

August 2021

Dear friends of Neuwied,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Shalom,

in 2021, as in every year, we would like to send you and your families and friends our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holy Days 5781/82: On New Year's Day Rosh HaShanah on September 7 and 8, on Yom Kippur on September 16, and on Sukkoth from September 21 to 27. We wish you blessed holidays!

At the same time this letter should give you a little insight into the work of the German-Israeli Friendship Circle in Neuwied.

The past year was marked by the Corona Pandemic in Germany and certainly also for you in Israel. With the lockdown that began on November 1, 2020, public life in many parts of Germany came to a standstill. Theater performances, concert events, and other cultural events had to be cancelled due to the high infection levels. Worship life was also severely affected. Many church services and religious celebrations could only take place online. This was an unfamiliar situation for our religious communities. When the incidence figures rose once again at Christmas, many church services across Germany had to be cancelled on one of the highest Christian holidays.

Also most activities and the events planned around the 9th of November had to be cancelled.

Under the hygiene and distance rules, we could at least celebrate the ecumenical commemorative service on Sunday, November 8, 1938. It was held under the motto: "They burn all the houses of worship in the land!" a quote from Psalm 74:8. The well-known Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer had already pointed out the fate of the Jews during the Nazi dictatorship and had marked this sentence in his Bible especially. In addition to the Catholic dean Thomas Darscheid, Pastor Karen Wilson from the Herrnhut Brethren Community and Dr. Jürgen Ries as former cantor of the Jewish Community Neuwied also participated in the service.

On November 9, 2020, as in every year, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place in Synagogengasse. Also this commemoration was allowed to take place only in a small frame: apart from the Lord Mayor, Dr. Ries and some representatives of the city administration no public was allowed to attend. The sad occasion of the commemoration was thus reinforced by the external situation.

Due to the Corona Pandemic there have been no visitors in Neuwied so far this year, neither official ones from Drom HaSharon nor private ones like descendants of former Neuwied Jews. The hope to welcome an official delegation from Drom HaSharon in Neuwied had to be postponed for another year.

A student exchange could not take place this year, either.

It is difficult to say when we will have the opportunity to meet our Friends from Drom HaSharon again. It will be all the more important to maintain contacts in these times.

The interest in the website of the Stolpersteine and the Jewish history of our town (www.stolpersteine-neuwied.de), which was set up seven years ago, is unbroken. The site has been completely redesigned and is constantly updated; new information is added as results of research activities. We are proud of the fact that the number of visitors is increasing every year: in 2020 there were almost 10,000 different visitors worldwide. The pandemic allowed intensive research activity especially under the keyword STADTEILE. Also the popular website of our Freundeskreis (www.dif-neuwied.de) is about to be renewed and modernized.

So we hope that this report will give you a little insight into the work of our Circle of Friends. We would be very happy to hear from you. You can also contact us through our above-mentioned websites and keep up-to-date with our activities there.

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 greetings from Neuwied, also from Dieter Melsbach and Rolf Wüst,



Werner Zupp, Pastor
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)