

Can the wounds of history be healed?

International Gathering for young reconcilers in Berlin

We invite young members of the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) and young people interested in reconciliation to the next international youth gathering in Berlin from 12th to 13th October 2024!



Berlin has been shaped like no other German city by German history, particularly the National Socialist Regime, the Second World War and the division of Germany. We will discuss with our Berlin partners, including Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, the Chapel of Reconciliation, the Martin-Niemöller-Haus Berlin-Dahle, Martin-Luther-Memorial-Church and the Garrison Church in Potsdam, if the wounds of history can be healed. We will focus on different forms of remembrance and how wounds can be healed without neglecting the critical appraising of past crimes. We will also talk about the rise of populism in Germany and Europe and what this means for remembrance and reconciliation work.

WHO	Young people interested in reconciliation aged 18-28, German participants aged 16 to 18 can participate with parental consent. Young reconcilers older than 28 but still studying can reach out to the organisers.
NON-EUROPEAN PARTICIPANTS	To make organisation and planning easier, young reconcilers outside of Europe should reach out to the organisers asap. This is especially important if you require a visa for Germany. We can also discuss higher financial support (see below).
ACCOMMODATION	Private homes of members of the Community or hostels. Accommodation can be extended beyond the conference to a reasonable extent.
COST	There is no cost to attend, other than a small charge for dinner. Travel and/or accommodation costs can be subsidised up to a certain amount: up to €50 for travel of less than three hours by train, up to €90 for travel of more than three hours by train, up to €120 for necessary flights. There is a possibility of higher funding depending on the number of participants and their travel needs. If interested participants need more financial support to make their participation possible, they should contact the organisers as soon as possible.

*If you're interested in participating, it would be helpful for the organisers if you would already indicate your interest here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd4-xLxKAIES31O8U97mobfSNOxWiCRFHtOJ2SBkCeNk2uwjg/viewform?usp=sf_link
If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at jugendkonferenz@nagelkeuz.org*

Preliminary programme

Friday evening	Dinner (optional, for those already in Berlin)
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SATURDAY, 12TH OCTOBER 2024

10am	Start of conference at Martin-Niemöller-Haus Welcome and short introductions
10.15am - 12am	Martin-Niemöller-Haus: What was the role of the church under National Socialism and what are the implications for our actions in the present day?
12-12.30am	Transfer by public transport
12.30am- 2pm	Martin-Luther-Memorial-Church: Lunch and Lunch Talk Working for reconciliation in a church with ideological symbols
2-3pm	Coffee break and transfer by public transport
3-5pm	Kaiser-Wilhelm-Memorial-Church: Destroyed and rebuilt: healing the wounds of history in Coventry and Berlin
5-5.30pm	Coffee break and transfer by public transport
5.30pm- 6.45pm	Chapel of Reconciliation: Healing the wounds of history on the former death strip between East and West Germany
6.45pm	Dinner and free time

SUNDAY, 13TH OCTOBER 2024

9-10am	Transfer by public transport
10-12am	Garrison Church, Potsdam: The destroyed church was abused by the National Socialists - should it have been rebuilt?
12.30pm- 1.15pm	Garrison Church, Potsdam The work of the Community of the Cross of Nails Talk (via videolink) by the Very Revd John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry Cathedral
1.15-1.30pm	Closing of conference Feedback round and good-buys
1.30pm	End of conference Free time in Potsdam and/or Berlin (optional)

Information on discussion partners

Martin-Niemöller-Haus Berlin-Dahlem

The Martin-Niemöller-Haus - Martin Niemöller's historic vicarage - is a place of remembrance of the church struggle in the 1930s and the Christian-motivated resistance against the Nazi dictatorship. Through events and educational programmes, it critically examines the role of the church under National Socialism and asks about the implications for our actions in the present. The association's activities encourage courageous commitment to democracy and a participatory society and bring a Protestant understanding of education into dialogue with today's diverse society.

Martin-Luther-Memorial-Church

Since January 2003, the Cross of Nails has stood in the Martin Luther Memorial Church, built in 1933, in which symbols of the National Socialist era with its inhuman ideology are still visible today. However, for over 70 years, people from the most diverse and political backgrounds have celebrated worship in this church for the glory of God, and in which the word of God has proven to be more enduring than any ideology.

Kaiser-Wilhelm-Memorial-Church

The church in the heart of Berlin was badly damaged in a bombing raid in 1943. The present church was built after the Second World War. The damaged spire of the old church has been retained and its ground floor made into a memorial hall. The church is a memorial for peace and a place of remembrance. As a Cross of Nails Centre, it is dedicated to reconciliation work and ecumenical and interreligious exchange.

Coventry Cathedral and the Community of the Cross of Nails

Coventry Cathedral is most famously known for being bombed during WW2, which left Coventry Cathedral and much of the city centre in ruins. From this comes the story of Coventry Cathedral's reconciliation, which begins the day after the destruction of the Old Cathedral on the 14th November 1940: Provost Dick Howard (who led the Cathedral during WW2) made a commitment to not seek revenge, but to strive for forgiveness and, ultimately, reconciliation with those responsible, which at the time was seen to be very radical thinking, with war still raging. The Community of the Cross of Nails is a worldwide network of some 260 churches, charities, chaplaincies, peace-building and retreat centres, schools and other educational and training organisations, all inspired by the Coventry story of destruction, rebuilding and renewal, and active in reconciliation in our own ways. Our three guiding principles are Healing the wounds of history, Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity, and Building a culture of justice and peace. We are guided by the words 'Father Forgive', and we pray the Litany of Reconciliation on a regular basis.

Chapel of Reconciliation

The Chapel was built in 1999 on the former death strip between East and West Berlin, partly from the fragments of the historic Church of Reconciliation and on the foundations of its large neo-Gothic predecessor building, which was blown up in January 1985 by the East German government (GDR). Located directly on the border - between the Soviet and French sectors - it had become inaccessible after the Wall was built on August 13, 1961. The chapel unites architectural and ecological modernity with remembrance, standing as a triumph against its predecessor's destruction.

Garrison Church, Potsdam

The Court and Garrison Church in Potsdam stands for the eventful German history of the past three centuries, but especially of the 20th century. There is no question that the historic church was also a place of anti-democratic and traditionalist forces and was seen as a symbol of militarism. On March 21, 1933, the "Day of Potsdam", the National Socialists staged Adolf Hitler's seizure of power in the National Protestant church. Additionally, many members of the 20th of July belonged to this congregation.

After the German reunification, the Garrison Church is currently being rebuilt as a center for remembrance and reconciliation.