

Neuwied, September 2019

Dear friends of Neuwied,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Shalom,

once again, we would like to give you, your families and friends a little insight into the work of the German-Israeli Circle of Friends in Neuwied, and at the same time we would like to send you our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holidays of 5779/80: on Rosh HaSchana on the 30th of September and the 1st of October, on Yom Kippur on the 9th of October, and Sukkoth from the 14th to the 20th of October.

The Jewish community of Neuwied celebrates these holidays in their synagogue in Saffig / Eifel. You can inform yourself about the community and its activities on its website www.liberale-juden.de/Gemeinden/Neuwied.

First of all I am pleased to report about my first visit to Drom Hasharon in March this year together with Inge Güttler, who is also a member of our board. Even if we spent only a little more than a day there, we enjoyed a very pleasant and informative visit with an intensive program. It was especially wonderful to be invited for dinner by the newly elected district councillor, Mrs. Oschrat Goni Gonem, and I would like to thank her very much once again for that pleasant evening in her home, where we could also meet Dr. Morti Delgio, her predecessor, and his wife.

Now I would like to inform you about some of our activities since our last festive letter. The year 2018 was of particular importance for the German-Israeli Friends of Neuwied, because it marked the 40th anniversary of our Freundeskreis. Forty years ago, men and women in Neuwied, led by Robert Collet together with Dieter Melsbach and encouraged by David Faran Frankfurter of the Israeli Embassy, founded the German-Israeli Circle of Friends in Neuwied. The foundation of the association was supposed to affirm a reconciliatory friendship with Israel after the terrible experience of the Holocaust and the Shoa. That is, what the initiators had in mind. So we took the opportunity to commemorate and celebrate this event. On Monday, August 13, a ceremony was held in the rooms of the parish hall at the Marktkirche, in which myself and the Lord Mayor of Neuwied, Jan Einig, recalled the history of the German-Israeli Circle of Friends. We had invited Micha Brumlik, renowned Jewish professor at the Department of Education, Religious Studies and Politics at the University of Frankfurt, to give a festive lecture on "The Jewish State. A historical and philosophical consideration". In the context of this event we started an exhibition under the title "Jewish life in Germany today". This exhibition aimed at promoting a better understanding of Jewish life today, opposed to a growing anti-Semitism also among people with a migration background.

On November 9th, 2018, as in every year, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place in Synagogue Street. As in all previous years, many people had come, again many students, whose teachers consider it an important task to attend together with their students. Students of the Werner Heisenberg High School presented selected texts from our Stolperstein-website as a result of a project. Of course, only a few contemporary witnesses of that time are alive. In a few years - we must be aware of that - there will be no more eyewitnesses. It will be even more important to keep this memory alive in this form.

Two days later, on Sunday, November 11, 2018, the ecumenical service of penitence was held in the Marktkirche of Neuwied. Cantor Jürgen Ries of the Jewish Community Middle Rhine, Pastor Thomas Darscheid of the Roman Catholic parish of St. Matthias, Pastor Karen Wilson of the Moravian Church and myself ministered the service. The service was held under the words of Psalm 122 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem - peace be in its walls".

On the same Sunday, a moving concert was presented at the Roman Catholic Church of St. Matthias. Under the motto "Shalom - Church Meets Synagogue". The two artists Semjon Kali-

nowsky (viola) and Paul Kayser (organ) played Jewish and Christian sacred music. In this inter-religious dialogue well-known classics by Max Bruch, Ernst Bloch, Louis Lewandowski and forgotten works by Friedrich Gensheim could be heard.

As in the past years, there have been several visitors in Neuwied from all over the world, and numerous contacts with Jewish families, whose ancestors lived in Neuwied, took place.

The interest in the five-year-old website of the Stolpersteine in Neuwied is unbroken. The website itself is continually updated and new information is constantly added as a result of further research.

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 also contact us via our websites www.dif-neuwied.de and www.stolpersteine-neuwied.de and keep yourself up to date about our activities.

We wish you all the very 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!

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



Werner Zupp, Pastor
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)