

Dear friends of Neuwied,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Shalom,

as every year, we send you and your families our warmest greetings and best wishes for the High Holy Days 5782/83: For the New Year's Day Rosh HaShanah on September 25 to 27, for the Yom Kippur Festival on October 4 and 5, and for Sukkoth from October 9 to 16. We wish you blessed holidays!

Another year lies behind us and we would like to give you a small insight but also a review of the work of the German-Israeli Circle of Friends here in Neuwied.

Last year, much of Germany was still dominated by the Corona pandemic, even if we have since learned better how to deal with it.

Much worse for me, however, is the fact that since the end of February 2022 a war has been raging in the middle of Europe, whose justification is totally unacceptable. If we had assumed that we could now live in peace in the heart of Europe after more than 70 years of peace, the fact of the Ukraine War has called all that into question.

Added to this are the clearly growing signs of a climate crisis, which have now also reached our continent and our country. Much in our lives that was previously taken for granted is being questioned forcefully over the past year, and so uncertainty reigns among people everywhere.

Despite one or the other restriction by the regulations concerning the Corona Pandemic, we could resume our activities in the past year.

On Saturday, 23. October 2021, we invited to an excursion to the Jewish sites of Neuwied: The stops on this excursion included the memorial of the destroyed synagogue in Neuwied, various Stolpersteine in the city center, where we were informed about the fate of Jewish fellow citizens, the Jewish cemetery in the district of Niederbieber and the visit to the renovated synagogue in Saffig in the Eifel. The excursion met with great interest.

On 28. October 2021 Dany Bober gave a guest performance in Neuwied. With his impressive concert Bober showed that Jewish music means much more than just klezmer. In various ways he brought together Jewish songs, reports, dialect poems and humor and thus showed that Jewish culture is very diverse due to its different geographical and historical references. Dany Bober, born in 1948 in Israel, re-emigrated to Frankfurt, his father's birthplace, with his parents in 1956, and now lives in Wiesbaden.

From November 4 onward, the German-Israeli Circle of Friends showed the exhibition "70 Posters - 70 posters tell Israel's story" in cooperation with the Protestant Church Community. For this exhibition, German designer Henrietta Singer and Israeli screenwriter Sara Neuman had searched Israeli archives for posters from the 70 years of the State of Israel's existence. The posters present the great variety of social and political issues of Israel with its very special history. They range from war and peace to politics, religion, agriculture, education, health and sports. The posters make the foundation of the Jewish state understandable, show the importance of the army in this context and illuminate the problems of the young state with immigration and integration, as well as the role of tourism. They also explain the issue of the occupied territories, the problem of the coexistence of the three great world religions, the Six-Days War, the Lebanon crisis and the first and second Intifada. With their exhibition, Sara Neuman and Henrietta Singer promote the Hebrew language and at the same time appeal to the pioneering spirit and to peace, conveying a new approach to art and culture, history and society in Israel.

On Sunday, November 7, we celebrated, as we do every year, an ecumenical memorial service in remembrance of November 9, 1938. The 74th Psalm ("A Maskil of Asaph") was the focus of the service, in which the Roman Catholic dean Peter Doerrenbächer as well as Dr. Jürgen Ries as former cantor of the Neuwied Jewish Community took part.

Hits and chansons by Jewish composers of the 1920s were presented and sung by Gabriele Kentrup on Monday, November 8, during a song evening under the motto "Auf ins Metropol" ("On to the Metropol"). The name "Metropol" evokes memories of the world-famous revue and operetta theater in Berlin, which enjoyed great popularity in the Golden Twenties. It was here that the hit songs and chansons for films, operettas and revues were sung, some of which are etched in the collective memory. After 1933, the composers, most of whom were of Jewish descent, were persecuted by the Nazis and their songs banned. But this chanson evening impressively showed that this music lives on.

On November 9 itself, as every year, the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust took place in Synagogue Lane. Fortunately, there were only a few restrictions due to the pandemic, so that the commemoration could take place in the traditional framework, and again numerous students could take part.

The conclusion of the event series was on Saturday, November 13, a literary-theatrical evening under the motto "What remains?" The ensemble THEATTRAKTION, led through a program of songs, poems and small theatrical scenes on the question of "Life and Death".

Due to the Corona pandemic and the still difficult travel conditions, visitors were again unable to come to Neuwied last year. For 2023 we hope to finally be able to welcome an official delegation from Drom Hasharon in Neuwied. Also a student exchange could not take place in the reporting period. We hope very much that soon opportunities will arise again to meet again more freely.

The interest in the website of the Stolpersteine in Neuwied, which was established eight years ago, is still unbroken. The website itself is constantly updated and new information is added as a result of the research activity.

It is our wish that this report gives you a small insight into the work of our Circle of Friends. We would be very pleased to hear from you. You can also contact us through our websites www.dif-neuwied.de and www.stolpersteine-neuwied.de and so 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 ret.
(Chairman)



Walter Sefrin
(Deputy Chairman)