

*The Coventry's Cross of Nails Centres in  
Berlin and in the Province of Brandenburg*

**A Way of Reconciliation**



**Coventry's Cross of Nails**

**“We try to banish all thoughts of revenge.”**

*Provost T. Richard Howard*

## *A Word of Welcome from the Dean of Tempelhof*

„The Word of God calls to friend and foe, whom His Spirit reconciles and unites.“ These are the words from a hymn in our Hymnal (No 454,5) which we sometimes sing in our morning services. This verse reminds me quite often of the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) and the important work which its members do.

Those involved in the Ministry of Reconciliation bear witness to our being profoundly inimicable and to our capability of being hostile to one another. How much suffering and destruction to other peoples and continents has our nation caused through the Nazis and the two World Wars. Therefore the friendship shown to us today by many nations cannot be taken for granted. This the CCN reminds us of again and again.

But the Spirit of God has indeed worked this wonder – we are united again with the Churches of those nations we once attacked and did battle with. We are again members of each other. We have experienced forgiveness. The CCN throws a network over Europe and bears witness to the possibility of a new beginning – even for those who are guilty of great wrongdoings.

Humility and gratefulness are the incentive for praying and working for reconciliation today and in every place where hatred and injustice prevail.

I am very happy that for over 50 years the CCN has a place in our Deanery. It is good that this ministry is centred at the Martin-Luther-Memorial Church. May God bless all who work here.

*Very Revd Isolde Böhm*

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## *The CCN-Centres in Berlin and in the Province of Brandenburg*

Dear Guests and Friends of the Reconciliation Movement,  
on this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Reconciliation in Mariendorf on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013 we welcome the Bishop of Coventry, Dr Christopher Cocksworth as our Guest Speaker. For this reason we have prepared a booklet to which the CCN-Centres in Berlin and in the Province of Brandenburg have all made their contributions.

In our region 13 parishes and christian institutions have been presented with Coventry's Cross of Nails. We also have several direct members of our community.

The first Crosses were brought to Berlin in 1962 and presented to the Action Reconciliation-Service for Peace, the Parish of the Four Evangelists in Pankow (former East-Berlin) and to the Tempelhof Deanery (former West-Berlin).

The Martin-Luther-Memorial-Church in Berlin-Mariendorf, which has been a CCN-Centre since 2003, has been celebrating a Day of Reconciliation in November since 2008. Other CCN-Centres have joined us in the planning and preparations. We are pleased over the co-operation of many CCN-Centres in the region which has now developed. Recently the temporary Chapel of the Garrison-Church in Potsdam has joined us. Now many Centres and interested persons from the region – and beyond – join us in celebrating the Day of Reconciliation.

The Contributions have been printed according to the date on which the centres joined the international community. Bishop Christopher and our partners in Coventry will receive a copy of this booklet in English. The booklet has been printed for all who join us to celebrate the Day of Reconciliation and all the CCN-Centres involved. We trust that through this booklet each centre will know what is happening in the other centres and thus be encouraged in their ministry.

Our special thanks go to our parishioner Mr Achim Oelkers for the layout and the preparations necessary for printing, and to Rev Robin A. Youett for the English translation.

*Anneliese Funke  
St. Marien*

*Klaus Wirbel  
MLGK*

## *The Bombing of the Cathedral 1940 and the Beginning of the Community of the Cross of Nails 1973*

I am delighted to have the opportunity to reflect with you on the beginning of the Community of the Cross of Nails.

The particular story of the Community of the Cross of Nails is part of the bigger story of the ministry of Coventry Cathedral which, in the words of the present Dean of the Cathedral, is „God's thumb-print“ on the Cathedral or, in another image, the distinctive elements of its DNA.



This story is told in a number of works – the most serious are actually written by Germans. Another good source is *Reconciling People*, published earlier this year to mark the coming Jubilee Celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the new Cathedral. However, my condensed version that follows, draws on an unpublished essay by Kenyon Wright, the first Director of International Ministry at the Cathedral.

Wright identifies four authors of the Coventry story, its first chapter at least.

First, there was Adolf Hitler, responsible for the bombing of Coventry and its Cathedral, a military strategy that coined a new verb, *to coventrate*.

Second, there was Richard Howard, the Provost (or Dean) of the time whose Christian character was so deeply formed that instinctly – on the morning after the bombing – he reached for reconciliation rather than revenge and made an immediate decision to rebuild the Cathedral as a symbol of hope. On Christmas Day 1940 he broadcast these notable words to the nation on the BBC from the ruins of the Cathedral, „What we need to tell the world is this: that with Christ born again in our hearts today, we are trying, hard as it may be, to banish all thoughts of revenge . . . We are going to try to make a kinder, simpler – a more Christ-Child-like sort of the world.“

## ***The Bombing of the Cathedral 1940 and the Beginning of the Community of the Cross of Nails 1973***

Third, there was Jock Forbes, the Cathedral Clerk of Works who, again on the day after the bombing, bound two smouldering wooden beams of the ruined Cathedral into the shape of the cross and placed this charred cross onto the heap of stones that had once been the altar.

Fourth, a priest, A. P. Wales, who took three large medieval nails that lay on the wreckage of the Cathedral, formed them into the shape of the cross and placed them onto the ruined altar along with the Charred Cross.

In proper reformation style, an interpretive word was added to these powerful symbols that was most certainly the word of the Lord: „Father, forgive“. Dick Howard had these two world-changing words inscribed into the East Wall of the bombed Cathedral underneath the Charred Cross and behind the altar of rubble. He chose not to quote the Lord's word from the cross in their full form „Father, forgive *them*“ but rather in the form that they were addressed to humanity at this point in its history, „Father, forgive“.

In my view, this decision is the theological root of the particular charism of the Cathedral. I like to call it „the Coventry confession of complicity“. It was an outworking of the doctrine of original sin, mutually responsible for the causes of our inhumanity to each other. Acknowledgement of complicity in sin was combined with commitment to solidarity in salvation: God's true shalom could only come through reconciliation between former enemies. This was the foundation of Coventry's ministry of „healing the wounds of history“.

Dick Howard's instinctive decision to rebuild the Cathedral became a national project. In an inspirational moment of theological vision, Basil Spence, a young architect, imagined the story that the Coventry's Cathedral was chosen to tell and won the competition to build the New Cathedral. In stone and space he narrated the story of the cross and resurrection, hope out of despair, the victory of God's love over human hate that is the deep truth embedded in the creation even before its foundation. It is a story that was actualized in the history of Jesus Christ and has been confessed by his authentic

## *The Bombing of the Cathedral 1940 and the Beginning of the Community of the Cross of Nails 1973*

followers ever since, especially in moments of human crisis. Like the magnificent Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche, Coventry's new Cathedral rises out of the ruins of the old as a sign and fortaste of the new creation which this season of Advent we wait with renewed longing.

Howard's work was done. He was succeeded by a young dynamic Dean, Bill Williams, who saw the world as his parish. Williams had a massive vision for the New Cathedral. It was to be – in his words – „a symbol of faith and hope“, „a laboratory experiment of Christian renewal“ and „a centre of multilateral and worldwide ministry“. Williams' convictions about the world-wide ministry of the Cathedral propelled him into an international work that began in Germany but soon extended across the globe. He presented replicas of the Cross of Nails to any community that he felt was genuinely committed to the work of peace and reconciliation.

As the international work developed it became too much for the Dean to sustain amid his other responsibilities and so, in 1973, Williams appointed Kenyon Wright as the Cathedral's first „Director of International Ministry“. Soon into post Kenyon proposed that the extensive network of Centres of the Cross of Nails established by Williams' prodigious contacts should be developed into the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN), and so the Community was born.

*- Address delivered 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011 in the Chapel Discussions of the Emperor William Memorial Church, Berlin*

*Bishop Dr Christopher Cocksworth (Coventry)*

## *The Old Parish Church, Pankow*

1945 after two terrible world wars the world population was exhausted. The outcry for a new beginning and reconciliation could not be ignored. Appropriate impulses were required. The Cross of Nails from Coventry became more and more such an effective symbol.

1940 Hitler ordered the German airforce to bomb the English city of Coventry. The middle-aged cathedral was reduced to a heap of rubble. Out of the collapsed roof timbers three hand-forged nails were removed and joined together to form a cross. Then Provost R. T. Howard had these words inscribed on the wall behind the altar:



### **Father forgive.**

From Jesus' prayer on the Cross the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation evolved and is today used all over the world in the decades after the Second World War in those places which have been presented the Cross of Nails.

In a special service Provost Williams presented us with the Cross in the Autumn of 1962 – and the Cathedral Choir sang. That was a minor political sensation, as this service was celebrated only one year after the Wall was built which radically cut off all connections with the West. And then such a service was celebrated! How was this possible?

Provost Howard was very competent in diplomacy and had managed to arrange an audience with the GDR-Secretary of State for Church Affairs, Mr Seigewasser. During their discussions both men discovered that they had both been involved in the Spanish Civil-War (1936-1939), albeit on opposite sides. But this recollection must have influenced the Secretary of State to grant the Provost's two requests:

- 1) That English youngsters should be permitted to assist in the re-erection of one of the wings of the Diakonesses' Hospital in Dresden as a sign of reconciliation.
- 2) That this special service could be celebrated in Pankow.

## *The Old Parish Church, Pankow*



But why did the Cathedral decide to present Pankow with a Cross of Nails? 25<sup>th</sup> May 1962 a new, very modern cathedral next to the ruins of the old one was consecrated in the presence of Her Majesty, the Queen. This the former Dean of Pankow, Helmut Gröpler, described in his book about the cathedral „The Angels held their breath“ (Berlin 1992, p.36) as „A building, which was crucified with Jesus has now been resurrected.“ In conjunction with the Cathedral's consecration silver-plated Crosses of Nails were sent out in all the world, especially to those churches who suffered under political adversaries. So one day one of these Crosses found its place on the agenda of a Board of Directors' meeting of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg (East). The Pankower Dean Krahnert was member of this board and he took the Cross with him for the Old Parish Church and the parish of Old Pankow.

Since then it has proved to be a great blessing, especially in the time of being „walled-in“, as various contacts to other CCN-Centres in West-Germany, in England and in the U.S.A. were possible and very



## *The Old Parish Church, Pankow*



supportative in our situation. For our congregation's peace ministry in the difficult times of the 1980ies the involvement in the international CCN provided us with an invisible protection against State repression. For this revealed the dilemma, which faced the GDR-ideology, as the partnership between Coventry and Dresden was acclaimed as a positive sign. Even in the school textbooks of the GDR this partnership was included in the subjectmatter: „Never again War.“ So the Cross of Nails always sought to attract public attention and the protection through the Holy Spirit was always experienced.

*Revd Dr Werner Krätschell,  
Companion of the Order of the Cross of Nails*

## *Martin Luther Memorial Church, Berlin*

The Martin-Luther-Memorial-Church in Berlin-Mariendorf was built after the plans of Dr Curt Steinberg (1880 – 1960) , the architect who was 1926 – 1928 also responsible for the parish hall in the Rathaus-street as part of the parish centre concept. At the beginning of 1931 the plans for the new church were presented for building permission, but because of the economical crisis they were postponed.

October 14<sup>th</sup> 1962 our Tempelhof Deanery was presented with a Coventry Cross of Nails. As a consequence of the intensive youth exchange Provost Williams of Coventry presented Bishop Dr Otto Dibelius the Cross of Nails. On the same day the Church of the Four Evangelists in Pankow also received the Cross of Nails.



This silver-plated Cross travelled from parish to parish in the Tempelhof Deanery, from South-Mariendorf to East-Mariendorf and finally on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2003 to the Martin Luther Memorial Church. Out of a steel I girder salvaged from a bombed house in Berlin a sculptor fashioned a support for the Cross with the words „Father forgive“ burnt in it. With this construction the Cross is put into context with the Litany of Reconciliation in our Church. This conception of forgiveness and reconciliation is vital to the Martin Luther Memorial Church as it is also visualized.

In our Church, whose foundation stone was laid in 1933, many Nazi symbols with their contemptuous discern for human life can still be seen. Our church has a Walker organ, some parts of which were used during the Nazi Party Conference in Nürnberg. But in the past 80 years people of all political persuasions and social backgrounds have met in this church for worship beyond all ideologies, to pray for

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God's glory, to give Him thanks, and to sing Him songs of praise. And now, many years later, people come to discuss the past.

This Church is symbolic of German history, it calls us to be wakeful, but also to exercise forgiveness and reconciliation, as it was also a refuge for persecuted. In this Church in 1938 the vicar, Revd Kurzreiter, baptised Johanna Klepper, the Jewish wife of the writer Jochen Klepper, and then conducted their marriage ceremony.



Against this background the Cross of Nails has a special significance. We not only celebrate various commemorative services, but we also invite people to attend our monthly Cross of Nails services on every fourth Friday with the Theme: „Forgive without forgetting.“ Since 2008 we celebrate every year our Reconciliation Day together with other CCN-Centres in Berlin and in the Province of Brandenburg. The Cross of Nails should call to mind that which Provost Howard once preached in his Cathedral:



**„Father forgive!“**

## *Martin Luther Memorial Church, Berlin*

As a practical consequence of our reconciliation ministry we have decided to support a project in the West-Bank. **Cinema Jenin** is the only cinema in the whole district, which was opened in August 2010 after great efforts and overcoming numerous difficulties. In co-operation with Palestinian and German friends Marcus Vetter, a film producer from Tuebingen, who visited us on one of our Reconciliation Days, was the motor behind this project. It was to become a „Cinema for Peace“. The cinema was closed down in 1987 as a result of the Palestinian conflicts with the Israeli army during the disturbances in the first Intifada. After the army destroyed over 600 dwellings in the refugee-camp of Jenin in 2002, things have quieted down and people can now lead a more-or-less normal life.

But this cinema should also become a place where Israeli neighbours can be met. The stage should also be used for concerts and plays. The German Goethe cultural institution participates with a videothek. Culture is important to provide people with a perspective. It can be felt how the cinema implants the hope that inhabitants of the region can lead peaceful lives in the future. This we want to encourage through our support of the project.

*Klaus Wirbel*

## Emperor William Memorial Church, Berlin

The church was built as a memorial to the German Emperor Wilhelm I and consecrated in 1895. This neoromantic church with its seating for 2,000 and its ostentatious splendour in the city centre soon became a distinctive hallmark of the growing capital. But the church did not survive for fifty years. The bombardment in the night of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> November 1943 reduced it to a ruined tower and a rubble-filled nave. In the first years after the war the ruins were cleared of the rubble and from 1953 onwards services and concerts were occasionally held in the open air, as in the Cathedral ruins in Coventry.

Kaiser-  
Wilhelm-  
Gedächtnis-  
Kirche  
Berlin



After the walls of the nave were demolished because they were in danger of falling down, long and lively discussions were conducted over the future of the church. At first the Architect Egon Eiermann planned to demolish the tower-ruins as well, but when his plans became public, there was an outcry of the Berlin citizens. So the tower-ruins, soon called „the hollow tooth“ remained as a distinctive hallmark and focus point for the people of Berlin. The plans for rebuilding the church were then altered to retain the tower-ruins in its centre.

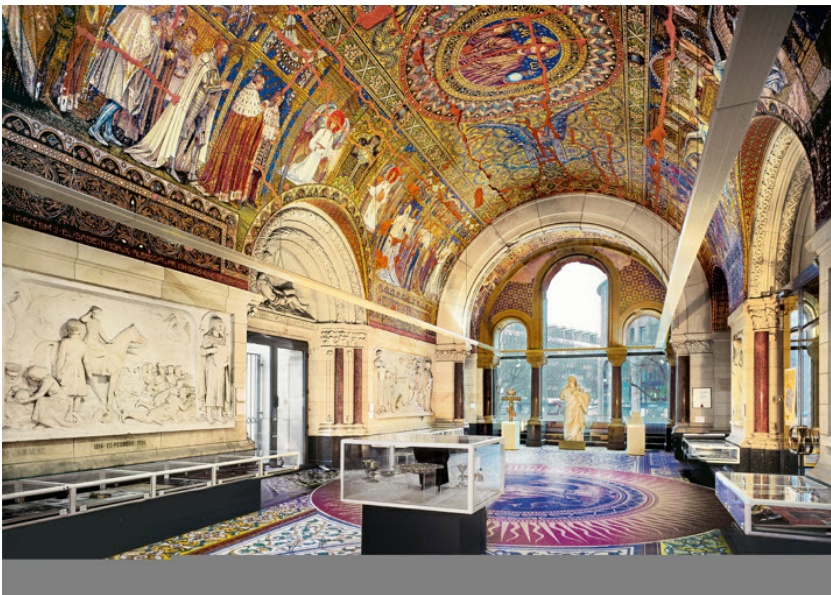


**Photo: © Katharina Dorn /  
publicon Verlagsgesellschaft mbH**

The relationship between Coventry Cathedral and the Emperor William Memorial Church go back a long way. As early as 15<sup>th</sup> November 1965 Provost Williams preached in

## *Emperor William Memorial Church, Berlin*

the Memorial Church on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cathedral's destruction. When Berlin celebrated its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1987, the tower-ruins were consecrated as a Hall of Remembrance in January of that year and Canon Paul Oestreicher presented the congregation with a Cross of Nails. This has been placed on the west side (to the right) of the damaged statue of Christ, which had previously stood over the altar of the old church. On the east side (to the left) stands a Russian-Orthodox Iconical-Cross which Archbishop German presented to the congregation during the Easter-Night service. These two signs of reconciliation from the East and from the West exemplify this Church's central ministry as a memorial against war.



**Photo: © Katharina Dorn / publicon Verlagsgesellschaft mbH**

Since January 1987 the Coventry Litany is celebrated every Friday at 1:00 p.m. (12:00 English time) in the Hall of Remembrance of the old tower. This service is attended regularly by 10 to 30 parishioners and visitors to the Hall experience indirectly something of the history of Coventry Cathedral and the Community of the Cross of Nails.

## *Emperor William Memorial Church, Berlin*

Quite often many interesting discussions are lead after the service.

Our guided tours, four to five daily, which about one million tourist join every year, also include the history of the CCN. These tours terminate in front of the „Stalingrad Madonna“, a copy of which was presented to Coventry Cathedral in November 1990 on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its destruction and which now hangs in the Millenium Chapel.

The deep relationship between the Cathedral and the Memorial-Church, both world-wide known as „Symbolic Ruins“ commemorating the horrors of the Second

World War, is still being nurtured. I remember with pleasure that in December 2011 Bishop Christopher and Canon David attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the new Church's consecration. In February 2012 the Cathedral's Boys Choir gave a concert and a year later the newly installed Dean John paid us a visit with Canon David. I am very grateful to Bishop Christopher that he has agreed to preach on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at the commemoration service of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Church's destruction.



**Photo: © Katharina Dorn /  
publicon Verlagsgesellschaft mbH**

*Revd Dr Cornelia Kulawik*

## *Kreisau House, Berlin*

The Kreisau House, an establishment for further education for young people and a retreat house for the Church's Apprentices Mission, welcomes every year about 10.000



apprentices and students, offering them an opportunity of learning together and deepening their fellowship with one another. Here they have time to discuss subjects which are enhanced through joint experiences, and for which they would have little time for in their busy daily lives.

We became a CCN-Centre on a rather roundabout way: the Cross was initially presented to the Industrial Youth, a department of the Church's Industrial Mission. 1996 this Youth Department, which Harald Poelchau had founded after the Second World War, was then



amalgamated with the Church's Apprentices Mission. And so the Cross came to the Kreisau House.

It became evident: Those who were inspired by the spirit of the \*Kreisau Circle and were responsible for the further education of young people from different social backgrounds and of different religious beliefs and life-styles, those who strove for answers to the actual political questions, and those who sought a responsible ordering of their personal lives and a more equitable transformation of a democratic society, they will find themselves well catered for in the Community of the Cross of Nails.

So for the last 20 years this Cross of Nails has now found its place in our House on the outskirts of Berlin. It soon became evident how



## *Kreisau House, Berlin*

much more difficult it was, to fill with life in the practice our full identification with the ideals of the CCN.

How can the Cross of Nails or even the Coventry Litany be made relevant in an establishment for further education, which most young people just visit for one day in their lives? How can the impulses coming from the Christian tradition in Coventry effect visitors who are mostly non-religious or do not have a christian background? What are the possibilities of a spiritual life, when this at the very best is only observed by the staff members?

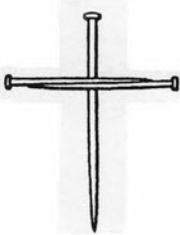
We are confronted again with these questions since our decision to intensify our membership in the CCN. We seek ways, which honour our membership with an adequate expression. Only the future will show us, how our efforts with young people from diverse religions, cultures, professions and even countries will bear fruit. But we are completely confident that with the impulses we give, we will succeed in planting seeds which will grow to promote reconciliation and tolerance.

*Revd Marcus Götz-Guerlin*

*(\*Members of the Kreisau Circle were opposed to the Nazi-Government)*



## *Monastery Church, Neuruppin*



Those who enter the church will see the Cross of Nails over the recess in the wall on the left side of the entrance. This Cross of Nails was presented 1994 to the parish by Canon Dr Paul Oestreicher, Coventry Cathedral's former Director of the Reconciliation Ministries.

It was through the efforts of the former vicar, Revd Helmut Groepler, CCN Companion, who was very active in the reconciliation ministry, that Neuruppin became the 21<sup>st</sup> member of the CCN in Germany.

We here in Neuruppin try to fill the idea of reconciliation with spiritual life. We are just a small group who meet about ten times a year to discuss various issues from biblical to actual political themes and once a year we celebrate a Cross of Nails service.

Our group is open to all visitors and we would welcome any new members.

*Susanne Groepler*



*Eva Messow*

## *Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin*

The congregation received its name from the Empress Auguste Viktoria at the consecration of the church in 1894. „Be ye reconciled with God“ (2. Cor.5, 20) was the verse she wrote in the Altar Bible she presented to the congregation for the church she had sponsored – an effort of the royal family to be reconciled with the proletariat, as the parish was in a working-class area.

The chapel was built on the boundary which separated West-Berlin from East-Berlin on the foundations of the Church of Reconciliation, which the GDR-Regime demolished 1985. Both sides of the Bernauer Street were lined with blocks of flats. The church was on the east side. Until 1961 those who stepped onto the street from their dwellings were in West-Berlin and if their place of work was in East-Berlin, then they had to pass through the checkpoint in the Acker Street to enter East-Berlin. Many people fled from their flats on the east side of the street, despite the fact that the front doors and windows on this side were soon walled up.

Since August 13<sup>th</sup> 1961 no-one living in the West could enter the church. This was only possible for people living in East-Berlin, until October 1961, when everything was shut off.

Ten years after the opening of the Berlin Wall, the congregation celebrated the consecration of their new church building, the Chapel of Reconciliation. During these festivities representatives of Coventry Cathedral, led by Paul Oestreicher, presented the congregation with a Cross of Nails and a copy of Josefine de Vasconcello's sculpture „Reconciliation“ to mark their enrollment in the CCN. The sculpture is placed in front of the Chapel's entrance, the Cross of Nails inside the building. We were grateful for the British offering their hand of reconciliation to us Germans and recognised in this gesture God calling us



## *Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin*

over the pain-ridden divisions of German history to overcome divisions worldwide through the power of prayer.

In the centre of our ministry of reconciliation are the services in which we use the Coventry Litany. For over 14 years these services are held on every Friday evening alternatively by four of our congregational members. The main emphasis individually differs, but essentially commemorates those who have opposed any form of coercion and have worked for reconciliation, thus giving impulses to worldwide tolerance and understanding.

In this context there is a close connection between these services and the services the chapel celebrates every Saturday at noon and the services commemorating those killed on the Berlin Wall, „The Dead of the Wall commemorative services“ in which the life story of one of them is told. There is usually a lively discussion with the tourists after one of these services.

The chapel is open six days a week for almost the whole year. This is made possible by a small number of our parishioners, who are assisted by the organisation „Open Houses“, where young people of various nationalities have been asked to cooperate with us. In addition to our services and devotions this gives us an occasion to communicate with a large number of people from all over the world and to discuss problems which deeply concern them and us.

Both sides the chapel are bordered by a field of rye, an



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ecological aspect, which many consider to be a symbol for the reconciliation between mankind and nature. This rye-project is supported by the agricultural and horticultural faculty of Berlin's Humboldt-University.

In November 2012 our former vicar founded a society called "Friedensbrot" ("Peace-Loaf") with the idea of presenting grains of rye harvested 2012 to be planted in 2013 in places which were of symbolical and historical importance at the time of Germany's turning-point in countries which had joined the Common Market since 1989. 2014, when we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wall's opening, rye-grains harvested from these places will return to Berlin to be mixed with grains harvested here, to be ground to flour, made into dough and then baked to become a common European „peace-loaf“.

Our congregation is a small one and there are few parishioners who are prepared to do honorary work. So we have to confine our activities to those described.

*The team concerned with reconciliation work*



## *Military Chaplaincy, Berlin District*

In a special service on February 12<sup>th</sup> 1999 in the Coventry Cathedral Provost John Petty presented me with the Cross of Nails for the Military Chaplaincy in the Berlin District, whose plenipotentiary I had been since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998. This had been recommended by the former chair of the German CCN, Revd Karl-Anton Hagedorn and without doubt had something to do with my being a CCN's Companion, a member of the international advisory committee.

Provost Petty had decided to present to me the Cross of Nails which had been presented to the military chaplain Revd Herbert Tratz for his duties as chaplain to the German Airforce and later as chaplain to the Navy. After his retirement he had returned this Cross to the cathedral. But this Cross had a special significance as it had been embedded in a sandstone fragment from the ruins of the old cathedral and could so be moved about.

But this service on February 12<sup>th</sup> 1999 had its significance in that the official transfer of the „Lantern“, the crowning element of the cupola of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, took place. The Lantern had been constructed in England as a contribution to the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche and as a sign of reconciliation. The Lord Mayors of Coventry and Dresden and the German Ambassador, Count von Moltke were in attendance. The Bishop of Saxony sent his representative, Revd Ulrike Birkner-Kettenacker, who served the last GDR Government under de Maizière als Ambassador in London, as he himself could not attend the service.

Since then this Cross has played an important role in services and sermons within and outside the Military Chaplaincy, especially in the close partnerschaft between the German and the Polish Military Chaplaincies furthering and deepening the ministry of reconciliation.

*Revd Dr Werner Krättschell*

## Garrison Church, Potsdam

The Chapel Royal and Garrison Church was built in 1735 by the Prussian King Friedrich-William I and for many decades served the military chaplaincy for the lutheran members of the armed forces and Chapel Royal for the reformed members of the royal household. 1817 the Old Prussian Union was founded in this church when lutheran and reformed Christians celebrated Holy Communion together for the first time since the Reformation. But this building, originally erected to „the greater glory of God“, experienced many changes in its churchmanship and its political significance. As a Reformed Church the interior in its simplicity had no embellishments but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was soon cluttered up with war trophies and the regimental flags of the vanquished armies.



Photo: © Monika Schulz-Fieguth

The peak of its political embarrassment was experienced on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1933 as the newly elected Imperial Parliament met for its constitutional session in which the old Prussian powers amalgamated

## *Garrison Church, Potsdam*

with the new ones. President Field-Marshal von Hindenburg met Adolf Hitler in the Church.

In the air raid on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1945 the Church was burnt out, but the ruins could still be used by the congregation for church services until 1968. The building was then confiscated and the ruins were finally demolished on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1968 – and that was on a Sunday.

43 years later a prefabricated chapel was erected and consecrated on the site of the Garrison Church. Since then we celebrate services every Saturday evening, as well as holding special services commemorating the Reformation of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517 and the assassination attempt on Hitler of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1944. The Coventry Litany is an integral part of our liturgy.

The Chapel is a place for church services and for praying for world-wide peace and reconciliation. But it is also a place for



**The exhibition about the history of the Garrison-Church  
Photo: © Monika Schulz-Fieguth**



## *Garrison Church, Potsdam*

education and remembrance as it houses an exhibition for school children and confirmation classes. 2013 our accent was placed on the National Socialist inflagroration of rejected literature in 1933. Readings were taken from some of these books and a workshop was held for students over the question of freedom of speech in the modern democracy.

On 20<sup>th</sup> Juli 2004 a Cross of Nails was presented to us on the site of the former and future Garrison-Church. Next year we celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this presentation. In the Chapel and on the building site of the new Garrison Church we plan to celebrate a week of festivity, in which the conspirators of the 20<sup>th</sup> Juli 1944 will be commemorated, many of whom came from Potsdam, were stationed in the barracks across the road and were members of the congregation. It would be most appreciated if we could also welcome representatives from Coventry at these anniversary celebrations.

*Revd Juliane Rumpel*



**Photo: © Monika Schulz-Fieguth**

## *St. Mary's Church, Berlin (old city centre)*

Since 8<sup>th</sup> May 2005 the Cross of Nails stands in the St. Mary's Church, Alexanderplatz. Our church was built in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is now the only mediaeval church which survived the bombings of the Second World War and resisted the demolitions of the post-war times. So it now stands alone at the foot of the Television Tower, opposite the Red Town Hall in a city centre which has been rebuilt according to the socialistic planning conceptions of the twentieth century's sixties and seventies.

On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War the Cross of Nails was presented to the parish in an ecumenical service. Since then we hold a service for peace every Friday at 12:30 p.m. with an organ recital on our Wagner organ. In this service we use the Coventry Litany and explain the meaning of the Cross of Nails. These services are conducted not only by members of our staff but also by members of our congregation. Every day many tourists from home and abroad visit our church as the last surviving medieval monument and a city church. On Fridays they will be invited to join with regular members of our congregation attending our midday services, to spend a time of quiet, of contemplation and prayer.



**The Cross of Nails in St. Mary's Church**  
**Photo: © St. Marien - St. Petri**

## ***St. Mary's Church, Berlin (old city centre)***

Otherwise there is always the opportunity to spend a time of prayer in front of the Cross of Nails that stands on a side altar in our church, which is open every day. There is also a flyer about the CCN's ministry of reconciliation that can be studied. Guided tours, arranged in co-operation with the church school in the city centre, also explain the meaning of the Cross of Nails and the beginning of the CCN's ministry.



**St. Mary's Church**  
**Photo: © Wilhelm Poeschel**

As a CCN-Centre our parish of St.Mary and St.Peter is responsible for many spiritual activities. Not only church services and contemplative series with relevant political and theological themes, ecumenical complines, commemorative services and university services, but also projects which point to the future. One of these is the building of a meditation centre on the foundations of the demolished St.Peter's Church. Here in the old city centre a „House of Prayer and Instruction“ will be open for the three monotheistic religions - Jews, Christians and Moslems.

This project furthers the aims of the reconciliation ministry coming from Coventry and of building a culture of peaceful dialogues.

*Anneliese Funke*

## *St. George's Anglican (Episcopal) Church, Berlin*

Our church was built in 1950 for the chaplaincy of the British Army and after the military left Berlin in 1994 it was given to the civil congregation, but without a military chaplain. The Cross of Nails was presented to us in a special service we celebrated in St. Mary's Church on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Also



a Cross of Nails was presented to St. Mary's Church. Since that time we held our evening services there.

Our congregation has two projects, one regarding anglican services in the Frauenkirche in Dresden and the other regarding the partnership with Anglican Parishes of the Good Shepherd in Rafidia and St.Philipp's in the old city centre of Nablus in Palestine.

Both the Coventry Cathedral and the Frauenkirche in Dresden were destroyed in the Second World War. Immediately after the Cathedral's destruction Provost Howard appealed for reconciliation with Germany and expressly rejected any form of retribution.

As the Frauenkirche had been destroyed through the bombing of the R.A.F. there was a parallel drawn to Coventry Cathedral, which had been destroyed by the Luftwaffe. Both Churches were then reconstructed with the assistance of the former combattants. The intimate relationship which then grew up between Coventry and Dresden is itself an example of the ministry of the CCN.

It was for this reason, that Canon Paul Oestreicher, as he was then the Cathedral's Director of the Reconciliation Ministries, suggested

## ***St. George's Anglican (Episcopal) Church, Berlin***

that we should celebrate Evensong once a month in the Frauenkirche. As there was no Anglican Chaplain in Dresden, he asked me to do this, as for us Dresden was not very far away.

Our evening services in the Frauenkirche are much appreciated by the people of Dresden and by the tourists, even when afterwards saying „Goodbye“ outside the church we sometimes hear: „I don't speak any English but I did enjoy the service.“ This is also reconciliation over the language barriers, as at Pentecost.

In the past six years of my ministry in Dresden I have invited many clergy from England to preach in the Frauenkirche. They were all enraptured and much moved. This, I believe, has strengthened the relationship between England and Germany as intended by the CCN and the Meissen Agreement.

*Revd Dr Irene Ahrens*

The second project of our reconciliation ministry is our partnership with the Anglican parish in Nablus und Rafidia in Palestine.

Christian Kercher, a member of our congregation, had met Father Ibrahim Nairuz, Vicar of the Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd in Rafidia and of St.Philipp's Church in the old city centre of Nablus, during his internship with the E.A.P.P.I., a project of the W.C.C., which monitors the Israeli Army's Checkpoints on the Palestinian borders. In the spring and summer of 2008 his team was centred in Yanoun, a village outside Nablus, to protect the farming population from the violent infringements of the extremist Israeli settlers of Itamar and Yizhar.

In February 2012, together with Christian, I visited Nablus and the neighbouring Rafidia. About 700 Christians still live there, but they feel very isolated. Not just because they live as a minority among Muslims, but mainly because of the Checkpoints, the Israeli partition-wall and the absence of pilgrims. The loss of prospect due to the high rate of unemployment brought about by the Israeli Military Régime is the main reason for many young christians to leave their homes

## ***St. George's Anglican (Episcopal) Church, Berlin***

in the biblical Samaria after completing their education at school and at university and head for Europe and the U.S.A.



**Father Ibrahim Nairuz and Revd Canon Christopher Jage-Bowler at  
Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, Nablus-Rafidia**

During our visit we agreed to set up a foundation to grant members of the Anglican congregations with loans to set up their own businesses and enterprises and later to include members of the other three Christian Churches in Nablus, the Greek Orthodox, the Melchidian and the Roman Catholic.

We also agreed to remember our partnership in our intercessions on the first Sunday every month.

*Revd Canon Christopher Jage-Bowler*

## *Convent of the Holy Sepulchre, Brandenburg*

The convent was founded 1287 by the Cistercienser Order. 1548 it became a protestant convent after the Elector of Brandenburg, Joachim II, introduced the reformation. The nuns resisted at first but then accepted the protestant churchmanship and so the convent survived. 1742 Friedrich II the Great raised the convent into a charitable institution for female members of the nobility. 1847 it became a Public School for daughters of impoverished noble families until 1945. 1946 to 1997/8 the convent provided a home to the Friedenshort-Deaconesses who had fled from Upper-Silesia with the orphans in their care. Later they cared for persons special needs.

1952 the curate of the village church, Ingeborg-Maria Freiin von Werthern, was installed as Abbess and she officiated until a few months before she died in 1996. She managed to found a new Chapter in 1995 by the installation of two canonesses.



As from 1998 much restoration and refurbishing work is being done on and in the historical buildings.

## *Convent of the Holy Sepulchre, Brandenburg*

2001 the retired minister, Revd Dr Friederike Rupprecht was installed as new Abbess. Through her ministry the convent became a spiritual and cultural centre in the region. The Chapter's membership increased to nine canonesses, of whom four are resident. Together with the staff members they carry out their duties in accordance with the Convent's statutes. Life in the community is governed by the daily services, including the prayers for peace. The canonesses spiritual life is based on the old Benedictine Order of „ora et labora“ (pray and work).

An important aspect of the Chapter's ministry is the care of women who are looking for a time of respite. Otherwise the Chapter offers retreats, devotional exercises, seminars, concerts and convent-markets.

In November 2011 the Convent was accepted as a CCN Centre and sees its reconciliation ministry in the context of a G . D . R . Churchless environment. This includes offering young people the opportunity to join work-shops run by



the International Youth Fellowship Services and the Youth Buildingworks – a voluntary year with the Authority for the Care of Ancient Monuments. They can also join the Convent's Church Secondary School.

*Gudrun Runge*



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*Photographies of past Reconciliation Days*

