New Apostolic Church International

Divine service times for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are changing in Europe



Jahresabschlussgottesdienst an Silvester 2014

(Foto: F. Schuldt)

Zurich. The current order of divine services for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day has been in effect since 2011. Now the District Apostles of Europe have passed a resolution on a revision for the European domain. In future, both the closing divine service of the old year and the first divine service of the new year will be conducted on a Sunday.

The new ruling takes effect immediately. The primary motivation for this new divine service order is to place the emphasis on Sunday as the day for divine service. Neither New Year's Eve nor New Year's Day are holy days in the church calendar. For this reason it is appropriate to celebrate the last divine service of the year on the last Sunday of the year instead of on New Year's Eve. Similarly, the first divine service in the new year should also fall on a Sunday, not on New Year's Day.

Exceptions to the rule

There are exceptions to this rule, for example when New Year's Eve falls on a Sunday, as it does in the year 2017. Consequently, the New Year's Day divine service in 2018 will take place on Sunday, 7 January 2018. If Christmas falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the closing of the year divine service will continue to be held on 31 December as before. This will be the case in 2021/2022.

Not an international ruling

In 2011 the International District Apostle Meeting resolved not to implement a uniform system in all parts of the world. Divine services were scheduled for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. However, the abundance of exceptions demonstrates that this ruling cannot be followed throughout the global Church. In some regions, these services were postponed owing to the circumstances in the respective congregational locations. In many countries of the world, New Year's Eve is a completely normal workday. In South Africa, for example, the "Sunday Rule" has proven itself over many a year: the closing service of the year takes place on the last Sunday of the year, while the New Year's Day divine service takes place on the first Sunday of the new year. The same happens in parts of Asia and South America.

The resolution of the European District Apostle Meeting states:

"After extensive discussion among the District Apostles, the divine service order for Europe, starting with the transition from the year 2017 to the year 2018, was established as follows: if the Christmas divine service falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, the closing of the year divine service will take place on 31 December. Otherwise it will take place on the last Sunday of the year. The divine service marking the start of the year (that is, the first divine service in the new year) will in future take place on the first Sunday in the new year. The time of the divine service will be determined by the District Apostles."

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