigned his office for reasons of age, and Walter Sefrin, a retired teacher of a Neuwied school, took over.

We hope that this report will give you a little insight into the work of our association. We would be delighted to hear from you. You can also contact us via our website www.dif-neuwied.de and get more information about our current activities and press articles.

We wish you all the best, peace and well-being for you personally and your families, for Israel, the whole region and the world. Our thoughts are with you. Shalom!

With cordial regards from Neuwied, also from Dieter Melsbach and Rolf Wüst,



Werner Zupp, Rev.
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)