

Neuwied, August 2018

Dear friends of Neuwied,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Shalom,

as in every year we want to inform you about the activities of our Deutsch Israelischer Freundeskreis, and at the same time we want to send you, your families and friends our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holidays of the year 5778: Rosh HaShanah on the 10th and 11th September, Yom Kippur on 19th September, and Succoth from 24th to 30th September.

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, we would like to express our gratitude for your delegation's visit, led by Moti Delgo and his wife last year. It was, I think, an enriching experience for both sides to meet here at Neuwied on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the town twinning of Drom Hasharon and Neuwied. This visit gave the Israeli delegation the opportunity to get to know Mr. Jan Einig, the new Lord Mayor of our city, and to have good conversations with representatives of the city and the board of the German Israeli Circle of Friends. I was very pleased to be able to accompany the delegation in parts of the program. I gladly remember the festive evening on the occasion of the anniversary of the twinning in our Heimathaus with many guests, the relaxed atmosphere and the mutual affirmation that our twinning is important for both sides.

I would like to briefly tell you, in which other activities we were engaged:

On November 9th, as every year, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place in Synagogengasse. Apart from many citizens, pupils as well as teachers from different schools of Neuwied participated. For me it remains important that the generations, who only know about these events from second-hand knowledge, share this memory. Of course, that always depends on the teachers who carry on and support these acts of commemoration. Students read texts at this memorial service.

Four days earlier, on Sunday, November 5, 2017, an ecumenical service of penitence took place in our Marktkirche to commemorate the 9th of November; Cantor Jürgen Ries of the Jewish Community of Middle Rhine and representatives of the catholic parish, as well as the Moravian Church and the Protestant Church participated. The service had the motto: "From God, who opens the graves of the dead". The delegation from Israel took part in the service and showed themselves very impressed by it.

For this year such a service has already been planned on the 11th of November, the Sunday immediately after the 9th November and the 80th anniversary of the Pogrom Night of 1938.

On Monday, 6 November, 2017 a musical reading took place, in which poems of 18-year-old Selma Meerbusch-Eisinger were recited, who died of typhus fever in 1942 in the Mikhailovka Labor Camp; the lecture had the title "I am wrapped in yearning". Before, she had been deported with her family and a large part of the Jewish population from her hometown Chernivtsi in the course of the evacuation of the local ghetto.

In January of this year, the former chairman of our Freundeskreis, Rolf Wüst, gave a much-noticed lecture on the testimonies of Jewish life and suffering in Neuwied. He spoke about the beginnings of the Jewish community in Neuwied and showed stages of the history of the Jewish synagogue in our city. He also gave examples of the fate of Jewish citizens in the Holocaust.

For his meritorious work commemorating the Jewish community in Neuwied, as well as for his intensive research into the fate of Jewish citizens of our city, Rolf Wüst received the Medal of Merit of the State of Rhineland Palatinate.

This year there have again been numerous, visits of and contacts with Jewish families, whose ancestors lived in Neuwied.

We are proud to say, that the interest in the three-year-old website of the *Stolpersteine* in Neuwied continues unabated. New information is constantly being added to the website through further

research. Regular reviews, enhancements and additions take place, and the great number of users of the site proves that a worldwide exchange of ideas and information with offspring and scientists has begun.

We hope, that this report gives you a little insight into the work of our Freundeskreis. We would be very happy to hear from you. You can contact us via our website www.dif-neuwied.de and keep up to date about our activities. In the second half of this year we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of our Freundeskreis with a set of very interesting events.

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 warm regards from Neuwied, also from Dieter Melsbach and Rolf Wüst,



Werner Zupp, Pfarrer
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)