

## „Europe needs the message of the churches,“

... said the General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Archpriest Heikki Huttunen (Brussels), at the General Assembly of the Council of Churches (ACK) in Germany, which took place on September 19-20 in Ludwigshafen. More and more frequently, conflicts were being solved by military means, while populism and nationalism were on the increase. That was why Europe needed the churches' witness: "We can give people hope and promote a humane and open atmosphere in Europe", said Huttunen. When it came to issues of climate change and biotechnology, the churches should clearly present their positions. During their day of study, the delegates also dealt with the connection between personal biography and the experience of God. The basis was the study of the German Ecumenical Studies Committee (DÖSTA) on the question of God today (published as a supplement to the *Ökumenische Rundschau* 111).



## Church of the Nazarene is new guest member

The leaders of the ACK member churches have approved the request of the Church of the Nazarene for guest membership in the ACK. This free church originated in the Methodist tradition and numbers in Germany about 1,100 members in 20 congregations, according to its own statistics. Following the approval of the churches, the Nazarene Church was admitted to the ACK during a devotion at the General Assembly in Ludwigshafen. The Board also reported that the New



Apostolic Church has applied for guest membership in the ACK, and the voting procedures of the member churches are expected to be completed in January 2019.

## Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation celebrated in North Pomerania

The central service of worship for this year's Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation took place on September 7, 2018, in Starkow in North-Western Pomerania. Around 500 guests accepted the invitation to take part in the grounds of the association *Backstein, Geist und Garten* (Brick, Spirit and Garden), which administers and preserves a 13th century church as well as a Baroque garden ensemble.



From right to left: Bishop Wiesemann, Archpriest Miron and Rossitza Dikova-Osthus, who held the sermon at the service in Starkow.

The Orthodox theologian Rossitza Dikova-Osthus preached on the theme "Your fruit comes from me", and the ecumenical service was led by Board members of the Council of Churches in Germany (ACK): the chairman Bishop Karl-Heinz Wiesemann (Speyer) together with Archpriest Radu Constantin Miron (Cologne) and Pastor Christoph Stiba (Berlin), as well as the chairman of the ACK in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Pastor Matthias Tuve (Greifswald). Musical accompaniment for the service was provided by the integrative band "Seaside" and a brass band from the Protestant St.

John's Church in Greifswald. In a speech, Professor Michael Succow, biologist and laureate of the Alternative Nobel Prize, called for better conditions to ensure biodiversity and sustainability in farming. Organic agriculture, which also respected the connection between culture and nature, was essential for human livelihood in the future.

The motto for the year 2019 has already been chosen. The theme will be "Salt of the Earth", and the central celebration will take place in Heilbronn on 6 September 2019 on the site of the Federal German Garden Show.

## ACK Ecumenism Award 2019



In 2019, for the fourth time, the Council of Churches in Germany is going to award a prize for ecumenism. The prize is endowed with 3,000 euros and

will go to projects and initiatives that contribute to Christian unity. The prize money has been donated by four banks in Germany that mainly administer funds for the Protestant, Catholic and Free Churches. The patron of the award is Cardinal Walter Kasper, former President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Applications can be submitted by 31 May 2019. The award ceremony will take place on September 18, 2019, in Augsburg. Information and application under [www.oekumenepreis-der-ack.de](http://www.oekumenepreis-der-ack.de).

## Journey to the Holy Land



Inspired by the call of the World Council of Churches to a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, more than

20 young adults from ten different denominations of the Council of Churches in Germany travelled to the Holy Land. Between October 1 and 10, they visited a variety of places, institutions and groups in Israel and Palestine, among them Haifa, various biblical sites at the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea as well as churches, projects and institutions in Palestine, such

as the environmental project "Tent of Nations". In addition, the journey took them to Jerusalem, where the group met with representatives of Christian churches and other religions.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for the year 2019 come from Indonesia.

The theme "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue ..."

is inspired by Deuteronomy 16:18-20. These words remind Christians in Indonesia that unity can grow where people repent of injustice they have committed, and where they "pursue" righteousness together. The German language liturgy as well as other material for the Week of Prayer 2019 is to be found under [www.gebetswoche.de](http://www.gebetswoche.de). Printed copies have been published by Butzon & Bercker and are available in bookstores. Cards for self-commitment to be distributed at the service will be available from mid-November 2018 in the Ökumenische Centrale.



## ACK Conference

19-20 November 2018: Dialogue, Identity and Multiculturalism. Conference in the context of the project "Do you know who I am?" in the Jewish Community Centre in Frankfurt am Main.

Registration and information: Annika Foltin, [annika.foltin@weisstduwerichbin.de](mailto:annika.foltin@weisstduwerichbin.de), Tel. (069) 24702716.

Further information and events can be found at: [www.oekumene-ack.de](http://www.oekumene-ack.de).

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