

Living Faith



EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE
Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz

Living Faith



The Domkirche, Berlin

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Preface

Churches are God's houses for humankind. By entering them, we leave our everyday world and enter an atmosphere of silence and concentration. Churches are God's houses for humankind – even if there is no divine service conducted. This is done in an affectionate way: The Word of God is interpreted for every one of us, and in the community of Bread and Wine we can once more trust in life. Thus, every church serves as a sign that God invites us to discover life together with Him in individual contemplation, in common celebration and even in everyday's world.

I would like to pass on this invitation to you: The Evangelical Church celebrates conducts divine services on Sundays and on numerous special occasions. It accompanies people in important moments of life such as birth and confirmation, marriage and funeral. The Evangelical Church offers pastoral care and counselling. Education and faith belong together. Parishes run day nurseries and accompany young people through their youth ministry. Children and young people are taught in Evangelical schools. The Evangelical Church is committed to adult education as well. The Protestant Social Services care for people who are in need of help. The Evangelical Church also takes a share in art and culture. And it looks beyond regional matters at the ecumenical ambitions of the global community of Churches.

Our regional church comprises both the federal capital and areas sparsely populated, like the Prignitz and Silesian Upper Lusatia. Church buildings will be found at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, at the hamlet of Thomsdorf in the region of Uckermark, at Cathedral Island in the city of Brandenburg or at the park of the summer palace Sanssouci in Potsdam. In the middle of our life they serve as a sign for the comforting certainty faith offers to us.

The brochure »Living in Faith, Believing in Life« wishes to show you the wide-ranging offers of the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia. The booklet provides a short introduction into ecclesiastical life, informs you about the various fields of activity and serves as a useful reference text, containing figures, facts and key addresses.

I would be pleased if you got to know our church. It creates open spaces for you to meet God.

My best wishes to you!
Yours faithfully,



Bishop Dr. Markus Dröge

In Life and Faith





We are loved
and accepted by God,
regardless of
our achievements

Faith

Christian faith means trusting in the grace of God, preached by Jesus and witnessed through His life and death. Therefore faith does not primarily mean believing in dogmas but it rather is a lively relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Faith imparts the certainty that we are beloved and accepted by God – regardless of what we do or achieve. Therefore, faith becomes the foundation of our life. Everyone who receives love is able to pass it on – moved by the Holy Spirit faith is revealed through love.

The basis of Christian faith is the Bible. Above all we owe our faith to the witnesses who tell us about God in the books of the Old and the New Testament. The confessions of Early Christianity and the reformers have shaped our faith as well. They can be found in the hymn book of the German Protestant churches.

Church Service

Divine Service unites people living in the same locality with a celebrating community. On the one hand the service draws up on a centuries-old tradition of faith, on the other hand it is determined by the people holding it and giving a particular shape to it. The heart of the service is about celebrating the presence of God. We meet Him when hearing words from the Bible, when commonly partaking of the Lord's Supper, singing and praying. The sermon expounds the message of the Bible for our time. The service is concluded by saying the blessing God accompanies us with.



Baptism

Baptism is the sacrament of the beginning: When people are baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit they confess their Christian faith and become members of the Church. So they entrust their life to the protection and guidance of God. Through baptism God promises His closeness and His devotion to everyone's life with all its ups and downs. Since the promise of God concerns our whole life, many parents have their children baptized soon after birth. Parents, godfathers and godmothers vicariously confess the faith their children shall grow into. Thus, baptism is also a celebration of joy and of gratitude to the life given by God.

Of course, grown-up people can be baptized as well to become members of the Evangelical Church. Adult baptism is preceded by talks with our clergymen and clergywomen. The talks serve to deepen the faith of the person to be baptized and enable him or her to provide comprehensible information about what he believes. Adult baptism includes confirmation.



The Domkirche, Berlin

Confirmation

First of all, confirmation intends to strengthen the individual believer through the blessing of God and his »yes« to baptism. Young people are thus encouraged for their life's journey that is also a journey guided by God. The Creed belongs to confirmation. Therefore young people get to know essential beliefs in confirmation class and seek together for something strengthening their lives. Confirmation class is the time of a singular community experienced during confirmation trips and various celebrations. Through confirmation young people are given the right to take Communion, to act as godfathers or godmothers, to have a church wedding and to elect the parish council.

Weddings

At the wedding service a man and a woman invoke God's blessing for a successful marriage and make a promise of marriage before God and the congregation. The ceremony focuses on love and forgiveness, which are vital to a marriage based on the love of Christ. Both the congregation and the couple pray for their common journey through life. The sermon delivered in this service draws on the wedding motto that is to guide the couple along their common future path as a biblical motto. The preparatory meeting with the pastor prior to the service deals with expectations connected to the beginning of the marriage. The procedure for the service is set and the biblical marriage motto is chosen. In this context questions concerning the formation of the marriage will have to be clarified if one of the partners does not belong to a church or if he or she is a member of a non-protestant denomination. Church marriage is preceded by civil marriage.



Georgen Parochial Cemetery, Berlin

Funeral

The death of a person is a turning point for all who have been close to him or her. The certainty that no one will be forgotten by God and that God's judgment on human life exceeds any human judgment conveys deep comfort to us. All people mourning their loved ones are promised: Our deceased loved ones are in the good hands of the Lord. The funeral service appreciates the life of the deceased and strengthens our faith that we will rise from the dead in Christ. We can trust that God imparts a new existence to our deceased loved ones.

After the mourning ceremony the deceased is laid to rest in a coffin or urn. The Christian funeral gives confidence to the family at a moment when everything seems to have changed.

Words and Action



Young people and those young at heart live and celebrate their faith together

Parishes

1.357 parishes form the centre of the EKBO's life. According to the Grundordnung – the Church constitution – they are responsible for proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed. They are managed by parish councils. These councils consist of elected parishioners and of the clergymen and clergywomen. On the basis of the Bible, the Protestant faith and the order of our church, the parishes perform all functions in their own responsibility.

First of all, the life and action of our church becomes visible in congregational life. This is where people assemble to hold church services. This is where parishioners meet to participate in working groups and initiatives: from the parent and child group and the youth group to the pensioners' group, from a group performing visiting services to the church choir.

The parishes are places where people belonging to different generations live and celebrate their faith. Doing local church work always means doing social service and offering society a humane culture that is based on the belief in God. This is achieved by supporting orientation – for example in confirmation class or in adult education – or by caring for sick people and mourning people, by visiting people at home or by promoting congregational life. Moreover many parishes support people living on the fringe of society and needy persons in the so-called developing countries.

Together with the priests, paid staff and a growing number of volunteers contribute to a welcoming parish – at the church office and in social work as well as in the management of parish facilities.





As a rule, the local church comprises all church members living in the area of the parish. Nevertheless, every member may join another parish. As a rule, the Reformed parishes are congregations not being based on parish boundaries, but made up of interested people. In addition, there are congregations where people meet who have little contact to or lost touch with the parish of their dwelling place – for example students' associations. Yet the members at a conference of the Protestant Academy Berlin or of a divine service at a hospital or prison form a congregation, although of a temporary nature and in a different sense.

The EKBO is home to 1.1 million people. In Berlin, about 19 per cent of the population belong to the Evangelical Church, in Brandenburg there are about 17 per cent and in Silesian Upper Lusatia there are about 19 per cent.

The regions of the EKBO vary significantly – from rural areas that are sparsely populated to the biggest city of the Federal Republic of Germany. The parishes share the desire to encourage people in their belief in God and to explain the question about God to people not yet being familiar with the trust in the Lord.

City Churches

In large cities, tourists are welcome at the city-centre churches that act as a place of lived faith. They can be found at central points within easy reach and are open each day. Regular worship at noon and in the evening, organ music and church services allow space and time for spiritual reflection.

The city-centre churches are characterized by a combination of ambitious cultural and charitable offers. Oratorios of Johann Sebastian Bach can be performed and needy persons be supported at the same time.

Let us mention some city-centre churches of the EKBO: the Berliner Dom, St Mary's Church, St Matthew Church at the Kulturforum and Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the federal capital; St Peter's Church in Görlitz; the Church of St Nicholas at Potsdam; the Abbey Church at Cottbus; St Gertraud's Church at Frankfurt / Oder; the Brandenburg Dom in the town of Brandenburg/Havel.



Mission

Today, mission means communicating to all people the love of God we meet in Jesus Christ. It invites us to faith, to baptism and to the community of the Church. Mission is a respectful dialogue, it takes seriously other people's convictions and it makes people aware of the biblical promise of God's free grace. It addresses people who are not committed to being members of a denomination as well as people who once have left the Church.

The character of the congregations and the good deeds of individual Christians are important factors when we try to win people for the Christian faith. Our church promotes various schemes of missionary work. The staff of the »Missionarischen Dienste« advises and accompanies parishes, church districts and church aid agencies in their missionary work.

The Berlin City Mission performs a specific missionary and diaconal task: mission, social welfare work and encounter. It is an independent organization within the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia – we might perhaps say: »Evangelical Church – second programme«. It comprises 20 City Mission parishes and missionary projects. Furthermore, the Berlin City Mission holds church services at uncommon places, for example on pleasure boats or at Berlin Central Station on Sundays and statutory holidays. In this way it strives to communicate with people who have had little contact to the Church to date.

The comprehensive social welfare work of the Berlin City Mission concentrates on supporting homeless people: by providing heated buses functioning as temporary shelters, by their city-centre presence, by offering improvised sleeping accommodation and transitory homes. Moreover, Berlin City Mission is committed to help people with mental handicaps, to assist former offenders and senior citizens. It also runs travellers' aid offices.

City-centre guest houses and hotels in the Berlin borough of Mitte, holiday hotels on the Baltic Sea coast and the Luther Hotel in Wittenberg offer accommodation (rated at two to four stars) for tourists and business travellers and provide conference rooms.

In the heart of Berlin – somewhere between the local prison and the Federal Chancellor's office – mission, social welfare work and exchange are promoted at the »Zentrum am Hauptbahnhof« which is run by the Berlin City Mission – a place of faith, love and hope.

www.berliner-stadtmission.de



accompanying,
encouraging,
comforting

Pastoral Care and Counselling

One of the most important tasks of Christian believers is to provide spiritual counselling to other people. In addition to the clergy, salaried and honorary staff of the parishes one may have pastoral talks with everyone prepared to take advice. They visit parishioners on the occasion of birthdays, in order to prepare baptism, confirmation or marriage, and in case of illness or of a funeral. Besides, staff members pay visits in order to cultivate contacts within the congregation.

Moreover, there are special services offered to everyone in need. Pastoral care for hospital patients qualifies as a special services. This is where pastors and church workers make use of their additional training in pastoral care, counselling and supervision. They are employed in communal and non-profit hospitals, in denominational and private hospitals. The pastoral counsellors visit patients in the hospital ward. They can be addressed by relatives and hospital staff, regardless of one's religious belief or denominational status.

Honorary staff of the church telephone counselling service at Berlin, Cottbus, Frankfurt/Oder, Potsdam and in Upper Lusatia are prepared to take calls day and night. The church telephone counselling service operates ecumenically. No matter what their individual attitude, denomination and philosophy of life is: People will find a dialogue partner there, even if they wish to remain anonymous.

The life counselling service at the Berliner Dom situated in the city centre offers individual advice and crisis counselling, pastoral care, relationship counselling and supervision to people of all ways of life and of all nations. Clergy, psychologists, marriage counsellors and other staff with additional skills work for the life counselling service at Berlin Cathedral. This function requires a professional qualification. The association »Beratung + Leben GmbH – Evangelisch-Freikirchliche Beratungs- und Sozialdienste Berlin und Brandenburg“ act as a sponsor for counsellors who are bound to maintain confidentiality. They lend their psychological

and pastoral support to people who experience a life crisis, who have religious questions, who need relationship counselling or require advice regarding occupational aspects.

Furthermore, 95 Evangelical counselling centres specializing in various problem areas have been established within the territory of the EKBO. Do not hesitate to contact our Social Service Agency, the »Diakonisches Werk«.

People suffering from health problems can count on pastoral care specialising in people suffering from deafness, hearing loss, blindness as well as AIDS. Pastoral care is provided for policemen, customs officials and soldiers. Pastoral care for prisoners is provided, too.

In emergency cases the fire brigade or the police immediately alert the crisis counselling service. Thoroughly trained pastoral counsellors accompany people during the first hours after an accident, for example

after an attempt at resuscitation of a relative had failed, in case of cot death or suicide. Crisis counselling is also provided for victims of a crash, a fire or a crime. They accompany policemen when the news of someone's death has to be announced. They advise and support people affected by an emergency.

At the airport chaplaincy travellers and airport staff can have a confidential chat or a short break and attend worship.

The »Pfarramt für interreligiösen Dialog« (Pastoral Office for Inter-Faith Dialogue) advises people within EKBO on inter-faith matters and coordinates EKBO groups active in that field. It also serves as a link office to world religions and non-Christian faith communities which are present in the area of Berlin, Brandenburg and Silesian Upper-Lusatia.



Children's Service at
Berlin Cathedral

Pastoral Care and Counselling

Children are a gift of God. They are entrusted to our care, but we are not to view them as property which we have at our disposal. God appreciates children. He Himself becomes a child and takes pleasure in the words and spontaneous sounds uttered by infants and babies. Jesus praises the little children as the real grown-ups in the Kingdom of God and he confronts the adults with children as paragons. This is why children are not only warmly welcome, but they shall be part and parcel of our congregations. They are essential for the congregations and the vitality of our church. There are many offers for them. For boys and girls the playgroup or the parent and child group can be the earliest opportunity to meet the Christian congregation. Another independent and important offer is contributed by Evangelical day nurseries where children are looked after. In 1998, the »Association of Evangelical Day Care for Children in the Area of the Federal States of Berlin and Brandenburg, registered charity« was founded to support the individual sponsors.

There are many offers for children and young people. They range from »children's days« at regular intervals and »contact places« with social project offers. From the 1950s onwards, Christian religious instruction has occupied an important place in the eastern territories of our Church. Children feel part of a big community where they are welcome. By participating in Christian religious instruction once a week, they are inspired to contribute in preparing church services and to rehearsing nativity plays at Christmas or to taking part in retreats of the congregation celebrating the beginning and end of term. The EKBO has many other offers like children's Bible clubs, children's church festivals, pre-school circles, mini clubs, children's afternoons, amateur drama groups or children's choirs and instrumental music circles.

Whichever offers children find in their parish: There will be playing and singing, laughing and crying, talking and disagreement, questions, answers and prayers. Children want to experience their congregation as a whole: with their heart, mouth and hands.

The congregational activities offered to children are complemented by confirmation classes, meetings of the Junge Gemeinde (Young Congregation) and other groups within the Evangelical youth ministry. Many activities, for example retreats and youth services, are organised by the Kirchenkreise (deaneries) and accompanied by the Evangelical Children and Youth Ministry of the Church Services Office, the »Amt für Kirchliche Dienste« (German abbreviation: AKD). The annual regional youth camp, attended by about 1.000 young people, is considered to be the most important event.

Advanced training for young people who want to be a team leader has become very popular. Thus, they can share their experiences with the younger ones, for example at confirmation class. The EKBO also offers basic and advanced training for volunteers who can become approved youth leaders. They want to take an active part, speak out for their own interests and motivate other people.

Children and young people have to be part of a lively and inviting church. The motto of the »Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend in Deutschland« (Federation of Protestant Youth in Germany), the AEJ, takes priority for us, too: »Guided by Christ – Diversity as a Chance – Self-Determination of Children and Young People«.

www.akd-ekbo.de
www.ejbo.de



Religious Education

School has to equip pupils with knowledge to orientate themselves and get along in all spheres of life. They are to be enabled to take their own decisions and act as responsible citizens. Therefore religious education matters also to children and young people who do not believe in God or who have been taught different religious views than they will come to know in Protestant religion class. Religious education aims at taking on four tasks:

Understanding the World: Our environment is shaped by the Bible and the traditions of Christianity and other religions – as regards literature, fine arts, music and architecture; the rhythm of the calendar, law, commercials and the media. Religious education illustrates the religious language and religious symbols and makes pupils familiar with the origin of feasts and customs of the world religions. By learning all about religions, cultures and their history pupils will be able to orientate themselves in our world much better.

Searching for the Meaning of Life: Human existence involves looking beyond everyday life: Where do I come from? Why do I live? Where am I going? There is no easy answer to these questions. Religious education helps to approach these subjects. The experience of man as pictured in the old texts and stories of the Bible will come alive if pupils deal with them. Thus, they can develop a distinct attitude towards their ways of life and towards social coexistence.

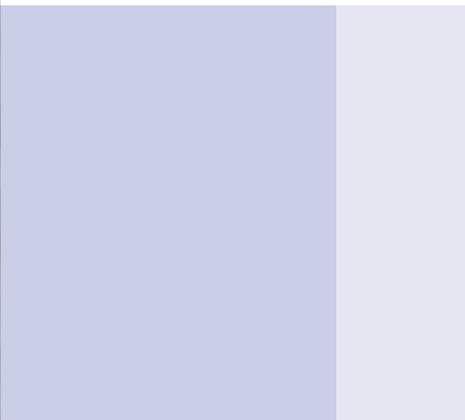
Pondering on Faith: People confess their faith in God – in many religions. But where is God? Why does he not avert disaster? Religious education tells pupils how people search for God or how they deny Him, and how faith in the Lord resists humans fancying themselves as omnipotent beings. They reflect on happiness and responsibility, on doubt and limitation, and they learn to treat living religions with tolerance and respect.

Advocating the Dignity of Man: Performance is what counts in our highly competitive society; however, many people are pushed to the fringes or live in the shadow of prosperity. But the dignity of a person does not depend on his or her performance! Religious education draws attention to the misery of other people and increases awareness of discrimination and injustice – in our own living environment and on a global scale. It reveals the chance to help other people and to promote justice. Protestant religious education contributes to religious freedom at school. The different regions of the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia offer religious education depending on their respective legal framework and administrative structure. This fact determines the churches' contribution to religious education.

Religious education in Berlin and Brandenburg is a voluntary teaching subject at school. In the scope of the school system the Evangelical Church supports the co-operation of religious studies with the subject of ethics, the subject of code of conduct, ethics and religion (German abbreviation: LER) and other teaching subjects. All pupils are to learn how to deal with differing convictions tolerantly and are to be enabled to enter into religious dialogue with everyone prepared to do this.

The federal state of Brandenburg makes provision for pupils attending religious studies instead of the state-operated LER. Pupils may attend both subjects as well.

Religious education in the Free State of Saxony is a teaching subject in its own right at all schools. Attending religious studies or the alternative ethics class is mandatory, marks are given and promotion to the next grade depends on those marks.



Secondary school
»Zum Grauen Kloster«, Berlin

Schools and Universities

Education is regarded as a prime task of the Evangelical Church. According to the reformation's view faith and education belong together at any rate. In parishes, day nurseries and schools as well as in adult training Evangelical education connects life, learning and faith. For we believe that faith and reason belong together.

Meeting God on one's way, finding a creature of God in every child, in everyone – this is the foundation of the Christian image of humanity and it is the basic idea of the Evangelical education, too.

Our independently operated schools play an important part in the public school system. They are open to all children, regardless of their religious, social or ethnic origin.

The Evangelical Church offers various types of schools: Progressive teaching elementary schools, often founded at the initiative of parents or parishes; »Realschulen« (intermediate secondary schools) pursuing prac-

tical aspects and putting emphasis on craftsmanship and natural sciences; »Humanistische Gymnasien« (A-level secondary schools, proposing classical languages training); comprehensive schools, interdenominational schools and a new type of school, Evangelical elementary and comprehensive schools under the motto »From ABC to A level«; special-needs schools and integration schools testing new forms of learning; vocational schools training social pedagogues and day nursery teachers. Evangelical schools consider themselves to be school congregations. Together they devise rites, celebrate worship and observe the feasts of the Christian year.

About 15.000 boys and girls within the EK-BO's territory attend schools supported by foundations, parishes, church districts or our Social Service Agency. The School Foundation of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia established in 2004 has prospered constantly. In 2012 this foundation was in



charge of 33 Protestant schools and 11 Protestant day nurseries situated in 24 locations within our territory. The Hoffbauer Foundation is a major educational provider, too. It supports 30 educational institutes.

We would like to present to you four examples of schools supported by the Evangelical School Foundation. Further information is to be found on the web page of the School Foundation.

Recently, the Evangelical School Berlin-Friedrichshain was incorporated into the School Foundation. The school started its lessons at the beginning of the 2009/10 school year. It aims to combine an Evangelical profile with a progressive teaching approach. The school occupies a former industrial building. 32 pupils are now being taught in two classes at the former Gladbeck Foundry where once the so-called »Goldelse« (Statue of Victoria) – located on the Berlin Victory Column – and the Fountain of Neptune – located at Alexanderplatz – were manufactured.

The Evangelical Elementary School Frankfurt/Oder has been a member of the Evangelical School Foundation since 2006. 200 children are taught at this school; it focuses on music teaching. Boys and girls come to know what their voice is like. After two or three years pupils may be able to compose their own tunes. English is taught from the first class on in a playful way; Polish language is an optional subject.

The Evangelical School at Berlin-Charlottenburg comprises an elementary and an intermediate secondary school. Project weeks and prevocational placements provide insights into the workaday world and into the world as it will be after graduation. To many pupils taking classes in German and English opens up the possibility of attending senior classes at a »Gymnasium« (secondary school to A-levels) after taking their final exams at a »Realschule«.

The Neukölln Evangelical School combines an elementary and a comprehensive school for boys and girls, regardless of their school per-

formance. The classes one to six constitute an open full-time school where the age-group levels are mixed. The comprehensive school enables pupils to achieve a qualification corresponding to their gifts and interests: the »Erweiterter Hauptschulabschluss« (qualifying for an extended lower secondary education certificate) or the »Mittlerer Schulabschluss« (a certificate of intermediate education). Moreover, they may move up to the 11th year of the secondary school. By means of these offers the school wants to guarantee equal opportunities to its pupils: from the first day at school to final secondary-school examinations.

All schools belonging to the school foundation come up with comprehensive offers. The offers include the project »Learning to Argue Correctly«: Pupils are trained as so-called »conflict pilots«. There is another offer being worked out in co-operation with the Social Service Agency: it is called »Partnership in Everyday School Life«. Honorary staff – often retired people – work at these schools as »Lesepaten« (someone who pro-

motes reading in class). They also supervise homework of children who need support.

There is the Berlin Oberlin Seminary, an Evangelical professional school for social pedagogy where youth care workers are trained. They co-operate with an Evangelical »Fachoberschule« (higher secondary vocational school) – leading to the »Fachhochschulreife« (university of applied sciences entrance qualification) – and an Evangelical »Berufsfachschule« (vocational school) – offering professional training in the social sector.

The Evangelische Hochschule Berlin (Berlin Evangelical College) traditionally offers studies in the »social work and social pedagogy« sector. It also offers study courses enabling graduates to manage religious education in parishes and schools or to take an executive position in health and nursing management. The university enjoys a good reputation beyond Berlin and Brandenburg; 50 per cent of the students come from the other German federal states.

Inspiring people

Theological Studies

There are many good reasons to study theology. It is the wish to help; or to deal with people and to be available for them; to live one's faith and to get people interested in the Gospel or to lead and organise a parish.

In the years ahead, our church will have to fill pastors' livings. Those young people who are about to start their studies of theology or to graduate successfully from university stand a good chance of being admitted into the parish ministry of a regional church.

Until then, diverse studies will have imparted substantial knowledge to the graduates. The classical languages of the Bible – Hebrew, Greek and Latin – allow students to gain access to the sources and origins of Scripture. Ecclesiastical history and systematic theology make accessible the abundance of Christian tradition and pave the way for expressing and advocating the truth of Christian faith. They also teach

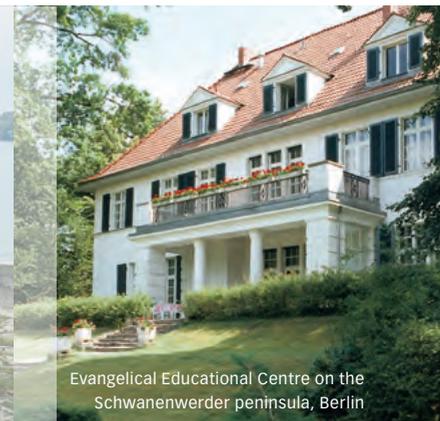
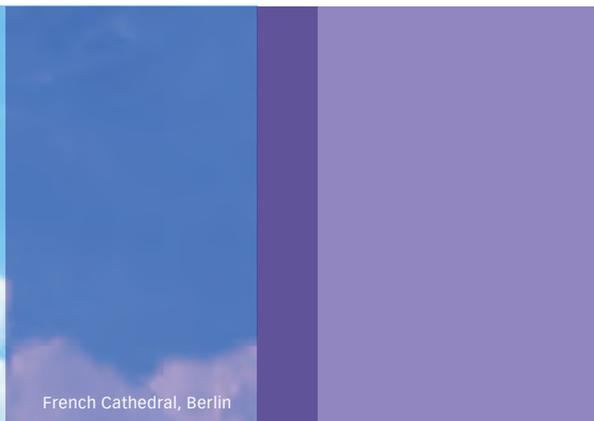
principles enabling students to judge current questions of Christian ethics more easily. Practical theology enables students to speak about God intelligibly to everyone and to know how a Christian parish is led.

It is no easy task to advocate the message of the Gospel in our society, to interpret life in the light of faith and to make faith accessible. As one might say, it is a somewhat demanding but worthwhile vocation. For theological studies it takes students who have enthusiasm for Christian values and who delight in meeting people.





French Cathedral, Berlin



Evangelical Educational Centre on the Schwanenwerder peninsula, Berlin

Schools and Universities

On behalf of our church, the Protestant Academy Berlin enters into extensive conversations with different social groups. The Protestant Academy is supported both by the EKBO – the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia – and the EKD – the Evangelical Church in Germany. It passes on debates to parliament, the government, the embassies, cultural institutions and several associations in the spirit of a protestant world view. The academy wants to promote critical disputes and seeks to make a strong contribution to the public debate.

Accompanying social and ecclesiastical reform processes is a focus of the academy's work. A major concern of its meetings is German history: the history of opposition to National Socialism, the post-war era, the peaceful Revolution and the unification process. The meetings arranged by the academy promote good relations between Germany and its Eastern European neighbours. Furthermore, the focus is on the ecumenical, inter-faith and intercultural dialogue. The academy's activities are determined by interdisciplinary talks with experts on human, social and natural sciences. The conversations deal particularly with questions on medical ethics and social policies. There are regular discussions about business ethics as well.

Every six months, the academy publishes a comprehensive conference agenda. In the course of a year, more than 5.000 people participate in the meetings. The academy makes use of the Französische Friedrichstadtkirche for day and evening events. The Educational Centre on Schwanenwerder is used to host conference participants from all over Germany.

The Protestant Academy Berlin is supported by the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia and the Evangelical Church in Germany. It is a non-profit organization. The Protestant Academy Görlitz has a focus on the European integration.

www.eaberlin.de



Haus der Kirche
(Church House), Berlin

Amt für kirchliche Dienste*

The offers of the Church Services Office are primarily addressed to volunteers, part-time and full-time salaried church staff. Their offers are to provide an opportunity to delve into the Gospel and to reflect on individual, vocational and social matters in respect of the Christian message.

The Church Services Office serves the purpose of training and counselling volunteers and salaried staff of our church. Its respective departments offer training courses covering preaching and the pastor's ministry, pedagogical work aimed at children and young people within a parish and at school and covering other fields of work. They also provide ongoing education for Gemeindepädagogen (parish pedagogues) and religious studies teachers as well as the ba-

sic education for parish pedagogues and basic and ongoing training for sacristan services in the parish. The Office functions as the church headquarters for youth ministry, for the work with children, for women's ministry and family education. They also provide support for the management of subsidies and fees. Another important task is to supply teaching materials, books and other media, playing and technical equipment, since there is a growing demand for such things.

Thus, the Church Services Office has an important share in the educational mandate of the EKBO: Christian faith and the Gospel story of Jesus Christ must be explained and passed on to the people, taking into account the conditions and problems of the respective era. Our everyday experience, temporal knowledge and thinking have to be reconciled with the experience of faith as described in the Bible. Therefore the Church Services Office participates in social debates, especially on matters concerning women, young people and school policies.

Its head office is located at Goethestrasse in the Charlottenburg borough of Berlin. This is where events and meetings of all fields of work of the Office take place. The Haus der Kirche is also home to the Evangelical Media Centre, the technical pool, a library including the musical library and a lending service for games, called the »Spielkarussell« (»games merry-go-round«). Advanced training of clergy including courses of lecture and training and advanced training covering Christian education mainly take place on the Dominsel in Brandenburg/Havel. About half of the events and offers of the Church Services Office are held in deaneries and parishes and in co-operation with local persons in charge.

www.akd-ekbo.de



Women and Families

The Evangelical Women's Ministry and Family Education constitutes a special subject in the Church Services Office of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia.

The Evangelical Women's Ministry and Family Education grew out of a former association called Evangelical Women's Help in Germany. At the end of the 19th century, women got together in the parishes for »Frauenhilfen« meetings (Women's Aid Groups). This was initiated by Empress Auguste Victoria (1858 – 1921). They responded to the distress of their fellow-women by transforming temporary assistance into organised aid. They founded day nurseries and nurses' stations, had houses built, took care of a visiting service, provided for neglected children and promoted the recreation of mothers. Rooted in their faith

they thus promulgated the charity of God also to those who had alienated themselves from the Church.

During the time of National Socialism Bible study came to the fore. It has remained a core area of the work until today. During the time of the GDR family retreats offered by the Women's Aid created a free space sheltered from the atheistical education monopoly of the government. Family retreats supported parents who wanted to educate their children in the Christian faith. This spirit has been kept alive for more than 100 years and has been enriched by new aspects through the efforts of women's ministry and family education. The development of the parishes and the advanced training and counselling of volunteers and salaried staff are particularly important. The knowledge gained through feminist theology is thoroughly evaluated. The correspondence course »Feminist Theology« is offered in co-operation with other regional churches.

Big events like the Regional Meeting and the Women's Kirchentag (Church Congress) allow both celebration and the exchange of information and experiences. The women's ministry and family education can be understood as part of a female network within church and society. They, too, establish ties to people keeping a distance to the Church.

As an office the women ministry and family education publicly advocates the interests of women and helps to shape the life of our church and society and shows its Evangelical profile in co-operation with other organisations.

The women's ministry has a leading function in the advisory board »Aid for the Victims of Trafficking« and it is a member of the Brandenburg Council Regarding Women's Issues and the Women's Council Berlin.

At Potsdam, it maintains close ties to the Evangelical Hospital for Geriatrics, which was founded by the Women's Aid in 1945. The ecumenical bond is expressed through the relationship between women in Germany and women in South Korea or Mozambique and in preparing the Women's World Day of Prayer inviting women of all denominations and taking place on the first Friday of March.



Exhibitions at St Matthew's Church, Berlin

The roots of family education lie in the Mother's Schools and even more in the Parents' Schools. The first Parents' School was founded in Berlin in 1919. By offering new kinds of events, the Parents' Schools were the first schools to particularly address fathers. They went beyond maternal and child care by offering lectures on various pedagogical topics. Since the sixties, pedagogical suggestions for children, parents and both have been a focus of the activities. For that reason, the image change of families and women and the integration of fathers have led to renaming and extending the Mothers' Schools and the Parents' Schools. Their new concept is called »Familienbildungsstätte« (Family Education Institution).

Every year, the Evangelical Family Education Association runs a course including more than 600 offers for the whole family. The focus is on a comprehensive training agenda and on counselling and accompanying volunteers and paid staff. Projects are

increasingly provided in parishes, as open work, in day nurseries and in co-operating institutions.

In addition, the Evangelical Family Education works closely with the Marriage and Family/Single Parents Desk of the Archbishopric Berlin and the Evangelical Action Group for Family Matters, registered charity (German abbreviation: eaf).

www.akd-ekbo.de

Art and Culture

Since its beginnings, the Church has been closely related to the arts. The theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher saw art and religion as two souls being on friendly terms.

The Church itself is part of the culture of its time. The Church cannot exist without dialogue and without understanding the symbols and expressions of the culture that surrounds it. By talking to artists the Church is stimulated to find a language witnessing to the reality of God in this world and initiating critical reflections and a wide world view. The arts express the reflection about God in language, pictures and metaphors involving architecture, painting, literature and music. The dialogue with art shall be conceived as a quest that tries to promote encounters of people and seeks to sharpen people's perception of the foreign and our own culture. Maintaining the dialogue with artists serves the parishes, agencies and institutions of the Church. Our regional church music director is in charge of all matters concerning sacred music.

The following institutions deal particularly with matters of culture and fine arts:

St Matthew's Foundation EKBO Cultural Foundation

In 1999, the Evangelical Church founded the cultural foundation St Matthew's. The cultural foundation serves the purpose of conducting and promoting the dialogue between the church and the arts. The foundation has its office at the Brandenburg Dom, one of the most significant places in the cultural development of Berlin and the region of Brandenburg for the last 800 years. The main venue is St Matthew's Church, which is located in the Culture Forum – between the Berlin Philharmonic, the Paintings Gallery, the New National Gallery and the National Library.

The foundation celebrates worship, offers organ devotions and organises art exhibitions, readings and concerts in the »city and cultural church« of St Matthew's, which is open every day.

Art and religion are two friendly souls

The Art Commissioner

The art commissioner advises parishes and church councils on questions of art and culture, arranges contacts with artists and curates exhibitions of contemporary art.

The art commissioner provides pastoral care for artists, helps to maintain contact with members of the art scene and prepares and holds artists' worship, for example the project series »Ash Wednesday for Artists« and »My Psalm«, both including a reception of artists and cultural workers by the bishop. In addition to that, the art commissioner contributes to the annual art auction for the benefit of migrants and refugees.

The art commissioner exercises his office as a secondary function. His office is located at »Kirche am Hohenzollernplatz« in the Wilmersdorf borough of Berlin. He can also be contacted through St Matthew's Foundation's office.

www.stiftung-stmatthaeus.de



Art Auction of the Evangelical Church

The EKBO's »Art Auction for the Benefit of Migrants and Refugees« is an initiative actively supporting the integration of migrants and refugees. The EKBO Commissioner for Migration and Integration organises the annual auction together with a team of volunteers. The revenue from the sale of the works of art donated to the EKBO allows us to support up to 20 projects. The former bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber together with celebrities like Günter Grass, Elvira Bach, Katharina Thalbach and the film director Fatih Akin became patrons of the auction. Bishop Dr Markus Dröge continues this project. In 2005 the art auction was given an award by the »Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance« which called it an exemplary idea.

www.kunstauktion.ekbo.de

Church Construction Office

The Church Construction Office, which is located in the Consistory, is responsible for all construction measures taken within the EKBO. It counsels parishes, church institutions and its architects. It pays special attention to the preservation of church buildings, the conservation and maintenance of their artistic decoration and arranges for appealing designs of the sanctuaries. Besides, the Church Construction Office deals with the general use of churches and requirement planning of buildings owned by the church. As regards the redesigning of church buildings, church windows and furnishings, the Church Construction Office co-operates with the EKBO's art commissioner. Since 2010 an Advisory Board on Architecture, Monument Preservation and Arts appointed by the church's governing board may be consulted through the Church Construction Office.

www.kirchenbau.ekbo.de



Parish Church S. Mary's, Müncheberg
Library and Parish Community Centre

More than 21.000 people sing in church choirs

Church Music

Music plays a major role in the life of most congregations. The variety of musical activities is reflected by various forms of Protestant faith. The spectrum ranges from the traditional repertoire of church music like choir, organ and brass bands to gospel, pop, meditative music and avant-garde music.

The musical life in our church is guided by some 175 full-time choirmasters and organists trained as B- or A-class church musicians. There are many part-time and voluntary choirmasters and organists, too. However, the backbone of church music life is formed by more than 21.000 singers who engage in about 950 choirs in Berlin, Brandenburg and Silesian Upper Lusatia. In addition, there are about 3.300 brass band players and a further 2.900 musicians rehearsing their music in groups and circles. Protestant church music allows a distinctive arrangement of divine services and is accentuated by EKBO's sacred music events. These events are visited by more than 600.000 people annually.

There are many more offers to perform music publicly, such as the »Weeks of Singing« or training and advanced training to work as a part-time or full-time church musician. There are about 2.000 organs in the area covered by EKBO – among them some 50 instruments of particular historical value – which form an artistic heritage that should be preserved and actively used.

www.musikinkirchen.de
www.c-seminar.de
www.kirchenmusikerverband-ekbo.de



Diakonie*

Social welfare work – the help for people in need given by the Church – is based on the story of the Good Samaritan told by Jesus. The Good Samaritan offered to help without asking about the background, group membership or conviction of the person concerned. The preamble of the statutes of the Diakonisches Werk Berlin-Brandenburg-Schlesische Oberlausitz, registered charity (German abbreviation: DWBO), outlines its diaconal mission: »Social welfare work gives witness to God's love for His world that we encounter in Jesus Christ. It wants to help people suffering physically, mentally, spiritually and socially. Thus, no one will be excluded. This is based on the ministry of Jesus Christ and on the testimony of the Holy Scriptures«.

The Diakonisches Werk is the central Evangelical association of the Voluntary Welfare Work. The origin of the Protestant Social Services dates back to 1848. At that time, Johann Hinrich Wichern founded the »Central Committee for the Inner Mission of the

German Evangelical Church«. Evangelical institutions joined together in this committee in order to help people in need. 100 years later, Protestant Christians founded the Aid Agency of the Protestant Church in order to heal the wounds caused by World War II. The »Inner Mission« and the »Aid Agency« united to become the Diakonisches Werk (Protestant Social Services).

Today, the work of the Protestant Social Services is as necessary as it has been in the past. Even if need looks differently now, we shall always offer our undiminished help.

More than 52.000 full-time employees work for the 437 member organizations of the DWBO. There are, altogether, 1.420 social facilities. They help through words and action: by in-patient and out-patient care, by helping disabled persons, running hospitals, by short-term and day care, by offering a crisis hotline and running travellers' aid offices.

Advice centres for child guidance, family counselling, marriage counselling and life counselling can easily be found within the EKBO. There are debt counselling offices and offers for migrants. The regional association of the Protestant Social Services within the EKBO also provide hospice care, women's shelters, addiction care and psychological care.

The work of the DWBO and its member organizations is supported by a large number of voluntary workers.

The »Evangelisches Johannesstift« (Evangelical St John's Foundation), located in the Berlin borough of Spandau and founded by Johann Hinrich Wichern, is a well-known diaconal institution – just like the Stephanus Foundation in the Berlin area of Weißensee, the Deaconess's House Berlin Teltow Lehnin, the »Martinshof Rothenburg Diakoniewerk«, the Hoffbauer Foundation on the Potsdam peninsula of Hermannswerder, the »Evangelisches Jugend- und Fürsorgewerk« (Evan-

gelical Youth and Welfare Foundation), the Fürst Donnersmarck Foundation, the »Paul Gerhardt Diakonie« and the »Hoffnungstaler Anstalten Lobetal« near Bernau.

The Protestant Social Services, the Berlin Mission, the Commissioner for Migration and Integration and the EKBO's Commissioner for Pastoral Care for Ethnic Germans assist parishes in their ministry to migrants, refugees and ethnic German immigrants to Germany.

The Protestant Social Services and their member organisations have developed many offers for migrants and try to make their services and institutions available to people of all cultures.

www.migration.ekbo.de
www.eui-dwbo.de
www.dwbo.de



Ecumenism

Bearing in mind the Charta Oecumenica published by the European churches in 2001, the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia considers itself to be called to witness to the unity of all Christians as a gift of God. Through baptism we belong to the one Body of Christ, just as well as Christians of other churches and other countries. Within the EKBO and all over the world, we form a community with Christians of all denominations, all nations, all languages and all cultures. To be Protestant is to be ecumenically-minded.

We experience that unity and that sense of belonging together locally with our sister churches of other denominations, other languages or other backgrounds. Over the last 100 years, the number of members of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia has decreased. However, our church is aware of its roots and accepts its responsibility towards society as a whole. It is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Ecumenical Council. At

present, the council comprises 30 churches: the Roman Catholic Church, free churches such as the Methodist and the Baptist Church, EKBO, Orthodox churches and expatriate congregations established by our European neighbour churches. The first Ecumenical Kirchentag held in Berlin in 2003 created irreversible impulses towards growing unity. About every three years, the member churches of the Berlin-Brandenburg Ecumenical Council and the members of the Berlin-Brandenburg International Convention of Christian Congregations, a registered charity, stage the Berlin City Church Festival.

There are multi-faceted relations between EKBO and the congregations belonging to the International Convention of Christian Congregations which has its headquarters in Berlin. Many of these congregations regularly celebrate their services in churches belonging to EKBO parishes. Based on inter-church agreements, we cultivate good contacts especially with the Dutch, Finnish,

Swedish, Anglican-Episcopal, Francophone Protestant, Chinese and Japanese congregations and with the Korean Han In congregation, all of them based in Berlin.

We are associated with Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in South Africa, Tanzania, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the Holy Land due to a common history we share. The churches founded by missionaries of Berlin Mission became independent a long time ago. Today, our close relationship is expressed through many partnerships maintained by our regional church or by parishes. We work closely with the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land in the fields of school education and vocational training. We co-operate with the Gossner Evangelical Church in India in the fields of church music and theological education.

We maintain a close fellowship with the Protestant churches in our European neighbouring countries who are related to us through their confessions – particularly the Lutheran diocese Breslau/Wrocław in Po-

land, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Lutheran congregations on the Volga in Russia, the Anglican dioceses London and Chichester in the United Kingdom, the »Fédération protestante de France« and the Diocese of Gothenburg in the Church of Sweden. Truth and reconciliation after the end of World War II, peace and freedom after the end of the cold war, creation of a united Europe – these processes may also be traced back to an ecumenism reaching beyond the borders. By co-operating with churches and congregations in Poland and in the Czech Republic, we wish to set a common example for a living faith in the regions on both sides of the border. We also established a close church fellowship with the United Church of Christ in the USA.

Keeping in touch with the churches of the worldwide ecumenical movement, we support justice, peace and the integrity of creation. After the »Decade to Overcome Violence« was introduced by the World Council of Churches in Berlin in 2001, we

A Part of a Worldwide Christianity

entered, for instance, into a partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Cuba. Through intercession, practical assistance and ecumenical programmes, we try to contribute to the struggle against starvation and poverty and we participate in relief campaigns after major disasters – for example, the fight against the AIDS pandemic in South Africa, the famine in East Africa and the triple catastrophe of an earthquake, a tsunami and a nuclear reactor accident in Japan.

EKBO concentrated its ecumenical and global missionary activities in the »Berlin Mission«. Both EKBO and Berlin Mission are situated at Georgenkirchstraße in the Berlin borough Friedrichshain, the site belonging to the former »Society for the Advancement of Evangelistic Missions amongst the Pagans«. Due to its missionary activities in the past, Berlin Mission cultivates relations with churches in the Holy Land, in India, Eastern Asia, South Africa and Tanzania. Of course, there are relations to the churches

of the worldwide ecumenical movement and Christian churches and congregations in the vicinity as well. In this way, the integration of church and mission is being realized as it was suggested by the World Council of Churches at its general meeting in New Delhi. Berlin Mission is supported both by EKBO and the following institutions: the Evangelical Church of Anhalt, the »Jerusalemverein« (Jerusalem Society), the German East-Asia Mission and, on a provisional basis, Gossner Mission. Besides, EKBO gathered other ecumenical services under the umbrella of Berlin Mission: the Churches' Development Service, »Inter-Faith Dialogue« and »Migration and Integration«. In following this holistic approach, EKBO and Berlin Mission attempt to pay tribute to an insight which the theologian Eberhard Jüngel brought home to the German churches: that mission would have to be ecumenical in the future.





Facts and Figures



Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, Berlin

The History of Berlin-Brandenburg

The Middle Ages In 948, King Otto I founded the missionary bishoprics Brandenburg and Havel, both mandated to the archbishop of Magdeburg in 968. However, the Slavs considered Christianity as the religion of the conquerors. Time and again, violent conflicts occurred. It was not until the 12th century that Christian faith became widespread. At that time colonization had started under the rule of Margrave Albrecht the Bear. Immigrants from the Rhineland countries and from central Germany, who brought with them their beliefs, religious customs and hopes, were chosen to colonise the region.

In the 12th century, the Bishopric of Lebus was established by a Polish duke. Lebus was a suffragan diocese of the Archbishopric of Gniezno and had a far-reaching influence. In 1170/71, Cistercians founded the first monastery east of the River Elbe, Zinna near Jüterbog. Ten years later, another monastery was founded near the town of Brandenburg, Lehnin, which became very important to the

Berlin region. In the early 13th century, the Cistercian monks established further monasteries, for example Chorin near Eberswalde. Around the end of the 12th century, the episcopal sees Brandenburg and Havelberg became cathedral towns. The reform order of the Premonstratensians dominated the cathedral chapters at Brandenburg and Havelberg, whereas the Cistercians promoted the economic development of the region. Since the 13th century, the mendicant orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians – the Carthusian Order joining subsequently – strongly influenced piety within the towns.

In 1539, the Reformation was introduced to the region of Berlin and Brandenburg. For the first time Elector Joachim II took Communion »in both kinds« (bread and vine) in accordance with the Lutheran rite. This significant event happened at St Nicholas's Church in Spandau on 1st November of that year. In 1540, the Reformation insights of Martin Luther were incorporated into the new church order.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Otto Dibelius



In 1613, the territorial prince, Elector Johann Sigismund, converted to the Reformed confession. Thus, he became the regional church leader. The Reformed confession was a Protestant denomination shaped by the Genevan Reformer John Calvin. Contrary to common practice at that time, the people did not have to adopt the confession of the territorial ruler but were allowed to remain Lutheran which most of them wanted to do. Ever since, though, there have been numerous Reformed parishes in Berlin and Brandenburg.

1657 Having been a provost at Mittenwalde (in the Margraviate of Brandenburg), Paul Gerhardt became a pastor at St Nicholas's Church in Berlin in 1657. Both Luther and Gerhardt rank as great Protestant song writers. Many of Gerhardt's hymns were set to music by Johann Krüger, who worked as a cantor at St Nicholas's Church in Berlin from 1622 until his death in 1662. In 1666, Paul Gerhardt was removed from office by the Great Elector after having disobeyed an order prohibiting criticism of Reformed

ideas. Gerhardt disputed the right of the state to interfere in church affairs. Having shifted without a rectory for three years, he followed a call to Lübben in the Spreewald area in 1669. Lübben belonged to Saxony at that time. He died there in 1676.

In 1685, the Great Elector issued the Edict of Potsdam. He offered the Huguenots – who were being persecuted in France due to their Reformed beliefs – a new homeland in the Prussian Brandenburg. Some 20.000 came, giving a strong impulse to both economy and science. Huguenots and their descendants were among the leading figures during the following decades.

In 1691, Philipp Jakob Spener followed a call to St Nicholas's Church, for Berlin was known to have an open attitude towards religion. He was appointed a provost and consistorial councillor there. At that time he had long since been recognized as the »Father of Lutheran Pietism in Germany« by friends and opponents alike.

In 1817, the Prussian king Frederick William III introduced the union between the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church. The principal Protestant theologian of the 19th century and co-founder of the Berlin University, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, championed the union, but opposed the government's interference in church affairs. A common Communion service became possible then. An uniform church administration was created and an uniform order of service was introduced – despite strong protests by many parishes. However, the Lutheran or the Reformed confession of the parishes was left unchanged.

In the 1820s, a foundation phase of missionary societies and diaconal associations had begun which persisted until the end of that century: Berlin Mission, the Central Committee for Inner Mission and the Berlin City Mission, to name but a few.

In 1850, the Evangelical State Church in Prussia established its own supreme ad-

ministrative body located at Berlin: the Evangelical High Consistory. It had been authorized to give instructions to the ecclesiastical provinces until they became independent regional churches after 1945.

1870 As regards church buildings, Berlin saw an unprecedented construction boom from the 1870s until the beginning of World War I.

In 1918, the close relationship between »throne and altar« was severed by the abdication of William II (who had been both German Emperor and King of Prussia) – the Prussian king had always been the regional church leader. In 1922, the Evangelical State Church became the independent »Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union« while introducing a new constitution. Many church officials did not really like the Weimar Republic. They preferred the German Nationalist point of view. Yet the Weimar Constitution had provided a favourable framework for politics. To be sure, the constitution separated church and state. However, it guaranteed the churches – as public



Built in 1964, the Versöhnungskirche (Reconciliation Church) had been situated within the so-called »death strip« of the Berlin Wall since 1961.

In 1985, the church building was blown up. In 1999, ten years after the Berlin Wall had fallen, the parish opened a new church building: the »Kapelle der Versöhnung« (Chapel of Reconciliation).

corporations enjoying the right of self-administration – a number of rights, including the one to collect taxes. The duties the state was legally tied to were continued; religious studies was taught at state schools.

In 1933, the National Socialists and the »German Christians« supported by them tried to force the Protestant Church to tow the line. To their mind, Jewish Christians were to be excluded from obtaining a church office by introducing the so-called »Aryan paragraph«. The »Confessing Church« was established in opposition to the German Christians. Martin Niemöller, who was a pastor in the Berlin area of Dahlem at that time, was one of their best-known members. In October 1934, the Second Confession Synod at Dahlem proclaimed a state of church emergency. New church governing bodies were established and legitimized by the confessing parishes – not by the public authorities. In May 1934, the First Confession Synod had adopted the »Barmen Declaration« in the town of Barmen (today a borough of Wuppertal). The declaration served

as the theological programme for the Confessing Church throughout Germany. The theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was born at Breslau (Wrocław today) in 1906, was in charge of the theological seminary of the Confessing Church at Finkenwalde (Pomerania). In April 1945, he was executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp.

In 1945, the »Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg« was established. Otto Dibelius was to become its first bishop. His time in office lasted until 1966. The Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg became an independent member church of the »Evangelical Church of the Union« (it had been one of the ecclesiastical provinces of the »Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union« before) and of the »Evangelical Church in Germany« (EKD). The Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg was particularly affected by the division of Germany that became increasingly evident: The Neumark (New March), amounting to a third of the former church territory of Brandenburg,

had been ceded to Poland. The East-West-conflict came to demarcate the former territory of the church. Now the Christians in the east and the west had to face two fundamentally different forms of government and society. Especially in the fifties, the church and many of its members in East Berlin and all over the GDR were subjected to severe oppression by the government.

1961 The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 forced the Synod and the Church Governing Board to split up and hold meetings separately. Bishop Otto Dibelius who resided in West Berlin was not to enter East Berlin and the GDR, just as his successor, Kurt Scharf: Soon after the Berlin Wall had been erected, the GDR authorities did not allow him to return to his residence in East Berlin. In 1966, despite the refusal of entry, Kurt Scharf was elected bishop of the – whole – Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg by the Regional Synod East and the Regional Synod West at separate conferences.

In 1970, having intensively discussed the matter, the Regional Synods made arrangements for a greater degree of autonomy of both the eastern and western part of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, still affirming their solidarity. From then on it was possible to modify certain passages of the Grundordnung – the church »constitution« –, should conditions require reconsideration. The statements that had been made about the Scriptures and the Protestant confession before adopting the Grundordnung of 1948 remained a unifying element.

In 1972, both Regional Synods modified the church law in order to have a bishop elected in the eastern part of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg: Albrecht Schönherr was elected bishop. Since 1967, he had already been in office in place of bishop Scharf who was still not permitted to enter the territory of the GDR. From 1972 onwards, Scharf was exclusively in charge of the western part; Schönherr was exclusively in charge of the eastern part.

Becoming the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia by unification in 2004

In 1977, Martin Kruse succeeded Kurt Scharf and became bishop of the western part. In 1981, Gottfried Forck succeeded Albrecht Schönherr as bishop in the eastern part.

In 1989 and already during the years preceding the fall of the Berlin Wall, groups critical of the GDR system found support in the parishes of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg. For example, Berlin's Zion Church Parish with its »environmental library« and the Gethsemane Church situated in the Berlin area of Prenzlauer Berg became famous because of that. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, quite a number of people working for the church accepted political responsibility; it was at this interim period that only few GDR citizens could take a political office because their records were unblemished. By this time, the Evangelical Church was the sole institution that had cultivated a democratic practice through its synodical tradition.

In March 1990, the Regional Synods of the eastern and of the western part held their first meeting since the Wall had fallen.

In 1991, there were a single Synod again, a single Church Governing Board and a single Consistory. In autumn of that year, Bishop Gottfried Forck retired. Martin Kruse became bishop of the reunited regional church.

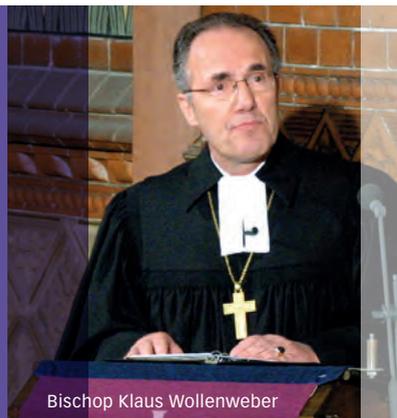
In 1994, Dr Wolfgang Huber was elected bishop by Synod.

In 2004, the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg associated with the Evangelical Church of Silesian Upper Lusatia: they became the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia. The Synod and the governing board were united; a new Grundordnung was introduced. In November 2003, Bishop Wolfgang Huber was elected Chair of the Evangelical Church in Germany. In January 2004, he was confirmed as bishop by the EKBO Synod.

In 2009, Bishop Wolfgang Huber retired. The Regional Synod elected Dr Markus Dröge as his successor.



St Peter's Church, Görlitz



Bischof Klaus Wollenweber



Bischof Dr. Wolfgang Huber

The History of Silesian Upper Lusatia

968, Otto I founded the Bishopric Meissen which was in charge of a mission territory including what is now called Upper and Lower Lusatia. At a later time, Upper Lusatia became an archdeaconry comprising the seven archpresbyteriates Bischofswerda, Kamenz, Löbau, Reichenbach, Görlitz, Seidenberg and Lauban.

In 1221, the Collegiate Foundation Bautzen was established. Its provost also belonged to the Cathedral Chapter Meißen. In addition to the Collegiate Foundation, the Cistercian convents Marienstern (near Kamenz) and Marienthal (near Ostritz) as well as the convent of the Order of St Mary Magdalene at Lauban were the most significant spiritual centres in Upper Lusatia.

From 1319 to 1635, Upper Lusatia, Lower Lusatia, Silesia and Moravia belonged to the lands of the Bohemian Crown. In 1346, the Upper Lusatian towns Kamenz, Bautzen, Löbau, Zittau, Görlitz and Lauban established a federation which was to play an important role in shaping the future of the area.

In 1525, Görlitz became Protestant. In other towns, too, the Reformation made further progress. As time passed, the towns and territorial estates of the Margraviate of Upper Lusatia gained more freedom. Thus they could independently decide whether they wanted to introduce the Reformation or not – this is to say without asking the territorial prince. The Collegiate Foundation Bautzen and the convents retained their spiritual function and manorial system. In this way, Upper Lusatia has been an area allowing different confessions since the Reformation. The Holy Trinity Church at Lauban and the Petridom at Bautzen became Simultankirchen (shared churches) where both Protestant and Catholic services were held. At Bautzen, this continued to the present day.

In 1635, John George II, Elector of Saxony, concluded the Peace of Prague, receiving Upper Lusatia and Lower Lusatia as a fief.

In contrast to the other Bohemian crown lands, Upper and Lower Lusatia did not experience the Counter-Reformation. The Protestant parishes near the border of Silesia became a spiritual refuge to many Evangelical Silesians who had not been guaranteed religious liberty by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The churches subsequently built near the border provided space enough to receive many Silesian worshippers.

In 1722, the town of Herrnhut was founded by Moravian expatriates. In 1742, the town of Niesky was founded as a colony of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine (Moravian Church). Pietism as represented by the Imperial Count of Zinzendorf and Pottendorf had a significant bearing on religious life within Upper Lusatia. For instance, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was a prominent proponent of this pietistic movement.

In 1815, the Kingdom of Saxony was ordered to surrender more than half of its territory to Prussia, for it had fought on the side of Napoleon until the Battle of the Nations near Leipzig. Lower Lusatia was passed on to Brandenburg; the northeastern part of Upper Lusatia became part of the province of Silesia. By these political changes, the parishes of the administrative districts of Hoyerswerda, Rothenburg, Görlitz and Lauban were affiliated to the Consistory of Breslau (Wrocław today). They were integrated into seven Kirchenkreise (deaneries) and participated in the development of the Evangelical Church in Prussia since Frederick William III had proclaimed the Prussian Union (between Lutheran and Reformed Churches) in 1817.

In 1946, the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Silesia met in Breslau. It confirmed the Church Governing Board mainly comprising representatives from the Silesian Confessing Synod presided over by Revd Ernst Hornig and elected in 1945. The Synod



announced that the church districts east of the River Neisse, which by then were being held in trust by the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, still belonged to the territory of the Evangelical Church in Silesia.

In December 1946, Church President Ernst Hornig and several members of the Church Governing Board were banished from Breslau. They moved to Görlitz.

In 1950, despite losing 90 per cent of its territory and of its members, the Regional Synod decided upon continuing the Evangelical Church in Silesia as an autonomous regional church. On 14 November 1951, the Kirchenordnung was adopted. In 1952, Ernst Hornig was inducted as Bishop of Görlitz by Bishop Otto Dibelius.

In 1968, the name of the church was changed into »Evangelical Church of the Görlitz Territory«, since the GDR authorities had demanded the term »Silesia« be dropped in the future. Not until after Ger-

man unification in 1990, the history of this regional church could once more be expressed by its name.

In 1992, Synod decided on changing the name into »Evangelical Church of Silesian Upper Lusatia«.

In 1997, after a festive service in Schweidnitz/widnica, a partnership agreement was signed between the Breslau Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Poland and the Evangelical Church of Silesian Upper Lusatia by Bishop Klaus Wollenweber (Görlitz) and Ryszard Bogusz (Breslau/Wrocław).

In 2000, the Church Governing Board suggested reorganising the eastern churches of the Protestant Union. As a result of an extended and struggling decision-making process, the »Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia« was constituted by 1st January 2004.

The EKBO Record Office

Since 1999, the EKBO Record Office has been located at the Berlin Church Archives Centre – together with the Evangelical Central Archives in Berlin, the Berlin Mission Archives and the Diocesan Archives of the Archbishopric Berlin. The Berlin Church Archives Centre is a service centre that includes a public hall seating 30 people and provides for 30.000 metres of shelf space for written materials.

The EKBO Record Office serves the purpose of collecting, preserving and making available archives material and historical library holdings owned by the Evangelical Church Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia. Valuable cultural goods of the last five centuries may be surveyed by researchers. The Regional Synod, the Church Governing Board, the Consistory and other EKBO institutions passed on their historical administrative documents to the Record Office. Historical documents formerly owned by

the Evangelical Church in Silesian Upper Lusatia will remain at the archives of the Deanery Association at Görlitz in order to facilitate local and regional studies.

The Church Registers Office is a special department of the EKBO Record Office. This significant department deals with enquiries about entries into the church registers regarding family research, inheritance matters and legal aspects. Private, scientific and commercial genealogists are welcome to use the reading room. It provides reading devices capable of re-enlarging microfiches.

The EKBO Record Office serves as head of office for the Association for the Ecclesiastical History of Berlin-Brandenburg, registered charity, and the Forum for Memory Culture.

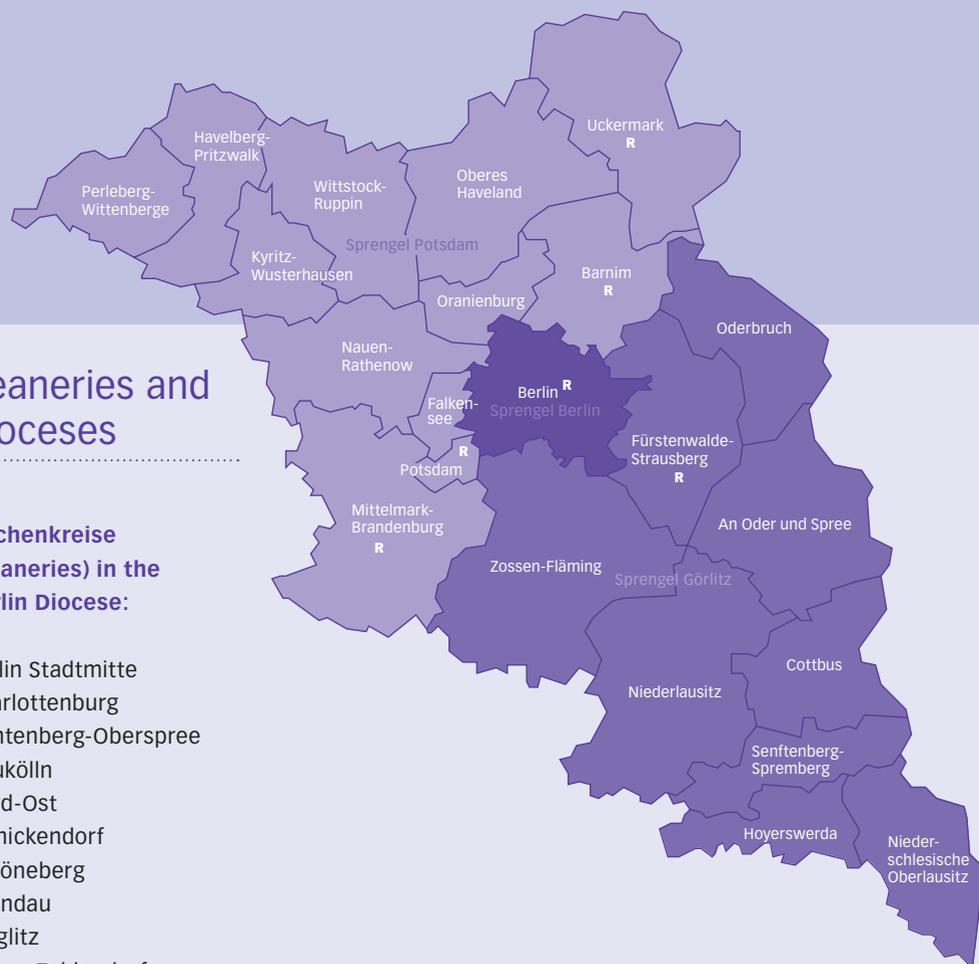
www.landeskirchenarchivberlin.de

Deaneries and Dioceses

Kirchenkreise (Deaneries) in the Berlin Diocese:

Berlin Stadtmitte
Charlottenburg
Lichtenberg-Oberspree
Neukölln
Nord-Ost
Reinickendorf
Schöneberg
Spandau
Steglitz
Teltow-Zehlendorf
Tempelhof
Wilmsdorf

R Reformed Parishes



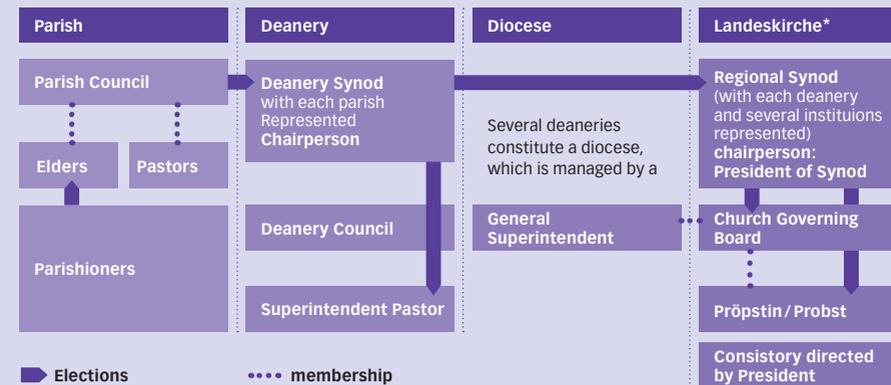
The Evangelical Church and the Diakonie (Pro- testant Social Services) at one glimpse

2010

Parishioners	1.089.357
Honorary staff	about 44.000
including	
Parish Council members	about 9.000
Parishes	1.357
Deaneries	32
Reformed deanery	1
Salaried staff in parishes, deaneries and at regional church level	about 8.500
including pastors	about 960
Groups meeting on a regular basis in the parishes	about 6.000
	annually about
Baptisms	7.271
People confirmed	5.332
Marriages	1.593
Marriage services	864
Funerals	13.688

Diakonie (Protestant Social Services)

Social service centres	81
Day nurseries	396
including places in day nurseries and day nurseries	about 21.000
Seniors' residences	21
Counselling centres	95
Institutions for handicapped persons	252
Hospitals	27
Short-term care facilities	47
Day care facilities	45
Educational institutions	31
Regional Diakonische Werke (Evangelical social services)	24
Migration-related facilities	104



*Regional Church

Organisation and Structure

The Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia (EKBO) is based on its parishes. The local executive boards consist of lay and clergy persons with equal rights. At present, there are 1.357 parishes which are administered within the framework of 32 deaneries. In addition, there is a Reformed deanery. Its congregations are not based on parish boundaries, but made up of interested people. It has preserved its Reformed individuality among a large number of Lutheran and United parishes.

A Kirchenkreis (deanery) is administered by Deanery Synod consisting of representatives of all parishes. Between the meetings of Deanery Synod the deanery is run by the Deanery Council which is usually presided by the superintendent pastor. Several deaneries constitute a Sprengel (diocese) in which a general superintendent has oversight provides pastoral care and leads visitations. The EKBO consists of the dioceses Berlin, Potsdam and Görlitz. A spiritual moderator represents the Reformed parishes.

The Landessynode (Regional Synod) is the supreme governing body board of the EKBO. Its term of office lasts six years. Most members of the Regional Synod are elected by deaneries, the church departments and institutions; some of them are appointed. The Regional Synod usually meets once every six months. During the intervening periods it is represented by the Church Governing Board. However, the latter has many more tasks assigned to it. The Church Governing Board, its term of office lasting six years, too, is elected by the Regional Synod. Some members of the Church Governing Board belong ex officio both to the Church Governing Board and the Regional Synod: the Bishop as chairman of the Church Governing Board, the President of the Regional Synod as deputy chairman, the President of the Consistory, the Pröpstin and the general superintendents.

Bishop Dr Markus Dröge is in charge of promoting the sense of community within the EKBO. He represents the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia in public, taking account of the decisions of Regional Synod and the Church Governing Board.

The Consistory is responsible for the current business and all matters of the EKBO. They co-operate closely with the other two governing bodies of the EKBO – the Regional Synod and the Church Governing Board. It is responsible for the legal supervision of the parishes and the deaneries and for the administrative supervision of the clerics, the superintendents and church officials. The Consistory also serves the important purpose of advising parishes and deaneries on legal and spiritual matters.

The Consistory has a collegial order. The college comprises the President of the Consistory, the Pröpstin and the heads of departments. The President acts as chair of the college. The Pröpstin/Probst – who is in charge of all theological matters concerning the Consistory – deputises for the President as chairperson. A legally trained head of department within the Consistory deputises for the President as administrative director. The respective consistorial departments correspond to the most significant fields of activity of the EKBO. Thus, theologians and lawyers make joint decisions in the college. The Church Governing Board supervises the Consistory.

Finances and Budgeting

The 2011 budget of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia amounted to 317.5 million EURO. The major part of the budget – 169.9million EUR – was raised by way of church tax. That corresponds to a share of 54 per cent. Since 2001, the church income from taxes has considerably dropped. Since 2005, there had been an upward trend which stopped subsequently. A sum of 28.8 million EUR – about 9 per cent – comes from the fiscal transfers which comes from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). These funds provided by the western member churches of the EKD serve to support the financially weak member churches in the newly formed German states. About 17 per cent of the church revenue – 51,6 million EUR – are government funds and state grants which are used, for example, to finance religious studies at schools or day nurseries.

After deducting the costs of essential items such as the financial provision of clergy and church officials and the EKD allocation, 67 per cent of the taxes, the financial adjustment and the general government funds are used to support parishes and church districts and their work and to operate church administration offices. 33 per cent of the taxes are intended for the work of EKBO.

The EKBO budget does not include revenues which parishes gain by Gemeindekirchgeld (parish dues), donations and collection money and which they may use for their own purposes directly. By collecting church dues a number of parishes are able to have a large sum at their disposal. Church dues may be collected from all full-aged parishioners having incomes of their own. Church tax paid in the previous year can be taken into account for payments of parish dues on application.

100% Expenses 2011
The budget was
317.529.864,63 EUR





Funding of the day nurseries and the Evangelical schools is provided by the respective institutions, not by the EKBO budget. The institutions are sponsored by parents' contributions and state grants. The day nurseries are usually supported by the parishes; the Protestant schools are generally supported by the Protestant School Foundation.

At all levels, funds are used in accordance with the budgets that are adopted by the committees elected at these levels. The figures of the budgets are published regularly. The annual financial statement gives public account of the use of funds.

In the future, the church tax receipts will drop because of the changing age structure of the church members – more than half of

them are older than 50 years of age – and, unfortunately, because of an increase in unemployment. For some years now, EKBO has responded to this problem by being committed to consolidating the budget. As a rule, additional expenses will only be approved if expenses are saved in other areas. If possible, increased expenses which cannot be avoided – for example those caused by tariff increases – have to be compensated by cuts in other areas. These measures are bitter and inevitably affect the services offered by the church. However, responsible financial management contributes to opening up new opportunities in order to proclaim the Gospel to the people and to live up to the missionary calling of the Church.

Church Tax

Church tax reflects the separation between state and church. At the beginning of the 19th century, the state confiscated a large part of church property. In return, it took over a large proportion of the financial means needed by the church and the parishes. The growth of population, the beginning industrialisation and the growth of the cities required intensified commitment and social work by the church. By the time the state was no longer able to fulfil its obligations towards the churches, they were permitted to raise their own taxes. In 1919, the church tax was anchored in the Weimar Constitution as the primary source of financing the churches. The German Federal Republic adopted this provision of the Weimar Constitution. It is to be found in Article 140 of the German Grundgesetz.

Church tax is the financial contribution of the church members. Church membership begins with baptism. It lasts for a lifetime. Only church members having their own taxable incomes (that is, paying wage tax, income tax and capital gains tax) have to pay church taxes. Everyone having a low or no taxable income does not pay church tax. This includes children, young people, students, retired persons, unemployed persons, people out of regular employment or welfare recipients. Of course, the church opens its doors for all people.

The amount of church tax to be paid is dependent on the amount of the wage tax, income tax or capitals gains tax to be paid. Thus, it is determined by the individual financial means of the church members. As for the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia, the church tax rate amounts to nine per cent of

Monthly Gross Wages	Single Tax Class I	Married Tax Class III	Married 1 Child Tax Class III / 1	Married 3 Children Tax Class III / 3
1.000 EUR	1,06 EUR	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR
1.500 EUR	9,13 EUR	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR
2.000 EUR	19,53 EUR	3,38 EUR	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR
2.500 EUR	30,38 EUR	11,45 EUR	1,67 EUR	0,00 EUR
3.000 EUR	42,14 EUR	21,11 EUR	9,10 EUR	0,00 EUR

Five Examples from the wage tax table 2012

the wage tax, income tax or capital gains tax. It should be stressed that the church tax rate does not amount to nine per cent of the income.

The church parliament – to be exact, Regional Synod – decides on the amount of the church tax rate. Synod passes church laws that have to be approved by the government.

Families and child allowances are taken into account when calculating church tax. The church tax is limited to a maximum of three per cent of the taxable income. »Capping« is granted by the government. Incidentally, there is no need for sending an application to the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia.

If one of the spouses belongs to the Evangelical Church and the other spouse belongs to the Roman Catholic Church or to another denomination authorised to collect taxes – both spouses being liable for taxa-

tion – church tax will be split equally between both churches. If one of the spouses belongs to the Evangelical Church and the other does not belong to a denomination authorised to collect taxes, »Special Parish Dues« or church tax will be collected. This requires joint tax assessment. The legislator assumes that a spouse not earning money or having a low income takes a share in the family income. The income tax amount to be paid by the spouses jointly is used to assess the financial standing of the church member. It serves as a basis to calculate the »Special Parish Dues«. Merely the spouse belonging to a church is subject to taxation. The amount of the parish dues people are asked to pay is calculated according to a graded church fee table.

Church tax is collected by the tax offices. As far as the churches are concerned, it is the most economical means of collecting

taxes. Consequently, more money is left to the actual calling of the church. This governmental service is paid for by the churches. In Berlin, it amounts to 2.5 per cent of the church tax revenue; in Brandenburg and in Saxony, it is 3.0 per cent of the church tax revenue. To be sure, the state has neither decision-making authority nor influence on how the church tax is used. The tax office collects the church tax and transfers the total amount to the respective regional church.

In their annual tax declaration, church members can claim special expenses to be rated as tax exempt. Thus, the taxable income will be reduced. Everyone leaving the church saves his church tax, but has to pay a higher wage tax or personal income tax according to his respective tax rate. People with incomes that are heavily taxed save less than 50 per cent of their former church tax.

Based on a sound system for levying church tax, the work of the church, the freedom of the sermon and the attempt to support the

cause of weak people remains independent of the individual viewpoints of financially strong donors. The principle of a just and social tax system is supported by taking into account the economical means and personal situation of every single person.

Church members being ready to support the work of the church – by their church tax, donation or collection money – enable us to perform different functions. We would like to express our deep gratitude to all the people who provide financial support to our church.

Berliner Dom

Am Lustgarten, 10178 Berlin-Mitte
(letters from abroad: D-10178)
Fridays from 16:00 p.m. to 19:00 p.m.

**Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche
(Emperor William Memorial Church)**

Breitscheidplatz,
10789 Berlin-Charlottenburg
Mondays from 16:00 p.m. to 19:00 p.m.

**Heilig-Kreuz-Kirche
(Church of the Holy Cross)**

Zossener Straße 65, 10961 Berlin-Kreuzberg
Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 13:00 p.m.

St. Marienkirche (St Mary's Church)

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 8, 10178 Berlin
Tuesdays from 16:00 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.

St. Nikolai-Kirche (Church of St Nicholas)

Am Alten Markt, 14467 Potsdam
Wednesdays from 15:00 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.

Telephone 030·20 451 100
calls from abroad 0049·30·20 451 100
info@ekbo.de

Joining Our Church

Every parish office can act as an office for joining our church. In addition, everyone may join, rejoin or convert to the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia at four offices specially dealing with this matter: at the Berliner Dom in the borough of Mitte; at St Mary's Church, located in the borough of Mitte as well; at the foyer of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in the Berlin borough of Charlottenburg; at the Church of the Holy Cross in the Berlin area Kreuzberg. You are welcome to meet a clergyman or clergywoman ready to talk to you: at the foyer of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church on Mondays from 16:00 p. m. to 19:00 p. m.; at St Mary's Church on Tuesdays from 16:00 p. m. to 18:00 p. m.; at the Church of the Holy Cross on Thursdays from 10:00 a. m. to 13:00 p. m.; at the Berliner Dom on Fridays from 16:00 p. m. to 19:00 p. m. Appointments may also be made by phone.

To begin with, there is a conversation with a clergyman or clergywoman dealing with questions, expectations and wishes of people considering to join the church. It is quite possible to rejoin our church immediately after the conversation, however, all necessary documents such as the identity card, the certificate of baptism, the certificate of confirmation and the notice of resignation will have to be made available at the meeting.

The path of adults towards baptism is shaped by a number of conversations or baptism seminars enabling them to provide comprehensible information about Christian faith and clarifying questions on Christian faith.

www.willkommen-in-der-kirche.de



Berliner Dom

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For further information
and addresses see:
www.ekbo.de
or call 0049-30-24 344 121

www.ekbo.de