

community

The New Apostolic Church around the world

04/2025/EN

The Spirit of truth

Editorial

Doing good in
every situation

Divine service

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Doctrine

Repentance and the path
to salvation

New Apostolic Church
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Doing good in every situation

We have been called to do good. Acting on this may be easier in times when we can enjoy beautiful and good things. Right now, this is not the case for everybody. Many may be worried about their health, their children, or their family. There may be financial difficulties or problems at work. And yet, everyone is called to do good.

Jesus comes and says to those who have problems and worries, “I am here, don’t worry. I will take care of you, I will help you. But please, even in this difficult time, do not forget your salvation. Do not forget your calling; your salvation should be your priority. And as difficult as it may be in this special situation, strive to do good despite all your worries.”

Some of our sisters and brothers are currently feeling uncertain, which I can understand. When we see all the upheavals in the world and in society, it is natural to feel uncertain. Some are even afraid of what lies ahead and wonder what the future will bring. Jesus also comes to you and says,



NACI International

“I’m here, don’t worry. I have everything under control. I will complete My plan. I will complete My work. I will do my part. But please do not forget your salvation and do not forget that you have been called to do good.”

Heartfelt greetings

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Jean-Luc Schneider

The Spirit of truth



Simon Kisselbach, Frank Schuidt/NAC Western Germany



On Pentecost, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted a divine service in Wiesbaden, Germany

John 16: 13

*However, when He,
the Spirit of truth, has come,
He will guide you into all truth.*

On Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit revealed Himself to humankind. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the promise made by Jesus to His disciples was also fulfilled. He had foretold and promised them that He would send a Comforter, who would support, help, and guide them. And since Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit has been at work in His church and proclaims the truth of God—particularly there where the apostolate is active. The Holy Spirit speaks the truth and leads us into truth. The Holy Spirit tells us the truth about God. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is clear and simple: Jesus Christ is the true God. Whoever sees and hears Jesus Christ sees and hears God. God truly is as Jesus Christ was. Of course, God revealed Himself in creation and in the Old Testament. However, we can only recognise the true nature of God in the words, deeds, and nature of Jesus Christ.

I always feel pity when I see that many Christians still see God as He revealed Himself in the Old Testament: the strict God who gives rules; the punishing God who kills those who are not on His side. Please, dear brothers and sisters worldwide, this is not our God! For us it is clear that the true God is Jesus Christ. We recognise God in the deeds, words, and nature of Jesus Christ. If we want to know God's will, we do not look for it in the Old Testament, nor in creation, nor in the stars, or wherever else. The will of God for us is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And when we seek God's help, we do not seek it from people or from things in which supernatural power becomes active or effective. We seek help from Jesus Christ whether we live in Europe, Africa, or elsewhere in the world. Our helper is Jesus Christ, not some person or thing in which supernatural powers are at work. We recognise the will of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, not in other human beings or anywhere else. The Holy Spirit leads us into the truth. Let us remember this: Jesus Christ is the true God.

The Holy Spirit tells us the truth. And He sticks to His promises. He tells us, "Trust in God, He is reliable. He

will do exactly what He has promised." And now we must understand that the truth of God is always related to eternal life. What the Holy Spirit teaches is always related to eternal life. Why do I say this? Because it has happened several times that I have spoken to brothers and sisters who were very disappointed. They had a problem and a minister told them, "Don't worry, everything will be fine"—but that wasn't the case. The prediction was not fulfilled. Dear

brothers and sisters, why did this minister say that? I personally look at it the following way. By saying this, the minister wanted to show that he shared in their concern and suffering and hoped, prayed, and wished that God would now do what they would ask of Him. And

indeed, this is often the case. But it can also happen that God says, "No, I have other plans." This is something we cannot explain or understand, but that should never make us doubt in God's love. God's truth always relates first and foremost to eternal life. God keeps His promises. And those who do what Jesus Christ taught will never be disappointed. They will obtain eternal life.

This is a second point that we want to remember on this Pentecost: God is true and reliable. He will give us eternal

God keeps what He promises. He will always keep His promises.



Young people from the Regional Church Western Germany formed the choir



*Let us make sure
that our yes remains a yes.
Yes to God, no to evil.*

life, which He promised us. He will complete His work, and nothing can hinder Him from doing that. And if I believe in Jesus Christ and follow Him, I will receive eternal life. God is truth and does what He promises.

Nowadays, the truth has become a problem in the world. This, however, was already the case in biblical times. Just think of Pilate. When he questioned Jesus, he said, "What is truth?" (John 18: 38). Truth is a problem for many, many people nowadays. Reality is presented and interpreted in so many different ways. It is crazy. There is one fact but there are hundreds of ways to present and interpret it. So many people nowadays are confused. So what is truth? Many people are convinced that they are not being told the truth. They think that something is being kept from them. This then results in their looking for information from those who really only say what they want to hear. And with my limited experience I can definitely say that it is exactly the same everywhere. Because of this lack of trust, people only want to hear what they want to hear. They are no longer

interested in anything else. The consequence of this is that society is becoming increasingly divided.

What is truth? Brother, sister, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth. This has always been the truth and will remain the truth forever. We see the world and the events in the world in the light of the gospel. And we see our fellow human beings in the light of the gospel. We see our own lives in the light of the gospel. And we see the future, our own and the future of the world, in the light of the gospel. Let us remember this third point: for us, the gospel is the truth, and we stick to it and align our decisions and our lives according to this truth.

The Holy Spirit tells us the truth also about ourselves. The thought immediately comes to mind, "Oh no, now things are going to get uncomfortable." The Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus Christ. He shows us His glory, His perfection. And if I am honest with myself, I must admit that I am still a long way from that. And it is true: the Holy Spirit makes



Below: District Apostles Pöschel, Lambert, Schulte, Krause, Ekhuya, and Ehrich (left to right)



The Holy Spirit not only tells us what we must do, but also what we can do. Several weeks ago, I was talking to a group of young people. One sister asked me, “Chief Apostle, how can I recognise the gifts God has given me?” Of course, if someone can sing well, it is not difficult to tell that God has given them vocal talent. In my case, this is not so obvious. So I said to the young people, “It is actually very simple: just do what God asks of you. God tells you the truth, and if you do what God asks of you, you will discover how many gifts you have. You will discover that you can do what God asks you to do. Then your relationship with God will also be good. When you come to God and tell Him, “Dear Lord, I have a good voice, how can I serve you?” then you yourself determine how you will serve Him. But when you come to God and ask Him, “What do You expect from me?” God will remind you: I told you in the last divine service to do this and that. Then you will realise that you can do that as well, and you will discover gifts within you that you were not aware of.

us aware of our own shortcomings. He makes it clear to us that without grace we cannot be saved. But He also tells us how we can obtain grace. The Holy Spirit shows us how we really are. Yes, we are imperfect, we need grace.

And on this path we can receive grace. However, the Holy Spirit also tells us the truth about ourselves. The truth about you and you and you. He tells us: God loves you as you are. God loves you. The Son of God gave His life for you. God loves you. Even if everyone rejects and condemns you, do not listen to them. Listen to God: He loves you. That is the truth. You are a child of God loved by God. The Holy Spirit tells us the truth.

I know it is an old New Apostolic teaching that God holds up a mirror for us in divine service and tells us to look in this mirror. This is still the case. Dear brothers and sisters, God helps us to know ourselves. He does this primarily through the word of preaching. Let us accept this and act accordingly. When I was in the sacristy before the service, I noticed a picture of me on the wall—as is the case almost all over the world—from twelve years ago, when I was ordained. Next to it there is usually a mirror. This helps me realise that time has passed. But you understand me: if I only look at the picture, I still look young. But that is not reality. That is not who I am. God reveals to us in the mirror what we are like today. He tells us the truth about ourselves through the sermon, and I ask you again: let us strive to implement

what we hear in the sermon. That is the truth about us.

The Holy Spirit also wants to help us become true and genuine disciples of Christ. God is true, He is reliable, and keeps His promises. We have given God many promises. We renounce evil and follow Jesus Christ in faith and obedience. Let us make sure that our yes remains a yes. Yes to God, no to evil. Let us be and remain true disciples of Christ.

People nowadays waste so much time and energy to present themselves in the way they want to be perceived by others. You know, I have a problem with that. So much time and energy is wasted to present oneself. People want to be seen in a certain way. They want to please others, be noticed, recognised, and respected by them. True Christians strive to please God. They use the time they have been given, and the strength and energy they have received from God, to grow into the image of Jesus Christ. Above all, they want to please God. They want to be true disciples of Jesus Christ. Dear brothers



Assignment of Chief Apostle Helper Helge Mutschler



From left: the District Apostles and District Apostle Helpers Patrick Mkhwanazi, Arnaud Martig, Tshitshi Tshisekedi, Sam Müller (Bishop), Ernst Guigou, Edy Isnugroho, Mark Woll, John Schnabel, Enrique Minio, Helge Mutschler, Thomas Deubel



and sisters, this is the last point we want remember from this Pentecost: let us be true disciples of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us to see ourselves as we are and helps us to change. He wants to transform us so that we become more and more like Jesus Christ. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He tells us the truth about God, about our fellow human beings, about the future, and about ourselves. Amen.

Chief Apostle: Dear brothers and sisters, I must briefly interrupt the sermon at this point. I look in the mirror, and then? It goes without saying: I realise that I am getting older. Last September I turned 65. And I plan to retire next year, 2026, on Pentecost. It is time to appoint my successor now, a year in advance. You can imagine that this is not so easy. I have prayed for a long time, I even wrestled with God to show me the one whom He has chosen to become our Chief Apostle. I know that many Apostles and many brothers and sisters also prayed about this and asked God. Dear Apostles, dear brothers and sisters, God has answered this prayer. Today I can announce with absolute certainty whom God has chosen as our next Chief Apostle. It is District Apostle Helper Helge Mutschler from the Regional Church Northern and Eastern Germany. I will assign him as Chief Apostle Helper today. And if the Lord has not come before then and I am still alive, I will ordain him as Chief Apostle next year on Pentecost in Cape Town, South Africa. District Apostle Helper Mutschler speaks German, English,

and French. You can imagine how he feels. If all the brothers and sisters around the world now send a fervent prayer to God saying, "Help him!" I can believe that this prayer will work. He will experience it, and we will experience it.

District Apostle Helper Mutschler: Dear brothers and sisters, dear guests and friends, that is precisely the point: all around the world we praise God and sing glory to Him. I will keep the remarks regarding my person to a minimum because it is Pentecost. That is why we are here. It is the calling of God and I have absolute confidence in that. I am really happy that I may walk the path of faith alongside the Chief Apostle, together with all of you throughout the world, until the return of our Lord Jesus. I will pray for you. May I make a small request: please pray for me.

CORE THOUGHTS

- The Holy Spirit tells us the truth about God.
- The Holy Spirit tells us the truth about ourselves.
- He helps us to become true witnesses of Christ.

Betrayed and sold, yet blessed

Even difficult paths can be part of a divine plan as the story of Joseph shows impressively. Those who believe in God's love learn to recognise the beginnings of new hope even in suffering and guilt.



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider being welcomed in Lagos, Nigeria on 2 March 2025



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conducted the divine service for the departed in Lagos in Nigeria on 2 March 2025.

The story: from slave to viceroy in Egypt

Egypt. Joseph, Jacob's favourite son, was sold into slavery at the age of 17 by his jealous brothers. Despite years of hardship in Egypt, Joseph did not remain unnoticed for long: he won the trust of his master Potiphar. But then, after Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of making advances on her, he ended up in prison. Even there, Joseph's luck did not run out. He found favour with the overseer of the prison and helped fellow prisoners, although initial ingratitude delayed his release. It was not until he was thirty that Joseph was finally released and quickly rose to become Pharaoh's right hand.

When a severe famine struck in Canaan, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food, unaware that they were standing in front of their brother. Joseph put them to the test, but when they refused to hand over their youngest brother Benjamin, he revealed his identity. Joseph forgave them and had his whole family move to Egypt. Thanks to his foresight, the land of Egypt was saved from famine.

The explanation: God makes the rules and is merciful

The story of Joseph and his brothers provides insight into how God acts, what values are important to Him, and how human beings can act in accordance with His will. Chief Apostle Schneider explained this.

- God was with Joseph. "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was successful," it says in the Bible. And indeed, God was with him. He was successful in the house of his master.

- God pursued His plan. “He was with Joseph. But not to make sure that he had a wonderful and easy life. He was with Joseph to fulfil the promise He had given to Abraham and Jacob.”
- Joseph was able to be a blessing because he remained faithful and obedient in all circumstances. Both in good times and bad.
- God did not reject Joseph’s brothers. “Although they had committed a terrible sin by selling their youngest brother and lying to their father, God did not reject them.”
- The brothers had to confess their sin. “But to be saved, the brothers first had to repent. It took them a long time, 13 years in fact, to realise this.”
- The brothers had to go to the place determined by God. “God did not say, ‘Okay, stay there. I will manage to find some food for you.’ No, He told them, ‘Go to Egypt. That is the place of salvation.’”

The lessons for us: love and redemption belong together

“We can draw a number of lessons from this story that are relevant both for us and the departed,” the Chief Apostle said.

- We must believe in God’s love. “You cannot assess God’s love for you when you look at your life on earth. You must consider the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.”
- Let us not judge our neighbour. “You cannot judge somebody just by looking at their life on earth.” Some have done nothing wrong and suffer like Joseph did, the Chief Apostle said. That is why we must not judge our neighbour, he pointed out.
- God’s salvation consists of eternal life. God’s plan is to save all human beings. But His salvation lies in eternal life, not in the solving of earthly problems.
- Salvation is linked to repentance. In order to receive grace we must be repentant and recognise that we are sinners and not look for an excuse. Don’t try to explain your behaviour. Don’t try to minimise your sins just because others have committed far greater sins.
- God has created a place of redemption. “We must go to the place that God has chosen. To be saved, we must go to the church of Christ.”
- “We are called to be a blessing for others here on earth by doing God’s will and doing good. But we have also been called to be a blessing for all people in the kingdom of peace.”



Music enhanced the worship experience

CORE THOUGHTS

Genesis 50: 20

“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

God loves sinners and wants to give them eternal life. This He will grant to repentant believers within His church through the apostolate.



I Motivated by good reasons

No one is immune to it. Everyone who takes on a ministry or a task in the Church appreciates some kind of gratitude or recognition. But when positive reactions fail to materialise, the only true motivation becomes apparent.

The divine service in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 28 March 2025 was based on Hezekiah. He was a role model and was regarded as a good king for Judah: he wanted to put things in order, have a good relationship with God, please God, and proclaim His will. He called on the people to return to God, gathered the scattered tribes, and made efforts to restore true worship. He repaired and cleaned the temple so that it could be used properly again. And he stood up for those who had not sanctified themselves sufficiently.

“This is a nice description of our mission in God’s work,” Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider said and went on to explain the tasks that are involved.

- First, we must know the will of God and understand it correctly in order to proclaim and teach it properly. And that is an ongoing task, a never-ending task.
- Secondly, we must show people that the only true and comprehensive solution for all problems is Jesus Christ, His sacrifice, His teaching, and His return.
- And then we also want to make sure that the Church can function. Our mission has been given to us by Jesus. And this mission consists of making salvation and eternal life accessible, and helping believers to follow Christ and be saved through Him.
- Our mission also includes building unity in Christ. We don’t need to sing the same hymns or dress the same



In March, Chief Apostle Schneider visited Buenos Aires in Argentina

all over the world. “It is not a question of following the same rules. The point is that we follow the same Master,” the Chief Apostle said.

- We know that no one deserves salvation. We all need grace. And that is why we pray, “Please God, have mercy on all of us. Be merciful to me and my neighbour.”

“It is important that we do it as the king did it: with a pure heart,” the Chief Apostle emphasised.

- All of us, beginning with me, must make sure that we do not serve the Lord to be admired or to achieve a certain power or status. We serve the Lord only for His sake, not for our own.
- Our motivation cannot be to receive more than others. The crown is eternal life, eternal fellowship with God. What more is there to have?
- Our motivation is that we want to be like Christ. And the more the nature of Christ develops in us, the more we want to serve as Christ served.
- It is so easy to tell others what they should do. But if we are sincere, we should really be the first to practise what we preach and teach.
- Let us be an example when it comes to trusting in God, no matter what happens in our lives, in the church, or in the world. “He loves us and will save us,” the Chief Apostle said.

If we do that God will grant us success, the Chief Apostle said. However, “you cannot measure this success with attendance figures of divine services, offerings, or member-

ship ...” Rather, “God will complete the work He has begun in us. That is our hope, that is the success we are waiting for,” Chief Apostle Schneider emphasised. “God will complete His work, no matter what happens on earth, in the Church and outside the Church. He promised it, and He will do it.”

CORE THOUGHTS

2 Chronicles 31: 21

“And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.”

Our task is to proclaim the divine truth, to make salvation accessible in the Church, and to contribute to the unity of our brothers and sisters in faith. We achieve this with love, without calculation. Let us put the teachings into practice and trust in Christ.

Love to the very end: living for Him who died

Absolute defeat proved to be the greatest victory. And this has implications far beyond the here and now: in order not to die, one must live for it. The Chief Apostle explained what this means in a divine service in Australia.



NAC Australia

The sermon in Melbourne on Good Friday, 18 April 2025, was based on one of Paul's statements that need further explanation: "And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5: 15)

The biggest defeat of all time?

From a human point of view, Christ's death on the cross was a terrible failure, a complete defeat, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider conceded. Because Jesus, who had the power to perform miracles, was arrested without any resistance, and was condemned and executed. God did not intervene. And Jesus thought He knew God's true will. He who preached

love and wanted to give eternal life had to die alone and abandoned.

Nevertheless, "With His death, Jesus Christ won a great victory. But this victory was an eternal one, not a visible one," the Chief Apostle emphasised. "Even when He was dying, He trusted God. He loved Him, and He loved humankind to the end." And that is why God gave Him the ultimate victory, and that became visible: He raised Him from the dead. The question is: "What does that mean for us today?"

Death as triumph

Today, it seems as if the world is dominated by evil, the

Chief Apostle said, summarising the failures. Even believers are not spared suffering. We are waiting for the return of the Lord, and the Lord has still not come. More and more people are turning away from Jesus, he said. And the good that is being done does not seem to bear fruit.

But Jesus' victory is much greater: with His sacrifice, He reopened the way to God for all of humankind. His actions and behaviour in life, and the death He endured—as if He were the worst of criminals—show that God is on the side of every human being. Because Jesus resisted all the temptations, He can help all human beings in doing the same. And finally, Jesus died for all of humankind, including those who commit injustices while believing themselves to be in the right, or those who turn their backs on God completely.

“What matters is what happens in our hearts—our internal, invisible victory,” the Chief Apostle said.



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider during the divine service in Melbourne, Australia

- wanting to become like Jesus: “That is not just an image or a slogan. We want our soul, our heart, our person, to become like Him, that His nature becomes our nature.”
- longing for eternal fellowship: “That is the most important thing in our lives. We want to become like Him, we want to be with Him, and we patiently wait until He comes.”

When victory becomes visible

“Let us remain faithful, trust in God, and love to the end,” the Chief Apostle continued. “And those who win this victory in their hearts will one day see their victory become visible in the first resurrection.”

“Now that’s our part,” he said. Let us live for Jesus because we believe and know that He died for us.” And that means:

- giving the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the respect it deserves by taking our own salvation seriously: not trivialising sin, taking our mistakes seriously, and being determined to align ourselves with God’s will
- serving Christ out of gratitude: doing good in order to be blessed is the wrong motivation. Rather, “We do good because God did good to us. That is the right motivation.”
- doing good without expecting a reward: “This is part of the test for all those who want to be part of the bride of Christ. Do you persevere or do you give up because there is no result, no visible blessing?”

CORE THOUGHTS

2 Corinthians 5: 15

“He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

Christ overcame evil by remaining faithful to God until the end. His sacrifice gives us access to salvation. Let us fight against sin and persevere in serving Him. Our goal is to become like Him and be with Him forever.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

BASED ON LUKE 2: 1-20

The angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, where Mary lived. She

Gabriel went to Mary and told her, "Do not be afraid. You have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He is the Son of God."

Some time later, Ceasar Augustus sent out a decree that a census should be taken. All

citizens of his lands were to be registered.

Everyone had to travel to the town or village where their family came from. There they were counted and registered. Mary went with Joseph to Bethlehem, where his family was from.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph could not find a place to stay. The town was full of people.

Jesus was born. Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger.

That night, some shepherds were in the fields watching their



sheep. Suddenly, it became as bright as day and an angel stood before them, and they were very afraid. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! I am bringing you good news. Today, in the town of Bethlehem, the Saviour has been born to you, the Redeemer of the world. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger."

A large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel and all were praising God, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests!"

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem, "Let us go and see this thing that has happened. Let us seek the Saviour."

They hurried into town and found Mary and Joseph, and the child in the manger.

The shepherds told everyone what the angel had said to them about the child. Then the shepherds returned to their sheep, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.



AT JOSHUA'S IN GUERNSEY IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

We are a **family** of four: my mom, Lynn, my dad, Ernst and my sister, Danielle. In the background you can see the Christmas lights in St Peter Port. My mom used to work as an optical assistant and my dad is a chartered accountant. My sister attends the same school as me. She is in year 10.



My name is **Joshua**, and I am 13 years old. I live on the island of Guernsey, which is part of the Channel Islands. They are situated in the English Channel, off the coast of France. They are divided into two Crown Dependencies, the Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Bailiwick of Jersey. The Bailiwick of **Guernsey** consists of the islands of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, Herm, and some other smaller islands. The capital of Guernsey is St Peter Port. Currently, the population of Guernsey is a good 60,000. I like where I live and have lots of friends.



The Channel Islanders have animal nicknames, and the nickname for Guernsey residents is **les ânes** (French for "donkeys"). I think it is because of the steepness of the streets in St Peter Port and the fact that donkeys were used to carry heavy loads. Guernsey residents also claim this name as a symbol of their strength, while the people on the neighbouring island of Jersey interpret this as stubbornness.



I am in year 9 at school and have wonderful and kind teachers. I enjoy playing most sports, but my favourite sport is soccer. I have recently joined our local soccer team. I also love to play a game called dominoes with my family; or **tennis** with my dad or my uncle.

I wish I had a dog. Unfortunately, we cannot have a pet where we currently live. In South Africa, where I was born, I used to have a dog. Her name was Sally. She was a cross breed. I miss her very much. On this picture taken in Cape Town you can see my **great-grandmother** Ma Margie and my **grandmother** Ma Vivienne.



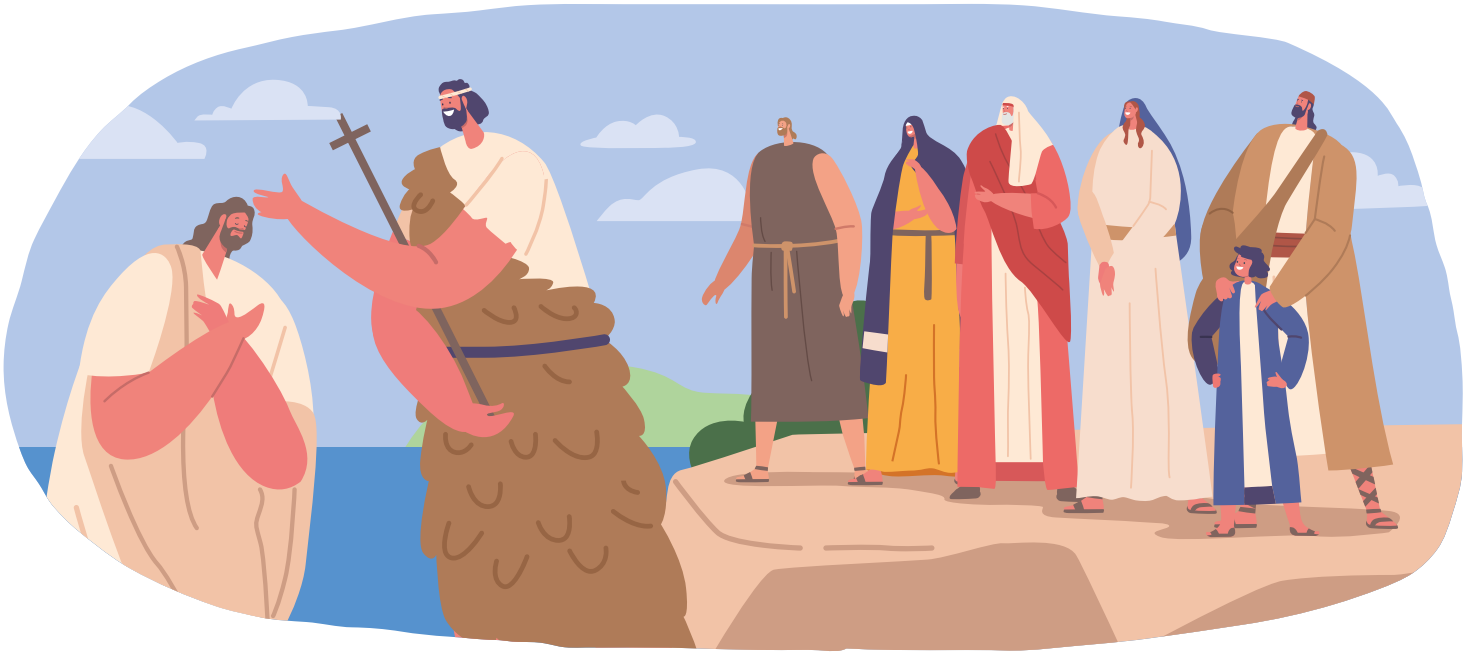
My favourite food is **pizza**, and I am constantly peck-ish. An interesting fact about the island of Guernsey is that there are no fast-food chains.



We do not have a church building on the island right now, but we have services in a Christian Centre called Les Cotils. We are a **congregation** of seven members with one Priest. This is very different to Cape Town, where we lived before. Our whole congregation sings in the choir and I am learning to play the recorder.

On this picture you can see me with our confirmation teacher and Danielle on the day of her **confirmation**. I hope to be confirmed next year.





Repentance and the path to salvation

The word “repentance” sounds as though one should have a guilty conscience and feel ashamed. In fact, repentance implies an increased awareness and a change of mind and heart: an absolute necessity for anyone who wants to reach their goal. This is explained in a doctrinal text from the Chief Apostle.

In his sermon on Pentecost, Apostle Peter proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the Saviour sent by God in order to save His people. He then went on to explain to his listeners what they had to do in order to receive salvation: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2: 38).

Salvation in the Old Testament

The salvation offered by Jesus Christ was different than that to which the people of Israel aspired. In the Old Testament, the foremost expectation of devout Jews was that the Lord would grant them peace and prosperity on earth. Their understanding of salvation was based on their history. The Lord had intervened to deliver Israel from their servitude in Egypt. He then led them to a land flowing with milk and honey. The intervention of God was a free act that was motivated by His love alone. In return, He expected His people to comply with His law.

Thereafter, the land endured a number of conflicts. Following one particular defeat, the people were deported to Babylon. The prophets explained that this exile was due to the failure of the people to obey the divine will. They urged the exiles to repent. If the people were to change their attitude and keep the law, God would intervene in their favour. Then they would be able to return to their own land and live in peace and prosperity.

In the time of Jesus, many Jews expected the coming of the Messiah, who was to deliver them from the yoke of the Romans and restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory.

To put it simply, we can say that the Jews expected the Lord to save them by

- intervening directly in order to deliver them from their enemies;
- permitting those who kept His law to live in peace and prosperity.

Salvation in the New Testament

The salvation offered by Jesus Christ is essentially of a spiritual nature. God intervened in history by sending His Son to earth. Christ freely gave His life in order to deliver mankind from the yoke of sin. He grants forgiveness of sins to those who be-

lieve in Him and repent. He gives eternal life to believers. This eternal life consists of perfect fellowship with God in the new creation.

Salvation is a free gift of God. No one can deserve it (Ephesians 2: 4–9). However, it implies that human beings make a sustained effort to show themselves worthy of the grace offered to them (Philippians 2: 12). Repentance is an essential component of this spiritual work.

A prerequisite for salvation

Apostle Peter explained that those who had come to faith had to repent in order to be baptised. He thereby underlined two essential points of the teaching of Jesus Christ:

- “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4: 17).
- “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3: 5).

The notion of repentance incorporates both remorse and conversion. Sinners must become aware of their fault, regret it (that is, suffer morally as a result of it), return to God, change their mentality, and adopt a behaviour that is consistent with the divine will.





Repentance is a prerequisite for baptism: in order to be freed from original sin, the sinner must renounce evil, believe in Jesus Christ, and make the commitment to obey Him.

It is also indispensable for obtaining forgiveness of our personal sins. In order for the absolution pronounced in the divine service to produce all of these effects, we must repent and convert. In other words, we must become aware of our mistakes, regret them, sincerely resolve to change, and have the desire to repair the wrongs we have committed.

God offers us His forgiveness in every divine service, and we are grateful to Him for this. However, we must admit that the frequency with which this forgiveness is offered can lead us to trivialise it to a certain degree.

Who among us would dare claim to be completely repentant every time we hear the absolution? This observation is not so dramatic in itself, because it is inherent to our human nature. What is important is to be aware of this danger and regularly question ourselves.

The call to conversion and repentance is an integral part of the preaching of the gospel, and thus part of the mission of the apostolate. It is not a question of making the believers feel guilty, nor of denigrating them, but of helping them to understand—with love and humility—what the Lord expects of each one of us.

Prerequisite for the new creation

Repentance and conversion are also inseparably associated with our inner renewal, the development of the new life we have received. Apostle Paul urges us to “purge out the old leaven” (1 Corinthians 5: 7). Many ministers have already had this painful experience: in speaking with brothers and sisters, we come to realise that they have been repeating the same stories for years, and that this old leaven has contaminated their whole life of faith. It is not up to us to judge them, but to come to their aid by telling them: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” Let us try to help them understand the harmfulness of this old leaven and the need to rid themselves of it. The subject is often delicate, and the process difficult. But the love we have for our brothers and sisters forbids us from giving up.

A way to fight against evil

As a fruit of the gift of the Holy Spirit that we have received, the love we have for our neighbour makes us sensitive to human distress. We intercede on behalf of those who suffer. We ask God to deliver both humanity and the creation from evil. God will respond to these prayers because He wants humanity to be saved.

However, most of the time, He does not intervene as many believers imagine He should. For example, He does not use His omnipotence to silence the weapons, end injustice, or

establish lasting peace. Nor will He use it in order to force everyone to obey His commandments.

His salvific activity aims to enable all human beings to live in fellowship with Him and with one another in the new creation. In the current phase of His plan of redemption, He is forming human beings who are called to enter into this fellowship as firstfruits and then to contribute to the salvation of everyone else in the thousand-year kingdom of peace.

From this we conclude the following: the best way for us, who have been reborn out of water and the Spirit, to contribute to the salvation of humanity is to “convert”, that is, to kill the old Adam in order to grow into the image of Christ. It is in this way that we can look for and hasten the definitive deliverance of all humanity (2 Peter 3: 11–13).

Conversion and repentance presuppose personal awareness. We naturally have a tendency to complain about all the evil that is committed in the world.

But we are not innocent victims. Each of us is part of the problem! Obviously, we are not criminals, and of course we strive to respect the will of God and keep the law. And yes, there are many people who behave much worse than we do! But let us recognise that we are far from perfect! We must admit that, owing to our failings, we too contribute to the influence of evil.

Again, this is not a question of making us feel guilty or denigrating ourselves. We must simply come to accept that each one of us has a share of responsibility for the problem—and understand that the solution also lies with us. We can help improve the situation by changing our mentality and behaviour in order to become

more and more like Christ. The more we come to be like Him, the less we will cause others to suffer!

By calling us to repentance, the Holy Spirit wants us to realise that we are both part of the problem and part of the solution. This is true on all levels, whether in matrimony, family life, the congregation, or in society ...

As already mentioned, the call to repentance and conversion is an integral part of the proclamation of the gospel—and thus of the mission of the church. The Lord does not send His people into the world to lecture their contemporaries. He expects us to preach repentance by example.



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New developments in the Church

Things are moving. The District Apostle Meeting at the beginning of June in Mainz, Germany had numerous projects on its agenda with the aim of strengthening the ministers, teachers, musicians, and church life altogether.

During the session of the International District Apostle Meeting in Mainz, Germany: the District Apostles and their assistants listen attentively



Frank Schuidt

A central concern: leadership in the Church is not to be enforced through ministerial authority. Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider has clearly and repeatedly emphasised this. “We have to convince people,” he demands.

The *Serving and Leading* model shows how this can be achieved. The aim of this globally binding policy is to help the individual contribute to the unity of the Church through Christian love, as well as mutual understanding and respect, District Apostle Thomas Deubel from Switzerland explained.

New policy for a shared coexistence

However, the 18-page brochure dates back to 2001, and a lot has changed since then: in the meantime, the Catechism has been published, our concept of ministry has been re-defined, and we have introduced the ordination of women.

It is no wonder then that the *Serving and Leading* model was submitted for discussion and consideration at the session of the District Apostle Meeting in Ghana last year. Since then, the Regional Churches have submitted numerous proposals for amendments. These were compiled into a new draft, which has now been discussed. The revised version is to be introduced soon.

Rethinking our concept of congregation

Church life was also on the agenda. “Congregation of the Future” is the name of a project group comprised of the European District Apostles, who have now presented their work to their overseas colleagues.

The project group looked at questions such as: What exactly do we mean by congregation? How do social develop-



Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider in the circle of the District Apostles and their assistants

ments affect congregational life? And what helps in founding, developing, and maintaining a congregation? District Apostle Stefan Pöschel (Western Germany) presented further insights.

Some of these findings have already been published under the title “The nature and duty of the Christian congregation in the spiritual sense” in a special edition of the *Divine Service Guide* (01/2025). Further publications are to follow.

Teaching material, songs, *Divine Service Guide*

Simon Heiniger, head of project management, gave an overview of the ongoing work in the project groups of the New Apostolic Church International.

This includes:

- an analysis of the production process of the *Divine Service Guide*
- new teaching material for Religious Instruction—soon to be launched in English, French, and Dutch
- the revision of the confirmation teaching materials, including translation
- an update of the *Corporate Design Manual* and the *Social Media Guidelines*
- digital sheet music from the hymnal, choir book, and youth songbook in use in Europe
- new modules for the online learning tool for ministers

The revision of the Catechism is a particularly important topic. A lot has happened since its publication in 2012/2013: a new ministerial structure, the ordination of women, and some forty additional doctrinal articles have been published.

Several teams of two have already worked their way through the content and identified any need for adaptation. Over 450 comments have been collected so far. They are now being further scrutinised. In the next phase, the chapters will be adapted and initial drafts prepared. When exactly the revised version will be released will have to be seen.

Music builds bridges between continents

The Youth Orchestra & Friends from the New Apostolic Church Western Germany spent ten days in South Africa. The highlight of the trip was the concert with the NAC Young People's Choir in front of an audience of over 4,500.



Jessica Krämer

From 11 to 21 April 2025, the Youth Orchestra & Friends travelled to Cape Town in South Africa. The ensemble consists of up to 300 young musicians from the New Apostolic Church of Western Germany and usually meets once a year for a three-day rehearsal weekend with a final concert.

Concert as the highlight

The orchestra had been preparing for the trip to South Africa for three years. The young people collected donations and practised for the big concert with the Young People's Choir of the New Apostolic Church Southern Africa. It took place on Wednesday evening, 16 April 2025, in the Grand West Arena, one of the largest event halls in the region.

The music ranged from classical masterpieces to film music and a South African medley. In addition to the orchestra and choir, several soloists also impressed the audience. The

official programme ended with the song "Here I Am", the anthem of the 2019 International Youth Convention in Düsseldorf, Germany.

The orchestra and choir performed together under the direction of Burkhard Schmitt from Germany and Jason Atherton from South Africa. Around 4,000 viewers from Germany watched a livestream of the concert.

Donations for needy children

In keeping with the concert motto "It's time to do good!" the trip combined musical achievements with social commitment: the youth from Germany had brought school supplies with them in their suitcases. The coloured pencils, watercolour paint boxes, and glue sticks were donated to the Masakhe Foundation's After-School Safe Spaces Programme.





Donation to the Masakhe Foundation:
a 100,000 rand and ...

The divine service in Tafelsig, South Africa was accompanied by 300 musicians from Western Germany, who were joined by several instrumentalists from Cape Town

... school supplies



In addition, Apostle Gerd Kisselbach and orchestra project manager Ingo Bürger presented a symbolic cheque for 100,000 rand to the aid agency. The money will be used to support children at the After-School Safe Spaces Centre in Delft, where children find a safe space in a New Apostolic church to play and learn after school.

Supporting programme and casual encounters

The trip offered a varied cultural programme: there were trips to the beach, a visit to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront with a harbour tour and an excursion to the penguin colony in Betty's Bay. When they visited the Root 44 Market in Stellenbosch, they were warmly welcomed by the local youth group.

A visit to Table Mountain, Cape Town's landmark, will remain unforgettable. There were stunning views of the city, its suburbs, the harbour, and the bay. Many souvenir photos were taken in this spectacular setting in glorious sunshine.

The youth also made new friends: after the rehearsals and the concert there was the opportunity to socialise with the members of the Young People's Choir. On Good Friday, the German and South African young people met for a picnic and games in Green Point Park.

Three divine services supported

After the kick-off event on Palm Sunday in our Tafelsig church, the orchestra—divided into three groups—provided musical support for the Good Friday services in the congregations of Erica-East, Scottsdale, and Saxonsea with a specially prepared music programme.

The trip ended with the Easter Day service in the Lavistown congregation, an eastern suburb of Cape Town. Apostle Robert Worship conducted this service for the members of the congregation and the young people, who filled much of the gallery with their instruments.

The young people were particularly impressed by the hospitality. "Take the impressions and enthusiasm you have experienced here back to your home congregations," was the final wish of the South African hosts and the youth orchestra's management: "Share your experiences and show through your behaviour that everyone can experience Jesus. He is the answer and our future."



District Apostle Helper Helge Mutschler was assigned Chief Apostle Helper on Pentecost 2025



I Loving. Trusting. With God.

Not power, but love and closeness to others. In the first interview, the Chief Apostle Helper shows how he thinks, feels, and believes.

Since Pentecost it has been official! With the appointment of Helge Mutschler as Chief Apostle Helper, the New Apostolic Church has a designated successor to Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider. There's still a good way to go before his ordination on Pentecost 2026—time for Helge Mutschler to get to know the worldwide Church. And time for the worldwide congregation to get to know him as well. Prior to this, he has already answered first questions in an interview with the head of communications of the New Apostolic Church International: openly, honestly, and with an audible heartbeat.

Dear Apostle, a few numbers to start with. You are the 875th Apostle of the New Apostolic Church, and in about one year you will be ordained as the tenth Chief Apostle. At that time, you will also have said yes to a spiritual ministry or task ten times. Can you still remember your first yes?

Chief Apostle Helper Helge Mutschler: When I was to become a Sub-deacon, I knew about it. Back then, in autumn 1994, the District Elder visited me in my parents'

living room in Freudenstadt. I knew that I was going to move to Hanover to study shortly afterwards. That's why I told him, "Hans, I'm on the verge of going to Hanover to study. It doesn't make any sense to take up a ministry here." I can still remember his reaction very well. He proclaimed loudly, "Ministry is ministry." (laughs). That may sound a bit special from today's perspective, but I have to say that broke the resistance—not because of the words, but I felt that there was something big behind it and that a no was now impossible.

Regarding the other levels of ministry, the step from Deacon to Priest was a big one for me, and I had to think about it for a while. I had already felt my yes from the beginning, but I needed time. Even more time was needed when it came to becoming an Apostle. Even though I trusted God's call, the whole thing was not so easy for me. I had a job that I loved and becoming an Apostle changes your whole life. But this yes, combined with the vow of faithfulness to Jesus Christ and the Chief Apostle, was something I felt very deeply and gave it consciously.



Chief Apostle Helper Helge Mutschler in conversation with Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider

Well, and now to the question of being called to the function of Chief Apostle Helper ... (short pause). For me, I immediately felt inside: this thing is so big. But if the Chief Apostle comes to me with this question, this comes from God. He has prayed for that. I have no other way than to put all my trust into God. And so I accept it. I accept this call with a very clear inner yes, based on faith and trust in God.

Over the last fifty years, our Church has kept moving. Which good old tradition do you cherish, and which development has been particularly significant for you?

Pastoral care! Pastoral care was a pillar of our Church. Such a beautiful tradition. And I can well imagine that this will once again take centre stage. It is about building relationships, but also about maintaining relationships. I would love for that to happen, to awaken a passion for pastoral care. Because it can also be a wonderful experience for all ministers. Pastoral care unites. And where there is connectedness, that is where the comfort and joy of heaven begin.

Regarding development, I am remembering Chief Apostle Urwyler and personal responsibility. I am very happy about that. I am pleased that it is becoming more and more possible to talk about faith without fear. Talking about faith without bias and at eye level has so much value. I no longer feel the pressure or expectation of how you have

to be or how you have to think, but more acceptance and tolerance—permission to be, and I think that is a wonderful development.

For some it is too fast, for others too slow. Some ask, “Is this still my Church?” Others ask, “Can it ever become my home?” So, who can you or should you even please?

For me, it's not about “pleasing” anybody. That is not my job or the job of the apostolate. It is about truth and clarity. And there is truth. What is truth? Jesus Christ. Around this truth there is diversity and a wide variety of perspectives. Imagine a colourful field of flowers—that is how varied a community can be. And how wonderful it is when we can say, “I see you, and I respect you, even if you're different.” Because I am also different from you. And I also need the other person to say from their perspective, “I appreciate you, Helge, in your difference. That's good for me too.”

Speaking of unity in diversity. People are often enthusiastic about diversity in other countries, but have problems with it at home. How can it work?

As already mentioned, I am absolutely a fan of a colourful field of flowers. But diversity only works through dialogue. Dialogue is about moving together through differences without wanting to remove them. Dialogue includes: I value the otherness of others.

Love for God and our neighbour, as well as our shared faith and our principles of faith, our expectation of the return of



Divine service with a sister in Ilulissat in Greenland



In the foreground: District Apostle Helper Patrick Mkhwanazi, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, and Chief Apostle Helper Mutschler

Christ, the Apostle ministry, and so on ... all contribute to unity. That unites us.

And if we remain in good communication, diversity can succeed in this unity.

Were there situations in which you distanced yourself emotionally from God? How did you find your way back?

Yes, I have definitely experienced these situations. In a difficult phase of my life, I distanced myself from God and blamed Him. This went on for a while and then something wonderful happened. I felt that this God, from whom I had turned away, was staying with me. I thought I was already very strong and stubborn. But He was even more stubborn. (laughs). This God does not move away, He remains faithful in my life. And when I realised that, it happened quite quickly, and the day came when I turned back to Him completely and stood before God with open arms, contemplating His majesty and saying, as Job did, "Now I lay my hands

over my mouth and will say no more." I was completely amazed by this God, by His grace ... and I still am.

You mention Job ...

I read the book of Job so often during that time and tried to find answers in it. I can really understand how Job's friends are wrong ... those know-it-all, oh-so-wise friends. In the discussions with Job's friends, I couldn't find an answer for myself. Until at some point, at the end of the book of Job, it dawned on me. Job challenges God. God responds: So, Job, I have heard your questions. Now I have a few questions for you: Who created the earth? Who created the stars? – and so on. This goes on for quite a while. Job is silent, humbled. But God continues. Job does not get off that easily. And at the very end of the book, Job only says, "I know that You can do everything." The dialogue is over, the case solved. It took me a long time to understand this. The answer to suffering is so simple as well as so difficult. The answer to suffering is: God.



As District Apostle Helper, Helge Mutschler was invited to several youth conventions organised by other Regional Churches



You have also been part of the District Apostle Meeting since 2021. How was your first meeting?

(laughs) That was a technical test run three days before the digital District Apostle Meeting during the pandemic. One by one, we turned on the microphone to check that everything was working.

The first face-to-face meeting was really impressive. I was of course very respectful of all these established and experienced men of God. Then the Chief Apostle calls on you in front of everyone and asks for your opinion. That was quite exciting. On the other hand, I felt a very warm welcome, really loving. That made it easy for me.

On many of your previous trips, you have also conducted divine services on a very small scale. For example, about a year ago in Greenland. In 2023, on the other hand, you were in the Congo with the Chief Apostle and had fellowship with almost 30,000 believers in Kananga. How would you describe these different experiences?

On Greenland, in Ilulissat, I conducted a divine service together with my travel group for one sister. That was very close, very intense, and very familiar. It was incredibly beautiful and moving.

On the other hand, there is the example of Kananga in the Congo, where 26,000 brothers and sisters had gathered, or the IYC 2019. There it is almost impossible to see the individual person. Especially in large halls, the altar is always well lighted, which means that you only perceive a large mass. And that makes it much more difficult to establish

a direct connection with the individual. Nevertheless, I always felt that there is something in the air, a connection through the power of the Holy Spirit. So I wouldn't say that it is more anonymous. But only the Holy Spirit can create that. I appreciate both.

On the one hand, I am good as I am—created in God's image. On the other hand, I am a sinner because I do not always fulfill God's will. How does that fit together?

That does not go together. This ambivalence is ambivalence that does not go together. Just like fire and water do not go together. On our Day of Prayer and Repentance, as in every divine service before the Lord's Prayer, we try again and again to become aware that we are sinners. Totally trapped in sin, without any chance of getting out of it ourselves. On the other hand, though, we also develop the awareness again and again that God forgives. Because God accepts me as I am. So perhaps this is only an apparent contradiction after all.

God is explicit, but people are inconsistent. Do we sometimes make the Christian faith too complicated? If so, how simple is it actually?

At its core, the whole thing is very simple: God is love, and in love there is no fear. And perfect love banishes fear. These are not complicated statements, but the deepest truth. Loving the Lord and our neighbour is actually nothing complicated. We must always return to this simple faith.



Coming up

- 5 Oct. 2025 Libreville, Gabon
- 12 Oct. 2025 Karlsruhe, Germany
- 19 Oct. 2025 Kitchener, Canada
- 2 Nov. 2025 Vellmar, Germany
- 9 Nov. 2025 Bülach, Switzerland
- 16 Nov. 2025 Saint Petersburg, Florida, USA
- 28 Nov. 2025 Jeffreys Bay, South Africa
- 30 Nov. 2025 Gqeberha, South Africa
- 7 Dec. 2025 Eberbach, Germany
- 14 Dec. 2025 Hamburg, Germany
- 21 Dec. 2025 Bensheim, Germany
- 25 Dec. 2025 Strasbourg, Germany
- 28 Dec. 2025 Affoltern am Albis, Switzerland

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