

Foerdergesellschaft für den Wiederaufbau der Garnisonkirche Potsdam e.V.
Society for Rebuilding the Potsdam Garrison Church

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Appeal from Potsdam

The outcome of the Second World War had already been decided when on April 14th 1945 an air raid left the old city centre of Potsdam in ruins. The famous Garrison Church caught fire and was eventually gutted by the blaze. The Dutch carillon plunged down and was reduced to pieces.

After the war, in 1950, the Protestant congregation established itself in the church tower. They had two new church bells cast from the remnants of the Glockenspiel and celebrated religious services once again. A new spirit entered the old walls of the church and its rebuilding was planned and prepared.

In 1968 the congregation's property was illegally expropriated by the communist government of East Germany and the church was subsequently demolished. Numerous protests from within and outside Germany were ignored and could not ward off the final destruction of the church. But even its demolition could not prevent the Garrison Church from remaining a symbol up to the present day for those people who love Potsdam.

We are not prepared to accept the fatal blow dealt to this unique historic building which has seen so much of European history. We are calling for world-wide support to help rebuild the Garrison Church.

Please support our Effort

The Garrison Church will, in the future, serve as an open city church: a House of God for seekers and believers. The liberating call of the Gospel will once again ring out from here. In this House of God memory could then be shaped, conscience be sharpened and the future be formed.

The reconstructed Garrison Church is intended as a centre of peace and reconciliation. At the same time our call for support is meant to be a protest against the ideologically motivated destruction of the city of Potsdam in the past.

With our appeal we would like to express that people from all over the world stand together against war, violence, dictatorship and destruction.

The Potsdam Garrison Church was a masterpiece of Prussian Baroque Architecture. The builder, Philipp Gerlach (1697-1748), was renowned as a master constructor of towers placed in the landscape. The Garrison Church functioned as a leading architectural symbol of Potsdam. It was an outstanding element of the famous skyline of Potsdam's three main churches.

Civilians and soldiers, aristocrats and townspeople, young orphans and adults, Lutherans and Reformed Protestants assembled here to listen to the word of God. It was in this church that Johann Sebastian Bach, in the presence of Frederic the Great, played the famous Wagner Organ.

European monarchs came here to pay homage to the kings of Prussia resting in the crypt. In 1817 the Reformed Protestant Church and the Lutheran Church of Prussia sealed their union in this church. Many members of the resistance movement against Hitler, including those who attempted to assassinate him on July 20th 1944, were members of this congregation.

The Garrison Church was abused. On March 21st 1933, the National Socialists used the church in a disgraceful way for a performance to turn their opponents into supporters.

Whoever wants to shape his future has to have knowledge of his history. We do not want our history to be taken from us. In continuity and change we face up to the challenges of the past with all its ambivalence. That is the reason why we are appealing to all those who have a special place for Potsdam in their hearts

.PLEASE HELP US REBUILD THE POTSDAM GARRISON CHURCH

Neither the Protestant Church of Brandenburg nor the State of Brandenburg, neither the City of Potsdam, nor the Deanery of Potsdam can raise enough money on their own to have the church rebuilt. We call on all those who have already given donations to continue their good work. We hope for the support of the countries that were forced to take part in the Second World War unleashed by Germany.

We turn for help to all citizens of Potsdam at home and abroad. We turn to all people who can make a contribution to give the famous baroque church back to our city.