

15. December 2025

Europe/International

Musical peace vespers at the end of the year of remembrance in St. Georg

"Give us peace, mercifully" - Choirs send an impressive signal for peace and solidarity

On the third Sunday of Advent, 14 December 2025, the Bocholt commemorative year "80 Years of Peace and Freedom" ended with a festive musical peace vespers service. This commemorated the end of the Second World War 80 years ago with numerous cross-border events. Visitors came together in the packed St. George's parish church to pause for thought in the run-up to Christmas and set an example for peace.

The motto of the peace vespers was "Give us peace, mercifully". The music was performed by the Bocholt Town Twinning Project Choir under the direction of Dr Gerd Heinz Stevens and the German-Dutch choir "VISION" from Suderwick/Dinxperlo under the direction of Cindy Gregoor.

The programme included songs such as "Dona pacem, Domine" by Luigi Cherubini, "The night will always win" Dr Stevens accompanied and interpreted the works "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" and the improvisation of "Hedwig's Theme" from Harry Potter on the organ. To conclude, both choirs sang the Advent hymn "Daughter of Zion, rejoice" together with the visitors. Long-lasting applause and standing ovations honoured the performances. After vespers, the guests donated 1,600 euros for children and young people in the Ukrainian solidarity partner city of Verkhniodniprovsk, emphasising the idea of peace through concrete help.

In their greetings and speeches, both Deputy Mayor Gudrun Koppers and Pastor Matthias Hembrock emphasised the particular topicality of the issue. Gudrun Koppers emphasised the importance of peace as the basis for freedom, democracy and solidarity with one another - especially at a time when armed conflicts are once again determining the daily lives of many people. In his speech, Pastor Hembrock emphasised that peace is by no means a given today and must be worked for, protected and lived again and again.

The realisation of the Peace Vespers was made possible with the help of local partners such as the Rudolf and Margot Ostermann Foundation, Stadtparkasse Bocholt and Volksbank Bocholt eG, Tekloth GmbH and Sven Pieron. The concert was made possible by the Interreg programme Germany-Netherlands and its programme partners and co-financed by the European Union (EU).



© Leo Heßling

The year of remembrance ended with a festive musical vespers service in St George's Church