

A personal Greeting

Dear fellow Christians,
Dear Sir or Madam,

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg is an important part of the worldwide church.

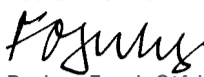
The Apostolic faith is the link between us and churches in other countries and continents. When in 1534 the Reformation took place in this region, our Church adopted the Lutheran Confession with the motto: *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever.*

In our parishes, in groups and in the church administration we ask how God's word can be preached authentically in today's language. It is important for us to do this together with Christians of other churches.

With this brochure I invite you to get to know our Church and to enter into living contact with us.

Let us encourage each other to grow together in faith and in our common desire to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world.

Yours in Christ



Dr. h.c. Frank Otfried July
Presiding Bishop



Statistics

Statistics in Württemberg

1 Regional Church or „Landeskirche“
ca. 2,1 Million Church Members

4 Church Regions, each headed by a Prelate (Regional Bishop)

47 Church Districts with 50 Deaneries

25 Deans for Religious Education

2.067 Pastors

1.316 Parishes

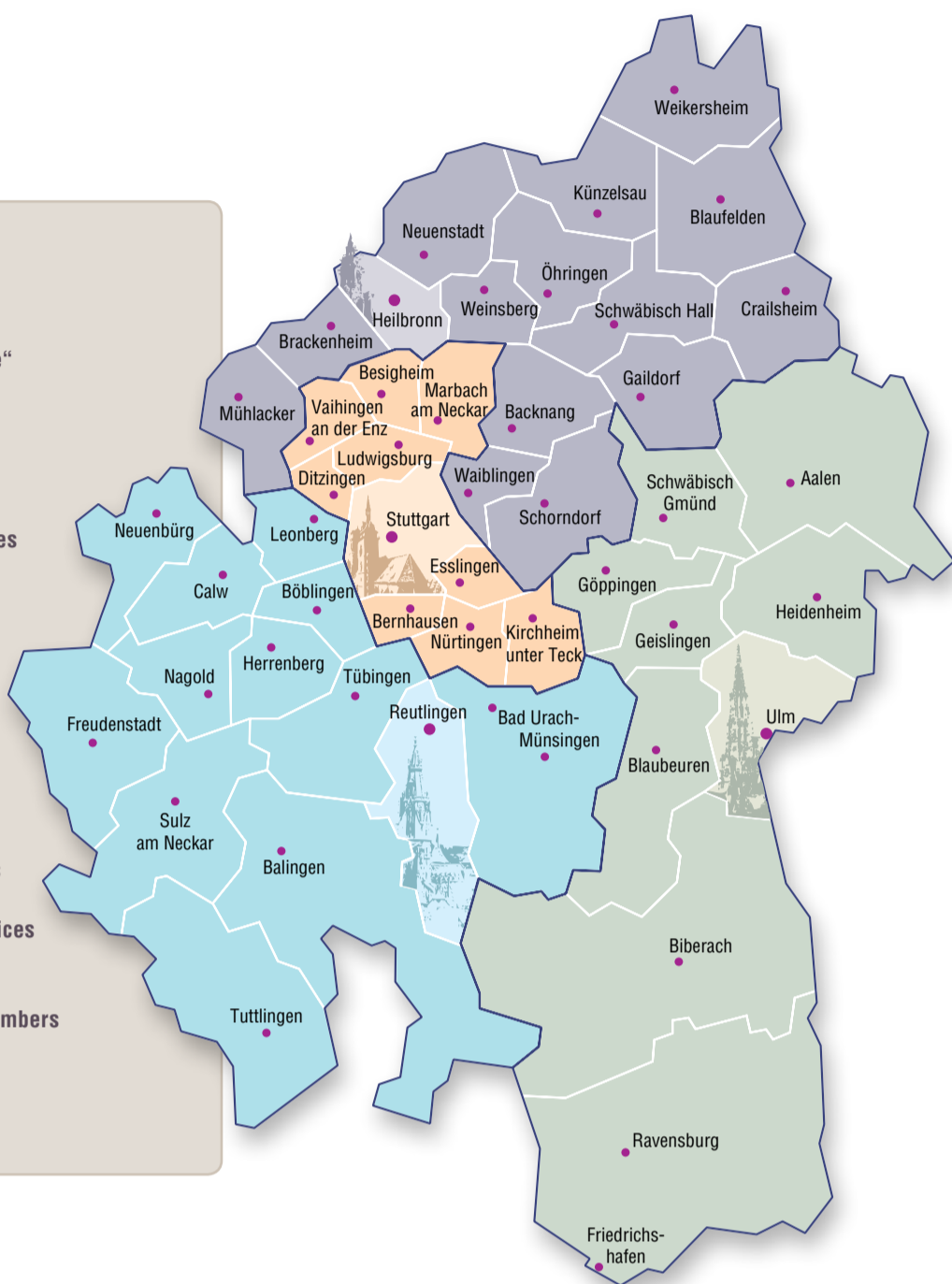
ca. **19.600** Parish Employees
and **151.000** Voluntary Workers

ca. **50.000** Voluntary Youth Workers

45.000 Employees in Diaconal Services
and **35.000** Voluntary Workers

ca. **10.000** Local Church Council Members

98 Members of the Württemberg
Church Synod



Structure

Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Württemberg Church Synod 60 Lay Persons, 30 Clergy 1 Member of the Theol. Faculty of the Tübingen University Additional Nominees 	The Presiding Bishop	Executive Council 8 Senior Department Heads 4 Prelates, Director of the Diaconal Board in Württemberg The Council is chaired by the Bishop
Church Regions		Prelates	
Church Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → District Synods 	Deans	Deans for Religious Education
Parishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Local Church Councils 	Parish Pastors	
	election		Church Members

History

In the early 8th century, the Anglo-Saxon Monk Bonifatius worked among the Germanic people as a missionary. The first church structures were established under the leadership of the "Germanic Apostolate". This later gave way to the Franconian Church Order which was incorporated into imperial law. Monasteries became centers of scholarship. The Reformation received its impetus in 1517 when Martin Luther published his 95 theses.

In innumerable speeches and publications, Luther harshly took issue with various developments within the medieval church: He condemned the sale of indulgences, emphasizing justification by faith alone. During his imprisonment at the Wartburg Castle he translated the Bible into German. In 1522, Luther's Reformation unleashed an awakening throughout the entire German realm. Christians in the town of Schwäbisch Hall ventured the transition to the new faith under the leadership of Johannes Brenz. The first celebration

of the Lord's Supper according to Luther's doctrine took place in this city as well. The Reformation was concluded successfully in the whole of Württemberg by Ulrich, Duke of Württemberg, in 1534.

Influenced by both Lutheran doctrine and by the efforts of the Swiss reformers Huldreich Zwingli and Johannes Calvin, the Church in Württemberg became Lutheran by confession. In its worship style, however, it largely follows the Swiss tradition to the present day.

The first part of the 17th century was marked by upheaval and open warfare. This was followed by a time of consolidation. In addition to theology, individual scholastic disciplines began to develop in their own right.

It was in this new atmosphere that Pietism as a lay movement took root in the Dukedom.

To this day, pietistic Bible evenings and home devotions are a characteristic feature of parish life in Württemberg.

Parishes

Parishes are jointly led by the local Church Council and the Pastor. The Württemberg Church ordains women and men. Faith finds its expression in many different activities such as youth groups, mother-child-circles, Bible evenings, senior citizens groups or church choirs. The numerous brass bands are a unique trademark of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

Worship generally takes place on Sunday morning. Church bells invite the parish members to come together, sing, pray and listen to the sermon. Parishes partake regularly of the Lord's Supper.

In addition, there are special services which reach out to people in specific life situations. Worship services for families and young people are especially popular. Much creative work is done in developing new forms of worship.



In adult education programs, current issues in church and society are discussed in lectures and seminars.

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg



EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN WÜRTTEMBERG

Impressum

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Ecumenical Relations

Ecumenical cooperation is an important feature of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg.

Our relations to the Roman Catholic Church are of special relevance, since the population here is roughly 36% percent catholic and 35% percent protestant.



Following the Second Vatican Council (1963–1965) such cooperation blossomed. As a result, preaching in the church of a catholic partner (and vice versa), joint worship services and “ecumenical marriage blessings” are signs of living ecumenism in our Church.

In order to promote unity among the churches we have both national and regional Church Councils (ACK). All member churches (among them Orthodox, Oriental-Orthodox, Methodist, Baptist) share the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The Federal Republic of Germany is multiethnic and multi-religious. People of different and various confessional heritage live here. Our constitution guarantees freedom of religion.

Members of the congregation taking communion at the end of the closing worship service. Eleventh Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), 20th – 27th July 2010, Stuttgart, Germany. © LWF/J. Latva-Hakuni

Mission

Jesus said: „Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” (Matthew: 28:19 - KJV). Jesus' Great Commission has formed the basis for Christian mission throughout church history. Pietism and the Great Awakening of the 18th and 19th century gave rise to new efforts in Christian mission. Several protestant mission societies were founded during this time. Missionaries of the Basel Mission (founded in 1815 as a joint effort of Christians in South-West Germany and Switzerland), brought the Gospel to many countries in Africa and Asia.

Through its membership in the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS), the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg is formally related to 23 EMS Member Churches in Africa and Asia and five Mission Societies in Europe. Parishes and Church Districts in Württemberg maintain about 200 partnerships with Christian communities all over the world.

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg maintains official partnerships with the Lutheran Church in Tiflis

(Georgia), the Lutheran Church in Montbéliard (France), the Romanian-Orthodox Church District of Vad, Feleac and Cluj (Romania), and is engaged in a “Three-Church-Partnership” with the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia and the Evangelical Church in Central Germany.

Our Church is a full member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (GEKE). Through the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) we are members of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC).



Church Development Services

International variety in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg is important to us. We cherish the presence of persons of different origins and backgrounds living in our midst. For this reason, we maintain relations to parishes composed of such persons.

We believe that justice, peace and the integrity of creation is not merely a slogan. Accordingly, we are working towards a good living for all people.



The questions of food security, climate justice, mobility, ecological and economical responsibility, human rights and many other current issues are discussed in parishes, schools and meetings. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Würt-

temberg supports projects all over the world, thus helping people in distress through measures of sustainable support and capacity building.

Worldwide ecumenism is manifest in many international partnerships of parishes and church groups, and interreligious dialogue is an important concern in our Church.

The Service for Mission, Ecumenical Relations and Development Services (DiMOE) in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg is yet another link to the worldwide church. Pastors serving with DiMOE share their experience of working in foreign countries with school classes and church groups. Also serving in the unit are Ecumenical Co-Workers from the worldwide church.

Diaconia

Faith is not an end in itself.

It reaches out to others. Belief in Jesus Christ leads us into diaconal service as an expression of that faith. To serve in this way is to love our neighbours. The Evangelical Churches in Germany (EKD) group their charities in an umbrella organization known as the Diaconal Board. In Württemberg, all church-related service organizations are members of the Diaconal Board of Württemberg. This board operates homes for the aged, hospitals and infirmaries, crisis counselling for people in difficulty and ambulant health care units. More than 45.000 full time employees and more than 35.000 volunteers working in the Diaconal Services in Württemberg help people regardless of religious affiliation, age, profession or income level.

“Bread for the World” (BfdW), a relief organization of the Diaconal Board of the EKD, strives to alleviate hunger and need all over the world. At the same time, BfdW enables people to help themselves by sponsoring a variety of projects with this goal. These are financed largely by charitable donations from individuals.

Finally the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg operates kindergartens, day and boarding schools.

