

“Guide our feet into the path of peace” - 1914 - 2014

Central worship service of the CPCE
in commemoration of the beginning
of the First World War

on August 3rd, 2014, 10:30 a.m.,
in Gunsbach / Alsace



photo: Roger Mielke/EKD

Village church of Gunsbach

Vienna, May 2014

Dear Madam / Sir,
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

July 28th and August 1st, 2014 will see the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. This “seminal catastrophe of the 20th century” (George F. Kennan) has left deeply-felt traces in the national and cultural memories of the peoples in Europe.

On the one hand, for the churches this commemoration is linked with the insight that, at least in Germany, they have been too ready and willing to put themselves at the disposal of war mobilization. On the other hand, for instance at the Constance Peace Conference, a small minority of Christian men and women clung to the Gospel’s witness of peace. Thus they were able to lay the foundations for peaceful reconciliation which through failure and guilt, has brought together the peoples of Europe today in an order of peace. As we have seen, especially in the political developments of recent months, this order of peace is not unchallenged. On the contrary, it constantly needs special and explicit support.

As the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe we want to proclaim the gospel’s message of peace in a central worship service of commemoration and we want to pray to God that HE “may guide our feet into the way of peace”.

I would also like to invite you, on behalf of our partner church UEPAL, to come to Gunsbach in Alsace into the close vicinity of the battle fields at the Lingekopf and at the Hartmannsweiler Kopf on August 3rd at 10:30 a.m. A meeting between President François Hollande and Joachim Gauck will also take place there on that date.

As guests we will be able to attend our worship service in the very village church where Albert Schweitzer’s father had been pastor and where Schweitzer himself had often played the organ. Gunsbach, as seat of the International Albert Schweitzer Foundation, is closely linked to Schweitzer’s message of peace. Together with delegations from our partner churches, young

people from many countries in Europe will worship in this service with us. They will come from two youth camps of the Protestant Voluntary Services within the Evangelical Church of Germany which will take place in the Land of Baden.

Following the worship service we are invited to the local Salle des Fêtes in Gunsbach where we will have lunch and meet the local community and the young people.

For those guests of our partner churches who come from farther away and who want to spend the night from Saturday to Sunday in Gunsbach we have reserved 12 rooms in the Old Vicarage in Gunsbach which is now used as a hostel.

To participate as well as to reserve an overnight stay we kindly ask you to register by June 15th at the Kirchenamt der EKD (Administrative Church Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany; karin.treiber@ekd.de, 0049 511 27 96 412).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Friedrich Weber". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Prof. Dr. Friedrich Weber