

THE ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM REGION





The Ústí nad Labem Region is stretching from Šluknov tip in the northern part of Bohemia towards the northwest.

Its area is 5,335 square kilometres and the region has over 850,000 inhabitants. The border is shared with the Federal Republic of Germany and is one of the most interesting natural and recreational areas in the region. In the Bohemian Switzerland there is a national park of the same name. The Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) with the highest mountain Klínovec (1,244m) is now again a popular recreational area. Towards the interior, we can for a change admire the scenic beauty of the Bohemian Central Highlands with the highest mountain Milešovka (837m). The country at the foot of the Ore Mountains has a long and varied history. Nevertheless, its natural wealth has also become its curse. Especially in the 60^s to 80^s of the 20th century many municipalities became a victim of extensive surface brown coal mining. An old royal town of Most did not escape the tragedy, either: it was completely destroyed. Only a rare late-Gothic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary from the early 16th century escaped destruction. In 1975 it was moved in a unique way to the place where the coal mining did not threaten it.

Along with land devastation there was as well a danger air pollution. Forests were dying, towns were often covered by toxic fogs. It is no wonder that in 1989 the first protests against the regime that allowed all this appeared just in this region.

However, nature and people are slowly recovering and life in the region, although it not without problems, is slowly changing for better.

The Ústí nad Labem Region has 7 districts: Děčín, Ústí nad Labem, Most, Chomutov, Litoměřice, Louny and Teplice. Congregations of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) are in all district towns and in another eight places. We will visit congregations in Děčín and in Rumburk, as well as a regional capital of Ústí nad Labem and a famous spa Teplice. Not only a town of Louny has an interesting and rich history, but a local Protestant congregation also has it. A congregation in Chotíněves was chosen for its special afterwar fate. A congregation in Litoměřice owns an Art-Nouveau villa and its activity is strongly connected with a local ECCB Diaconia. Litoměřice itself is not only a state protected reserve but also one of the oldest and from the point of view of the Reformation heritage one of the most important towns in the north Bohemia. We should not forget a nearby Terežín which so sorrowfully entered the Czech history during World War II.

Říp Mountain dominates the Říp region. At its northern foot we will find Krabčice. Local ECCB congregation belongs among significant toleration congregations.

Its later history is as well connected with a nearby congregation in Roudnice nad Labem. Worth mentioning is their valuable church from the beginning of the 20th century which was designed by a famous architect Otto Kuhlmann from Charlottenburg.

Let us set out on a journey for beauties and sites of the Ústí Region !

ŘEČÍN





Děčín – in the past it was a name of a king town, today it is a name of a statutory town derived from an ancient Slavic tribe of the Děčáns. The town with a rich but also a troubled history, the town located on the confluence of the river Elbe and the river Ploučnice, surrounded by a beauty of the rock towns, deep gorges and beautiful views; this town is also home for 50,000 inhabitants living in a centre of the town and also in surrounding neighbourhoods.

It is a beautiful town. The natural wealth of the Elbe's sandstone walls, the Bohemian Central Highlands and the Lužické Mountains meet each other in this region. Děčínský Sněžník (722 metres) with a look-out tower dominates the region. A National Park the Bohemian Switzerland (České Švýcarsko) together with a corresponding national park in a neighbouring Saxony is a unique European natural reservation.

On the right bank of the river Elbe on a high promontory there stands an early Classicist castle of Děčín to which a unique approach road known as Dlouhá jízda ("Long Ride"), preserved from the Baroque period, leads from the town. Rose garden with a Baroque "sala terrena" and with a garden-house is also a favourite place of many visitors. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, a later founder of Sokol, a significant gymnastic organization of that time, was born at the castle in 1832.

Across the Elbe river, on even a higher rock, an observation restaurant with a beautiful view of the town and its surroundings was built up. Behind it, in the middle of the trees, Děčín Zoo is hidden. Houses in residential districts have shiny, various colours facades, all big churches are also well kept – Baroque Church of the Holy Cross and Church of St. Wenceslas and St. Basius as well as St. Francis' of Assisi Church in former Podmokly, which is now one of the town districts of Děčín. Art-Nouveau synagogue miraculously survived the war and also a recent period. Along Teplická Street we are slowly approaching the church that belongs to the local congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB).

The history of the church dates back to the 1880's. That time German Protestants of the Augsburg Confession belonged to a remote

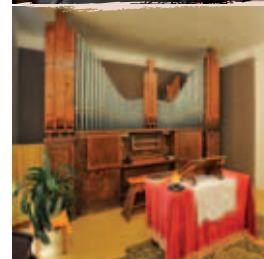
congregation in Habřina near Ústětk. As Děčín was getting bigger, the number of believers was also rising and an independent German congregation was formed in 1887. Which congregation wouldn't like to have its own church? Therefore in 1881 – during a centenary celebration of a Toleration Patent, a construction of Jesus' Church according to G. L. Moeckel's project was started. Builder W. Nickel assumed the construction of the church – building from sandstone ashlars in a Neo-Gothic style with pseudo-Romanesque elements.

The church was completed in 1884 and in the same year an organ was also installed. The German Protestants experienced glorious moments in 1923 when dr. Albert Schweitzer, "doctor of a jungle", musician, philosopher and theologian, a great connoisseur of J. S. Bach's work hold a concert in this church.

Hard war years passed over and people from all Czechoslovakia but also reemigrants from Poland and Volyně began to settle down in the border region.

The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren was founded in 1946 and took over the Church of the Lord at Teplická Street into its care. Within the years necessary repairs of the exterior were made with a help of the ECCB and friends from abroad and later the interior of the church was also repaired and got its original appearance. A combination of wooden elements with sandstone ashlars is also impressive, a pulpit and a font are as well remarkable. In the apse there are two big stained-glass windows which present St. Peter and St. Paul. In nearby Benešov nad Ploučnicí the congregation has its own preaching station. A local castle is a rare example of so-called Saxon, Nordic-oriented Renaissance.

Although the congregation in Děčín is not big by number of its members, it carefully and with respect takes care of a church and a congregation house which serves the members of the congregation in winter. The house of prayer is equipped with a rare organ made in Eule company in Bautzen.



ČHOTINĚVES





U A small village near Litoměřice, south of the second highest mountain of the Bohemian Central Highlands called Sedlo (726 metres) became the home of the Czech reemigrants from Volyně after the 2nd World War. The town of Boratín where the descendants of the exiles after the Battle of the White Mountain lived, (they were expelled from the Czech Land because of their belief) was a witness of many power struggles, many heavy losses and also new hopes in its history. One of the fulfilled hopes was settlement of an originally German village of Chotiněves in fruit and hop-growing region of Litoměřice.

Our compatriots did not come unprepared: they brought Lord's table, a pulpit and an organ from Boratín to their original country. Their desire was to build a church; they left the original one in Boratín...

The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Chotiněves (ECCB) was

established in June 1948. They successfully applied for a permission to build a church and already in the autumn 1950 a construction according to architect Bohumil Bareš's plan was begun. On the 18th of November 1951 there was a ceremonial inauguration of the church. It's a pride of the village especially when a tower was added in 1987. A church bell comes from an abolished church in Habřina which used to be a center of the Protestants in the vast diaspora of North Bohemia.

The congregation in Chotiněves also takes care of a preaching station in Úštěk where it is also a possibility of accommodation, catering and swimming. The surrounding beautiful nature and also many historical monuments offer a welcome opportunity for rest.

KRABČICE





U In a fertile region of the Elbe river, at the northern foothill of the mountain Říp there is a village of Krabčice (268 metres above sea level, less than 900 inhabitants). The mountain Říp inseparably belongs to the village: isolated, lonely, 460 metres high basalt hill with St. George's Romanesque rotunda on its top is a national cultural monument. No wonder: Říp has been emblazoned in legends since a long time ago. It has been a silent witness to the joyful as well as mournful events over the centuries, it was glorified by poets, it was an inspiration for painters. One of the foundation stones of the National theatre was taken from here, soil from memorable battle-fields was put here.

But let's return to Krabčice: a history of the village is closely linked to the fate of the Czech Protestants. In the period before the Battle of the White Mountain the whole Říp region was predominantly Protestant. During the counter-Reformation after the year 1620 Krabčice remained the most important village of the Czech Brethren. After the Proclamation of the Toleration Patent in 1781 a Reformed congregation was formed in Krabčice and believers of the Augsburg Confession settled in a neighbouring Libkovice where they built a church (it was the first Protestant church with a tower and bell in Bohemia) in 1855.

The original traditional toleration house of prayer was built in Krabčice in 1790. A rectory and a school belonged to it. In the course of time believers were not satisfied with their small house of prayer and they decided to construct a

bigger church. From far away visible church (it is also called Podřipská Cathedral) was built in 1885 in a Neo-Classical style. It has 40 metres high tower and four bells. Preachers from Slovakia originally served in the congregation in Krabčice.

The greatest spiritual development of the congregation came in 1870^s under the influence of a minister Václav Šubert and Jan Karafiát who served as a vicar in Roudnice nad Labem. Their work was not limited to their own congregations only but it was truly a missionary work in the "Northern diaspora", for example in Louny, Trnovany near Teplice or in Krásné Březno near Ústí nad Labem. In all these places the Protestant congregations were gradually being established.

Another important act of Václav Šubert was the foundation of a church educational institute for girls in Krabčice in 1869. Today it serves as a House for Seniors which is in the care of the Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB).

Although the congregation in Krabčice was gradually getting smaller (the tragedy was a forced collectivization of agriculture in the 1950^s), nowadays it is a live congregation and it tries to take care of the buildings which they are in charge of. There is a close relation between the House for Seniors and the congregation. Worth mentioning is also the ecumenical open meeting of the Christians with an impressive title "A Prayer for Home" which is organized by the Ecumenical Council of Churches always on the 28th October.



ECCB DIACONIA HOUSE FOR SENIORS



LOUNY





The town of Louny is situated in the peaceful countryside of northwest Bohemia at an altitude of only 185 metres above sea level. The Bohemian Central Highlands is within sight and the Ohře River, which flows through the town, will soon finish its long journey in the waters of the Elbe near Litoměřice.

The rich history of the town which was and remains under all circumstances always Czech, is closely linked with the fate of the Czech Land. In 1253 Louny became an important royal town on the way to Saxony; at the time of the Hussite Wars, Louny along with Žatec and Slaný were a firm support of the Hussites. The town also has a significant Waldensian period history. Late-Gothic Church of Saint Nicholas from the years 1519–1530, admirable work of Benedikt Rejt, was originally Hussite. Also, during the Estates revolt in 1618, the Louny people joined the Protestant Estates. After the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 the town had to capitulate to Albrecht of Wallenstein, and endure the poverty and burden of the Thirty Years' War, so even after the Proclamation of the Toleration Patent of in 1781, the town remained Catholic.

In the meantime, until that time secret Protestants from the interior started to wake up quickly and they declared their support for the Reformed or the Lutheran Church (at that time they did not have any other choice). Krabčice in the Elbe region excelled among the newly established congregations. Thanks to the untiring work of a minister Václav Šubrt in so-called northern diaspora a preaching station in Louny

was established in 1870. One of the first mission workers there in those years was Jan Karafiát.

In 1922 the preaching station became a congregation which was still in charge of the scattered groups of the Protestants from Děčín to Kadaň. It was an extremely dedicated and hard work; after the establishing of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) these remote places gradually were transformed into separate congregations.

From the beginning Louny Protestants were trying to get dignified worship place. They met in different ways, occasionally also in unused Romanesque Church of Saint Peter. They however did not give up a hope for their own new church. Finally, their dream came true: in 1932 a modern church in the functionalist style designed by Louny native, Prague architect Pavel Bareš, was inaugurated. The building was later gradually supplemented by the rectory building, other congregation rooms and finally a tower was added. The tower however does not have bells until now. In the front a spacious worship place is enriched with an organ which was saved in the 50^s from an abolished church of the German Evangelical Church in Teplice. Louny church which is a protected site, survived along with its faithful members all the blows brought about by a war and later by the communist regime.

Today, not only the members of a small but live congregation but also the town representatives respect their church.



RUMBURK





U Town of Rumburk lies in Šluknov tip, in the northernmost part of the Czech Republic on the border with the Federal Republic of Germany (387 metres above sea level, 11,000 inhabitants). To the north of the town there is a hilly country Šluknovská pahorkatina situated. The direction to the south offers an impressive panorama of the Lužické Mountains with the highest mountain Luž (793 metres).

Rumburk is being mentioned already in 1298 when it was a market town on the former salt track. Over the years it became a famous textile centre and at the end of the 19th century it was already one of the important towns in Šluknov tip. The Loretto Chapel from the beginning of the 18th century is the most famous historical building in town which is at the same time the northernmost building of this kind in Europe.

A revolt in Rumburk in May 1918, when Czech soldiers in a local Austro-Hungarian garrison refused obedience to their commanders, sorrowfully entered a town history. The revolt was brutally suppressed; ten young soldiers were executed and many others were sent to the front or put to prison. A monument in a town park reminds us of this tragic event of the last year of the 1st World War.

The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was founded in Rumburk on the 18th of April 1948. New members of the congregation got former St. John

Nepomuk's Chapel after the German Evangelical Church and an original school serves as a rectory now.

Fate of this late Baroque chapel is notable: it comes from 1775–1778 but soon after it did not serve worship purposes anymore. It was used as a granary, later also together with the adjacent house it served even as a roadside inn. In 1861 the German Protestants got it as a gift. At that time a Protestant cemetery was also founded here. It is not clear until now whether it was an intention or an accident: on the 2nd of August 2003 the church burned down.

A grand restoration of the church and the adjacent building soon began thanks to devoted help from numerous contributors. These days the common work is almost completed. The organ was also repaired. The interior of the church was sensitively rearranged according to designer Barbora Veselá's plan and a restored building near the church serves various congregation activities.

A preaching station in Česká Kamenice also belongs to the congregation in Rumburk. Česká Kamenice is a small town with many interesting historical buildings and with an attractive surrounding. Members of the preaching station gather in the congregation house. The small church which the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) obtained after the 2nd World War serves as a funeral hall.



TEPLICE



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Teplice is the oldest spa in Bohemia; hot mineral springs have been known perhaps as early as in the period of Celtic settlement. Teplice lies 228 metres above sea level in a valley between the Bohemian Central Highlands and the massif of the Ore Mountains and has around 52,000 inhabitants. The biggest development of spa occurred in the 16th century. Even an Elector of Saxony liked to visit this spa. The original Renaissance palace dates back to this period, later the palace was rebuilt in a Baroque and Empire style. The major monuments include also the Church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross from the year 1700.

In 1793 the bigger part of the spa burned down; in the following years there has been an extensive reconstruction of the town in the Classicist and Empire style, with beautiful parks and fountains. In the 19th century Teplice becomes "salon of Europe". Among prominent guests there were for example J. W. Goethe, L. van Beethoven, František Palacký and Jan Neruda. Teplice's reputation is being carried forward until the 20th century. Then there however came a period of Munich and World War II, and as elsewhere in the border area the German residents left Teplice after the war. And together with them the members of the German Evangelical Church also left.

In the 60^s of the last century Teplice was almost at the verge of ecological disaster. Intensive mining activities of the North Bohemian Coal Mines reached to the very town. Unfavourable dispersion conditions threatened the inhabitants of the world-famous town with increasing frequency. The first student demonstrations against the air and land pollution in autumn 1989 broke out here in Teplice. After the Velvet Revolution Teplice could finally breathe freely again.

But let us return for a moment back into the past. What was the religious life of the Czech Protestants in this spa town?

The difficult task to build individual preaching stations in the North Bohemia fell to the congregation in Krabčice. Thanks to the tireless work of the local preachers, in 1899 the Czech Reformed preaching station was established in the suburbs of Teplice (today it is its town part Trnovany). After World War I many new members came and in the year 1926 a congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was established in Teplice-Trnovany. Its first minister was Eugen Zelený. The congregation seat was transferred to Teplice in 1934. A plot next to the congregation building was bought and in 1938 a church in the functionalist style designed by architect Miloslav Tejce started to grow here.

Before it could be finished, the Second World War started. The German Evangelical Church had its congregation in Trnovany and during the war the Czech Protestants were also allowed to meet in their Art-Nouveau church from the year 1905. When the war finished, the members of Teplice congregation could use this church; they however preferred to finish the building of "their own" church. It was officially opened on 1st January 1948. (The German church in Trnovany had a sad fate: it became a warehouse, then it burned and in 1974 it was demolished).

Teplice congregation of the ECCB has been using its church for more than 60 years and remembers with a gratitude all who contributed to its construction in the hard recent years and enjoys a rich congregation life, as it is enabled by the congregation facilities with a nice garden.



ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM





Ústí nad Labem, Ústí Region Administrative Centre, (218 metres above sea level; 100,000 inhabitants) is situated at the confluence of the Elbe and the Bílina rivers. The Ore Mountains surround the town boundary on the northwest. To the north of Ústí there is a popular rock town Tiské stěny. If you go from Lovosice to Ústí nad Labem by train or by car, you will follow the Elbe river on its way through a deep valley which belongs to the Bohemian Central Highlands. On a high rock on the right bank of the Elbe you will see Sřekov castle and soon you can learn about the history and the present of the regional capital. Its history is rich and often troubled. Already in 1249 it is mentioned as a town. Over the centuries the periods of development have alternated with periods of devastating wars...

The beginning of industrial development in Ústí nad Labem dates back to the second half of the 19th century. The town became an important centre of food industry and an important transport junction. It was probably also the reason for the Allies bombing at the end of the 2nd World War in April 1945. One fifth of the city was razed to the ground. A tower of a significant late-Gothic monument – the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, at that time departed almost two metres from its axis. So the town of Ústí has its Leaning Tower until now.

The postwar fate of the town was not easy, either. After the departure of the German people new residents came to the town. Proximity of the extensive brown coal mining, chemical and gas industry, it all meant abundant job opportunities but also harmful effects on environment and health of the people. November 1989 brought Ústí nad Labem a new hope for the future.

The Ore Mountains surround the city boundary on the northwest and sandstone walls Tiské

stěny are increasingly popular place for rest and sport activities. Surrounding areas are rich in various natural and historical monuments.

Also the history of the congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) is associated with the fate of the town. As in Teplice and in Louny, the beginnings of life of the Czech Protestants are connected with a congregation of the Reformed Church in Krabčice. In 1905 a preaching station in Krásné Březno was established, in 1919 it is already a part of the ECCB in Ústí nad Labem. During the war, the preaching station was however closed down and only on 1st August 1947 a congregation was established. As in other places in northern and western border areas, after the 2nd World War the new residents came as well to Ústí congregation. The members of the congregation received a spacious villa in Dvořák Street. The church after the German Evangelical Church fell to the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC) but it is however used by both churches. The history of the church is also interesting. It is a Neo-Romanesque Church of Apostle Paul, built of face work (one of the red churches) in today's Roosevelt Street designed by architect Zeissig from Leipzig in the years 1904–1906. It is reported that the vault of the church was at that time the highest in Bohemia and that the ferroconcrete prefabricated parts were used for the first time. Worth mentioning is also a valuable organ made by Eule company in Bautzen. Worship space serves in its original form until now.

A preaching station in Trmice belongs to the congregation in Ústí nad Labem. Local Church of Jesus was built in the years 1905–1907 in a Neo-Romanesque-Gothic style. A special feature is the location of a house of prayer on the first floor.



THE VYSOČINA REGION





The Vysočina Region is situated at the border of Bohemia and Moravia. D1 highway from Prague to Brno cuts through the region and approximately in the middle there lies a regional capital of Jihlava. It the north Vysočina borders on the Pardubice Region, in the south-east it borders on the South-Moravian Region, in the south-west it borders on the South Bohemian Region and in the north-west it borders on the Central Bohemia Region. With its area of 6,796 square kilometres the Vysočina Region is the fifth largest region of the Czech Republic. Its population is 512,582 inhabitants. The whole region lies in the area of the Czech-Moravian Highlands. The highest mountain Javořice can be found in the Jihlava Hills. From the north-east to the south-west the water-shed of two seas goes through the Vysočina Region: the North Sea (the Sázava river flows into the Elbe) and the Black Sea (the Svatka and the Jihlava rivers flow into the Danube which continues to the Black Sea).

The Vysočina Region belongs to the most preserved and the healthiest natural regions of the Czech Republic. There is a beautiful nature, deep forests, lots of rivers and lakes. The Žďár Hills and the Železné (Iron) Mountains have a statute of a protected landscape area. The Czech-Moravian Highlands is very suitable for summer and winter recreation and offers a lot of places for relax. There is for sure a reason why this area is much-sought-for region by painters, sculptors, poets and writers. Lets us remember: “The Opening of the Fountains” by Bohuslav Martinů based on the poem of a Vysočina poet Miloslav Bureš, further on a painter Antonín Slavíček and sculptors Jan Štursa or Vincenc Makovský.

The Region of Vysočina is also rich in historical monuments. The historical centre of Telč, monastery church in Zelená hora near Žďár nad Sázavou, a Jewish quarter and St. Procopius’ Basilica in Třebíč are listed by UNESCO. The Region of Vysočina also takes care of another immovable and movable national cultural monuments, appreciates its famous natives and remembers with respect all those, mostly the nameless ones, who were here in Vysočina helping the partisans during the Second World War even at a price of their own life.

In the Vysočina Region there is especially light industry, such as glass industry, wood-processing, textile or food industry. The important sector is of course summer and winter tourism.

In this region the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has many congregations with interesting religious buildings. We will visit several village toleration houses of prayer as well as some churches in towns.

DAŇKOVICE





Near Jimramov, in a protected landscape area of the Žďár Hills, at the southern hill-side of Buchtův hill lies a small municipality of Daňkovice. At an altitude of 685 metres above sea level there live about 136 inhabitants. The municipality was already mentioned for the first time in connection with the year 1350. At that time Daňkovice was a part of the Pernštejn domain and besides peasant settlements the little cottages of day labourers were scattered over the slopes of the hills. The villagers made their living by weaving, by working on the poor fields and in the forest.

Already in the year 1750 a pub and three brickyards were here. At that time Daňkovice also got its seal. In the 19th century a cultural life started to develop here, in 1906 Daňkovice had its own library. During the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic a convalescent home was built in the Buchtův Hill but during the Second World War it was occupied by Hitlerjugend for their purposes. Today there is a medical institute. During the war Czech and Soviet partisans found their refuge in the surroundings of Daňkovice. They were secretly supported by the members of a local congregation.

Nowadays, Daňkovice is very popular place for tourism and recreation for its scenic landscape and beautiful surroundings. Some of the country cottages were preserved; two of them are on the list of the protected monuments.

During a counter-Reformation secret Protestants were hiding in the surroundings of Daňkovice as well as everywhere in Vysočina. After a declaration of the Toleration Patent almost all the inhabitants confessed to a Reformed confession and already in the year 1782 they joined a congregation in Jimramov and later they joined a neighbouring congregation in Německé (today Sněžná). The inhabitants of Daňkovice built their first wooden house of prayer in the year 1785 and they were using it for more than thirty years. In the year 1818 a spacious stone house of prayer with a nice attic roof and straight rectangular windows was built at the outskirts of the village. The entrance was from the field path. The house of prayer has kept its original appearance until now; only necessary repairs were done. The inside arrangement has not been changed, either. The inscriptions with biblical texts between the windows are as well preserved. The valuable organ comes from Jimramov church. A cemetery with a stone wall and two gates spreads around the house of prayer. A new rectory was built in the year 1906.

Officially, Daňkovice became a congregation on the 26th of October 1904. Nowadays, a preaching station in Borovnice with a Protestant church from the year 1886 is also a part of the congregation.



HORNÍ DUBENKY





Horní Dubenky (600 metres above sea level, about 600 inhabitants) lies north of the Javořice Highland with the highest mountain Javořice (836 metres) which is at the same time the highest mountain of the Vysočina Region. It this remote region with a relatively high altitude where the river Jihlava rises, the villages were being established in the 13th century in a so called “big colonization wave”. One of these villages was also Horní Dubenky. The centre of the region was Janštejn castle which was owned by Jindřich of Hradec since 1383. The castle was probably damaged during the Hussite wars. The rest of the castle can still be found in the forest near Horní Dubenky. Later Horní Dubenky was a part of the Telč domain. In 1423 a Hussite group led by Jan Hvězda of Vicemilice was attacked by the mercenaries of Menhart of Hradec. The rest of the 15th century was a relatively calm period of agricultural and crafts development. The glass production near Janštejn was mentioned in this connection. But the post-White-Mountain period became one of the most difficult periods in the history of the region.

The Emperor's army was destroying villages and countryside. The Swedes were fighting here as well. A period of the religious persecution followed. In the region where the Czech Reformation lasted for years, the recatholization was particularly strong. It was carried out by the Jesuits from Telč as well as from Jindřichův Hradec. At the banks of the lakes the forbidden books were being burnt. The secret Protestants used to meet near the Lord's Well at the foot-hill of Javořice but even here they were being attacked. They used to meet also in Zahrádky u Brchaňů or in the mill on Doubrava.

As soon as the news about the Toleration Patent arrived to Horní Dubenky, they went to Telč with a request to establish a congregation. But they were refused because a congregation of the Augsburg confession had just been established in a nearby Velká Lhota. Nevertheless, the villagers from Horní Dubenky did not give up their effort. They contacted Emperor Joseph

II directly. Eventhough, there were not enough of them according to the Toleration Patent rules, on the 6th of November 1783 the Emperor issued the Supreme Decree based on which he gave a permission to establish an independent congregation of the Augsburg confession in Horní Dubenky.

The beginnings of the poor congregation were hard. The land for a construction of a rectory, cemetery and a house of prayer was only leased. The construction of the house of prayer started in April 1786 and already in October in the same year the first worship was served there. Unlike the other toleration houses of prayer in the Vysočina region, this one has a brick vault instead of a wooden ceiling. A pulpit, a stone floor as well as a choir with an organ were added later. The small tower comes from the year 1857. At the beginning of the 20th century a new rectory and farm buildings were built. During the 50^s of the last century the considerable repairs were done. A new hall was added to the rectory. The hall was given a name of Pavel F. Lanštják, a long term significant preacher, to whose memory a memorial plaque was dedicated. A cemetery was established already in the year 1782. Today a nice alley leads to the cemetery and we can find there tombstones of the first preachers.

The year 1989 brought a new challenge also for the Horní Dubenky congregation. Open air gatherings are being held; every fourth Sunday in August there is a worship near the Lord's Well to commemorate the persecuted Protestants. And every year Master Jan Hus is being remembered at the bank of the Borský Lake near the so called “Žižka's Stone”, a Hussite battle memorial which can be found on the way to Janštejn.

In the summer months an annual meeting with a title “Parrésia alias Heart Paradise and Labyrinth of the World” is being held here to present an interconnection of evangelium and culture.



HORNÍ KRUPÁ





In the Hills of the Horní Sázava region, north of Havlíčkův Brod and near Dolní Krupá lies a village of Horní Krupá (477 metres above sea level, 473 inhabitants). It was founded in the Ronovec domain in the year 1265. Near Krupá we can still see the ruins of the Ronovec castle. The surrounding countryside is diverse, the Krupá and Jilemnice brooks flow through this area. The Volský Hill with an observation point is 598 metres high.

Near the village we can find a beech tree which is approximately 300 years old, with a perimeter of its stem 620 cm. This tree is protected. So called Hart Well (Jelení studánka) is a very memorable place. After the Battle of the White Mountain the secret Protestants used to meet here for worship. In the middle of the village we can still find the old peasant houses. It is worth mentioning that in the year 1923 "Postila" written by Martin Zámorský, a Czech 16th century preacher, was found hidden in a secret place in the house number 4. Pseudo-Gothic village Chapel of Virgin Mary was built at the end of the 19th century. In the year 1928 a memorial to the victims of World War I was built here. In Horní Krupá the Brethren Church has also its house of prayer there.

The beginning of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation in Horní Krupá was very difficult. Even though this region remembered the period before the Battle of the White Mountain very well and the secret Protestants survived the counter-Reformation here, after the Toleration Patent there were only 50 families who officially joined the Reformed church, which was not enough for establishing an independent congregation. Therefore, they were accepted in Sázava congregation which was however far, it took six hours of journey to get there. In the years 1791–1824 Sázava con-

gregation did not have a preacher. The Protestants in Horní Krupá however did not give up. The worship took place in private homes, from time to time a preacher visited them. The independent congregation was established in the year 1867. Although, the region was very remote and very poor, a small group of believers had merit in a building of a house of prayer. It was built near the village and it was opened by a ceremonial worship on the 30th of October 1847. The house of prayer in Horní Krupá differed by its appearance from other toleration style buildings. It was designed by builder Prchal of Hamr. One nave Neo-Classical house of prayer had high windows with curves in their upper part, triangle gable and a nice entrance front. Inside, there were two wooden galleries, two rows of benches and a stone floor. The apse was lightened by a big window. The first organ was arranged in the year 1872.

In a similar time, together with a house of prayer there was also a school arose by rebuilding of purchased farm buildings. The members of the congregation, mostly ordinary farmers and workmen, were very self-sacrificing. The rectory built in the year 1871 had also its own farm buildings. During the years these buildings required various repairs, the rectory was as well modernized. The Protestant school which served until the year 1930 as the last religious school, later was used as a winter house of prayer and today it is a seat of the Christian centre for the ecology education called Sunflower (Slunečnice).

The last very successful and sensitive alterations of the toleration house of prayer (which remained without a tower) were done in the years 2006–2007 according to a designer Barbora Veselá's design. The whole complex respects its toleration past and it deserves our attention.



HOŘNÍ VILÉMOVICE • KRALICE NAD OSLAVOU

HOŘNÍ VILÉMOVICE





Horní Vilémovice lies in an area of the Křižanov Hills, approximately in the middle of the way between Třebíč and Velké Meziříčí. The municipality at an altitude of 590 metres above sea level has around 80 inhabitants. Since the year 1360 it was owned by Vít of Vilémovice and in the 16th century it was a part of Třebíč domain. The fate of Vilémovice is connected with the fate of the Unity of Brethren. The Protestant tradition has deep roots here. Some of the Protestant families (Jaš family) have been living here for more than 400 years.

In the year 1784 a Reformed congregation was established in Horní Vilémovice in which the Protestants from the whole surroundings used to meet. A toleration house of prayer was built in the years 1784–1788. It was a simple rectangle building with small doors and with a shingled hipped roof. Later it was equipped with a pulpit, fence around the Lord's table, font and benches. The organ for the choir was provided as late as in 1902. In that year a tower with a clock and bells was as well added. In such a condition, after not so many alterations, the house of prayer has been kept until now.

The original rectory was built just next to the house of prayer. In the year 1933 a nice modern rectory in the middle of the garden was built in the village which serves as a congregation house, winter house of prayer as well as a flat for a preacher.

The preaching station in Kralice nad Oslavou is very important for the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) thanks to the Unity of Brethren. Its members were very conscious about education and in the places where they worked they also usually established schools. In the years 1575–1620 such a school was in

Ivančice. One of the most significant representatives of the Unity of Brethren was a bishop Jan Blahoslav who established a famous Brethren printing house in Ivančice in the year 1557. Its fate is closely connected with Kralice, today's preaching station of Horní Vilémovice.

Kralice was mentioned for the first time in the year 1310. Kralice fortress was built sometime at the beginning of the 15th century and during the 1540^s it was rebuilt into a smaller Renaissance castle. In the year 1572 the owners of the castle sold it to Jan of Žerotín, the senior, who already owned a neighbouring domain of Náměšť nad Oslavou. Kralice castle was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War, Kralice remained a part of Náměšť domain.

When Rudolph II issued his Anti-religious novelties in Moravia Mandate in 1577 (which was also a case of the Unity of Brethren), Jan of Žerotín received its members at the Kralice fortress. The printing house from Ivančice as well as the Brethren library was moved here and a unique work could continue, the final result of which was a Czech translation of a Bible, famous Kralice Bible (in the years 1579–1594).

For more than forty years the members of the Unity of Brethren could work here and print their books under the patronage of the Žerotíns. After the Battle of the White Mountain the printing was moved from security reasons to Náměšť castle. And in 1628 when also Karel of Žerotín, senior, had to leave the country, the printing was moved to Lešno in Poland.

Today, we can find valuable memories of this period in the Kralice Bible Memorial, there is also a memorial in the main square and the Church of St. Martin also reminds us of a famous Kralice Bible. The archaeological research in Kralice has still been on progress.



HORNÍ VILÉMOVICE



KRALICE-BIBLE KRALICE MEMORIAL

JIHlava





Almost in the middle of the Vysočina Region, on the former land border between Bohemia and Moravia, on the confluence of the Jihlava and Jihlávka rivers there lies a regional capital of Jihlava at an altitude of 525 metres and there live more than 51,000 inhabitants.

Jihlava is a very old town. Already at the end of the 12th century a Slavic village with a small Church of St. John the Baptist is being mentioned. The deposit of silver ore was discovered in the Jihlávka river and in the 13th century it brought a foundation of a royal mining town which was developing very quickly. The colonization mostly from the German countries was spreading quickly as well. In this period the Dominicans and the Minorites came and established monasteries here. At that time a congregation Church of St. James the Greater was also built. The town was surrounded by the fortification walls, the houses with the arcades were being built in the main square and Jihlava became one of the leading towns of the kingdom. The silver mining declined at the end of the 14th century. In the course of the Hussite wars the town supported Emperor Sigismund. During his presence the Compacts which guaranteed a free communion in both kinds was ceremonially declared in Jihlava in 1436. The town opposed George of Poděbrady and therefore it was invaded by a royal army.

In the 15th and 16th century silver mining was replaced by cloth production which was very profitable. In the year 1526 the town burnt down. The new houses were built in a Renaissance style. During the Thirty Years' War and the Swedish occupation the town was very damaged and later it was rebuilt in a Baroque style.

New development of cultural life as well as industry started in the 19th and the 20th century. At that time Jihlava was a centre of the

German language enclave. After World War II due to this situation there was a similar migration of people as in the border towns. During the war Jihlava was occupied by the Germans and also the Jewish synagogue was destroyed. Today, Jihlava is a live and prosperous town and it is also a Historic Town Reserve. There are a lot of historical monuments – let us mention at least the Gate of the Mother of God which survived as the only one from the time when the town was surrounded by walls. The Church of St. James the Greater which was finished in the year 1257 is a protected site. The Church of St. John the Baptist is one of the oldest stone small churches which have been preserved in the Vysočina Region. It was built in a Romanesque style before the year 1200. Today, it is rebuilt in a Baroque style. In the Jesuit Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola there are two unique Gothic sculptures-Pieta from the end of the 14th century and so called Přemyslid Cross- a sculpture of the Crucified from the middle of the 14th century. Both sculptures are national cultural monuments.

After World War II when the German population left the town, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren got a church after the German Evangelical Church. The Czech Protestant congregation in Jihlava was established already in the year 1928. The Protestants could gather in a German Lutheran church which was built in a Neo-Romanesque style in 1878. The Czech Protestant gatherings in this church took place also during World War II. After the war the congregation also got a nice congregation building. In a preaching station in Strážov there is a house of prayer from the year 1925.

Besides the ECCB there are other churches in Jihlava: the Roman Catholic Church, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC), the Orthodox Church, the Methodist Church and the Apostolic Church.



CHURCH



CONGREGATION HOUSE JIHLAVA

JIMRAMOV





A township of Jimramov is located on the confluence of the Fryšávka and Svatka rivers in the Hornosvratecká Highlands in the eastern part of the protected landscape area of the Žďár Hills. About 1,200 inhabitants live at an altitude of 495 metres.

Jimramov was founded in the 13th century during the colonization of the region. Its history is connected with a castle Skály (Štarkov). Nowadays, we can find only the ruins of this castle. In the year 1392 a fortress which belonged to the Pernštejn family was mentioned for the first time. Pavel Katharyn of Katar who chose Jimramov as his residence, got the fortress in the year 1588 and rebuilt it in a Renaissance style. In the 18th century the Belcredi family extended the fortress and rebuilt it into the castle which they owned until the year 1945. In the course of time Jimramov became a nice little town. Nevertheless, it was also damaged by the fires and by the the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War.

In the square we can find a school which was built in a Classicist style. There is an exhibition hall and a memorial hall of famous Jimramov natives (Jan Karafiát, brothers Alois and Vilém Mrštík) at this school. Some of the houses are also built in a Classicist style. A memorial plaque is placed on Jan Karafiát's parental home. The town hall is Empire. In the hill, above the village there is a Roman Catholic Church of Virgin Mary's Birth which was originally Gothic, in the 18th century it was rebuilt in a Baroque style. In 1786 a Protestant church was built. Historical centre of Jimramov is a Historic Town Reserve. The life of the congregation is going in the line with the life of the town. During World War II the congregation members participated in a selfless help to the partisans. They survived even the totalitarian regime period.

Jimramov and its surroundings was and remained Protestant. In 1609 during the reign of Vilém Dubský of Třebomyslice a special religious order was introduced. According to this order the worship and the Holy Communion was done in both kinds.

In spite of the counter-Reformation after the proclamation of the Toleration Patent, almost all people of Jimramov and nearby villages chose the Helvetian confession.

In the beginning, the believers gathered in their neighbours places, later the nobility gave them an old mangle room. Later they got a place to build a house of prayer which was in the former cemetery, in the hill in front of the Catholic church. On the 26th of October 1786 the house of prayer with shingle attic roof was consecrated. According to the toleration regulations it did not have a tower. It was added in the year 1884. At that time the church was also equipped with a gallery and the organ. Between the two churches there are also two cemeteries which used to be strictly divided but now they are no longer separated by the wall. The interior of the original house of prayer was in the line with Reformed church customs. Later various adjustments were done. We can find here a beautifully decorated pulpit and a fence around the Lord's table as well as the benches which are arranged according to the customs of the Reformed church. During the latest reconstruction in the 1980^s, short before finishing the adjustments according to Miroslav Rada's art design, there was a fire of the roof and the interior was damaged during the rescue works. The church was reopened as late as in the year 1988. It is worth mentioning that soon after the fire a neighbouring Catholic congregation contributed a big sum of money to save the church.

The Evangelical rectory in the square has been serving since the year 1791. Later a congregation hall was set up in the house which is today called Karafiát's Hall and is decorated by Miroslav Rada's paintings based on the motifs of the famous "Fireflies".

The totalitarian period was not easy for the congregation. The ministers as well as young people who used to gather in a nearby Zbytov were being persecuted. Several Vysočina ministers lost their state authorization. After November 1989 Jimramov congregation was facing new tasks. In 1991 the church was enriched by the new organ which is being used not only during the worship but also during the concerts of the spiritual music. The live congregation remembers the work of its predecessors with respect and looks towards the future with a hope.



KRUCEMBURK • Chotěboř

KRUCEMBURK





The municipality of Krucemburk (561 metres above sea level and 1,600 inhabitants) can be found in the place where the protected landscape areas of the Iron Mountains and the Žďár Hills meet each other, a few kilometres from Ždírec. There are deep forests in the surroundings, the lake Řeka is a nice place for swimming and a nearby National Natural Reservation Ransko is as well worth visiting. North of Krucemburk, on the Veselý Hill a museum of folk architecture and technical monuments of the Vysočina Region was built.

Krucemburk was established by the German Knights Order in the 13th century. The Church of St. Nicholas has Romanesque foundations, later it was being rebuilt. In the middle of the 14th century Krucemburk was already mentioned as a little town. Later Krucemburk was given a right to hold annual markets. The 15th and the 16th century is a period of a big development – in the year 1590 the municipality got the silver seal. During the Thirty Years' War the dynasty of Ditrichsteins became the owners of the domain. Krucemburk was however hit by the fires and together with a period of decline there was as well persecution of the non-Catholics. Towards the end of the 18th century a little town started to face more favourable times.

The Toleration Patent from 1781 brought a religious relief also to Krucemburk. A year later the oldest Augsburg confession congregation in Bohemia was founded here. At the beginning the worship meetings took place in a barn, similarly as in many congregations after their establishing during a post Toleration Patent period. During June 1786 the first wooden house of prayer was built. It started to deteriorate however very quickly. The believers in Krucemburk got their new house of prayer as late as in the year 1840. It was a typical tolera-

tion period building without a tower. The only difference was an entrance in the shorter side of a rectangular space of a building. The house of prayer kept its simplicity until now, only the interior was adjusted later. A building near the house of prayer was built for a purpose of a rectory. Later the building was adjusted for gathering and congregation job purposes.

The period of World War II was very hard for the municipality as well as for the congregation. Curator František Šešulka with a wife became victims of Nazism, a congregation preacher Bohumil Lopour was arrested and imprisoned at the end of the war. Ždírec and Krucemburk experienced another tragedy on the 9th of May 1945: a heavy air attack killed twenty people. This sad event is commemorated by a memorial by Vincenc Makovský. Among the artists who liked and always come back to Krucemburk we can mention a painter Jan Zrzavý. He is buried at the local Catholic cemetery and a memorial hall in a local municipal office reminds us of his life and work.

In the year 1945 Krucemburk was officially renamed to Křížová. Based on a referendum from 1993 the inhabitants decided to come back to the original name of their home.

In a beautiful valley of the river Doubravka near Chotěboř one of the recreational centres of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was opened in 1971. The children from the Protestant families used to go for summer camps to the nice local cottages. Later the centre served families with children for holiday recreation. The cottages are being gradually adjusted. The children with a handicap come here regularly for recreation. Every year in a low season period there are recreational programmes for the seniors. This area offers a lot of possibilities for walks, common meetings as well as various hobby activities.



PREACHING STATION CHOTĚBOŘ
CHCH HOUSE OF PRAYER

KRUCEMBURK



MORAVEČ





A municipality Moraveč can be found in the western part of the Czech-Moravian Highlands in the area which is also sometimes called the Křemešník Highlands. Moraveč is located to the south of the road which connects Tábor and Pelhřimov, has 200 inhabitants and an altitude of 595 metres. For the prevailing unfavourable climatic conditions this area is called Czech Siberia. Even such an inaffable countryside was however inhabited in the past and is connected with an interesting history.

The region around Pelhřimov was owned by the princes of the Slavníkovec dynasty until the year 997 when they were exterminated by the Přemysliids. Želiv became a centre of the region. The owners of the domain were changing, similarly as it was also usual in other parts of Bohemia and Moravia. After the Battle of the White Mountain Emperor gave the whole area to the Prague archbishopric which owned it until the year 1848. The oldest record of Moraveč comes from the year 1379. The village developed gradually, the peasant houses arose around the village green. The damaging fires however occurred here as well.

In the past the development of the municipality was depended on the religious matters. The region was Protestant but just the post-White-Mountain period brought a cruel change. Prague archbishopric started a recatholization process in which a priest Koniáš participated as well. The religious persecution took a long time but in Moraveč there were still many secret Protestants who chose the Reformed confession immediately after the declaration of the Toleration Patent.

In December 1783 the first minister Jan Szalatnay came to Moraveč from Hungary and a

congregation could be established. Already on the 29th of February 1784 he had his first sermon in the barn of Jíra's family. In the same year a wooden rectory was built, prepared a land for a cemetery and in the year 1785 a construction of a brick house of prayer according to valid toleration principles began. The house of prayer was consecrated on the 4th of November 1785. The inner equipment was in the line with usual way. In the year 1876 according to Pelhřimov builder Štěpán Walser's plan a Neo-Gothic tower was additionally built. During further repairs the inscriptions with biblical verses from the year 1788 were restored. The rectory was being repeatedly rebuilt and today it is a part of the congregation life as well as the home for the preacher. In the local cemetery we can find the tombstones of his predecessors.

The life of Moraveč in the 19th century was influenced by a railway construction from Tábor to Horní Cerekev. The local people built their new houses for the money which they earned by building the railroad. During the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic various clubs and associations were being developed; such as the amateurish club and various important anniversaries were being commemorated thanks to the teachers of the Protestant school.

This favourable development was interrupted by World War II. The Jewish inhabitants of Moraveč did not come back home any more. The neighbouring village of Leskovice was burned down by the Germans at the end of the war. Among many victims there were as well members of the Moraveč congregation. Years were passing and after the year 1989 Moraveč became a modern and a prosperous municipality. Its congregation takes care of its predecessors' heritage with respect and gratitude.



NOVÉ MĚSTO NA MORAVĚ





Nové Město na Moravě is sometimes called the heart of the Horácko Region and its surroundings is considered to be the most beautiful part of the Czech-Moravian Highlands. The town has a special charm thanks to the impressive connection of an imposing town with a beautiful and easy to reach nature in its vicinity.

Nové Město na Moravě (600 metres above sea level and approx. 10,500 inhabitants) was established in the year 1250 by a founder of the Cistercian Monastery in Žďár nad Sázavou Boček of Obrány. At the end of the 15th century the town as well as the domain became the ownership of the Pernštejn dynasty; the town reached its biggest development during the reign of Vratislav of Pernštejn and Vilém Dubský of Třebomyslice. The latter had a Renaissance castle built here at the end of the 16th century. After the Battle of the White Mountain the castle as well as the domain became Cardinal Ditrichstein's ownership. He declared Nové Město a town in the year 1635. Today, a well preserved historical centre creates a Historic Town Reserve.

The oldest monument is a Catholic Church of St. Kunhuta in Vratislav Square. A Gothic presbytery is preserved inside. Gradually a church nave and a tower were being additionally built. However, in the year 1723 the church was struck by a big fire. So called "Black Chapel" decorated with sgraffitoes by a painter Karel Němec, a local native, is very interesting. K. Němec also decorated a cemetery Chapel of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. In an original Renaissance castle (which was rebuilt several times, for the last time it was in a Neo-Renaissance style) there is a Gallery of the Horácko Region. In the former town hall from the year 1555 there is a seat of the Museum of the Horácko Region.

The town is a birth place or place of work of several significant artists. Let us remember two of them – a sculptor Jan Štursa and his pupil Vincenc Makovský. Their work is a part of our national cultural heritage. The Vratislav Square was rebuilt according to the architec-

tural design of Vincenc Makovský and we can find here a lot of works of art that create sort of impressive outdoor gallery. It is especially Štursa's bronze sculpture "The Injured One" in front of the artist's native house, a statue of František Palacký or a bust of T. G. Masaryk. In the place of the original Protestant house of prayer there is a bust of Jan Amos Komenský, a work of sculptor Julius Pelikán.

Nové Město na Moravě is a popular destination for those who admire summer or winter sports. There are ideal tracks for cross country skiing; a famous race called "A Golden Ski" has been organized here since the year 1934.

After the Battle of the White Mountain the counter-Reformation in Nové Město and its surroundings was very consequential. The Protestants were very happy about the Toleration Patent and they chose the Reformed confession. The congregation was officially established in the year 1783. The first worship took place here at the end of the year 1782. A small toleration house of prayer was built already in the year 1784 and after various alterations it served until the year 1897 when a foundation stone for a construction of a new church was laid. Vienna architect Ferdinand Glaser designed a building in a Neo-Classical style and the church was built by a builder Josef Sadílek. Glaser also designed the interior equipment which remained unchanged until now. In September 1898 there was a ceremonial worship to consecrate the church. The church was being repaired several times and it serves a big, live congregation which looks after it very carefully. Near the church across the garden there is a rectory which replaced the original one, not suitable anymore, in the year 1947.

In Nové Město na Moravě there is also a Protestant cemetery where a national artist Vincenc Makovský, a congregation member is buried. A former Synodical Senior of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) ThDr. Josef Křenek is also buried here.







Approximately in the middle of D1 Highway from Prague to Brno there is an exit for Pelhřimov. This town is located in a slightly hilly countryside at an altitude of 500 metres with almost 17,000 inhabitants and it is a Historic Town Reserve. A pilgrimage place of Křemešník (765 metres) with good water, church and a view-tower dominates the area. Pelhřimov is a seat of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation.

In the year 1290 king Wenceslas II gave a permission to establish a town in this place. Soon it started to develop around the Church of St. Vitus. The town reached its bigger development also in connection with a colonization which was partly German.

During the Hussite wars Pelhřimov supported the Hussites. One of the most significant personalities and thinkers of the Hussite movement was Mikuláš Biskupec of Pelhřimov who also advocated the Hussite requirements in the Council of Basel in the year 1433. In Pelhřimov there were the Provincial Congresses taking place regularly. The 16th century was a period of a development; in the year 1596 Pelhřimov was declared a royal town. After the Revolt of the Estates in 1618 the town was affected by the reprisals as well as by big fires. Paradoxically, this meant a chance for a building development: on the square we can find various architectural styles, from Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque to Art Nouveau, functionalism and finally Cubism, the example of which is Fára house from the years 1913–1914 designed by architect Pavel Janák.

In the town we can find many other historical buildings. Let us remind us of the most important monument, Church of St. Vitus from the second or the third quarter of the 13th century. During the Hussite period there was a communion in both kinds. The Church was being rebuilt in a Renaissance style, later in a Baroque style. Early Baroque altar with an altar painting of St. Florian from the year 1687 is very valuable. The altar belongs among the movable cultural monuments of the Vysočina Region. If it is a nice weather, we can have a great view from the tower of the originally Gothic Church of St. Bartolomew.

After the declaration of the Toleration Patent there were no Protestants in Pelhřimov. As late as in the year 1910 a preaching station of Strměchy congregation was founded here. The biggest problem for the Pelhřimov Protestants was to find a place for gathering. They

tried many times to find a suitable place—in a pub, at school, in a former Jewish synagogue.. As late as in the year 1991 they got a gift from the town—a house in Růžová Street. Thanks to the enormous effort of congregation members, support of town as well as friends from home and abroad the house could undergo a complete reconstruction. Opening of Čedok travel agency offices on the ground floor of the building was also very helpful. The congregation house was inaugurated on the 30th of May 1993. Nowadays, Pelhřimov and Strměchy create one congregation.

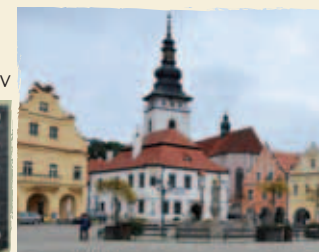
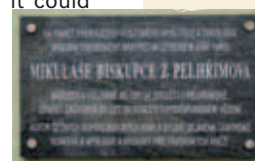
Seven kilometres east of the town, in the Křemešník Highlands lies a village of Strměchy (584 metres above sea level, 133 inhabitants). The first record of its existence dates back to the year 1379. Pelhřimov region as well as Strměchy have a Hussite tradition. The secret Protestants used to survive here also in the hard times of the counter-Reformation. The local nobility was not in a hurry as for the declaration of the Toleration Patent in 1781. The people in Strměchy learned about its declaration from the relatives by chance and they chose a Reformed confession. But they did not meet the strict toleration regulations because they were not enough of them. Therefore they joined far away Moravě. The number of the Protestants was however gradually rising and in the year 1787 a branch congregation was founded in Strměchy. Its members started to consider a construction of a house of prayer immediately. They found a land in a small hill above the village, they as well provided wood for the construction. In November 1788 a new house of prayer was consecrated. It was a very simple one, with a soil floor and very small windows. Later, especially after the abolishing of the toleration measures it could be equipped better. The tower however was not added so the house of prayer kept its simple but impressive appearance. The cemetery nearby is also original, there are tombstones of the first preachers.

The independent congregation was established in the year 1869. Rectory was built in the middle of the village. Behind the rectory there is a vast land and attic rooms in an annex of the building. The repairs from the end of the 90^s of the 20th century were mostly done for the recreational purposes since a seat of the congregation is in Pelhřimov.



STRMĚCHY

PELHŘIMOV



PROSETÍN





Prosetín is a small municipality near Bystřice nad Pernštejnem. The hill called Vrchy north of Prosetín is 637 metres high. In the direction to the south the Hornosvratecká Highlands is opened towards the South Moravian Region. The altitude of Prosetín is however still high, about 561 metres. The number of population is about 400. The surrounding countryside is beautiful, we can find here a rare natural location called Kocoury with rich flora on limestone soil.

Prosetín is mentioned in the year 1390 when the whole area belonged to the Pernštejn dynasty. In the 16th century it became a part of Kunštát domain. At the beginning of the 17th century there used to be a fortress in Prosetín but most probably it was destroyed quite soon. In a place of an original small Church of St. Margaret a new bigger Catholic church with a rectory was built in the 18th century.

In the whole region the Protestants had the majority. The counter-Reformation was not that cruel here, the area was too remote. The secret Protestants had worship meetings in a cave in Páleniny and they were exchanging forbidden books. After the declaration of the Toleration Patent all the villagers in Prosetín chose the Reformed confession. The congregation was established in the year 1782 and in the same year in March a brick house of prayer started to be built in the hill above the village near the big

oak tree. The first worship took place already on the 26th of October 1782. The equipment of the house of prayer is still in the line with a Reformed style: a pulpit is located on the longer side of the wall and in front of it there is the Lord's table with a woodcarved fence. The organ is on the massive choir since 1912. During the years it was necessary to make some repairs. The most important one was an additional construction of a Neo-Renaissance tower to the front of the house of prayer. In the year 1897 an entrance into the church was also adjusted.

Together with the church, a cemetery was founded. In the year 1893 a new rectory in the village was built and replaced the original one from the year 1784. Local Protestant school assists in establishing libraries also in neighbouring villages.

Prosetín congregation contributed to the foundation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregations in Rovečné and in Olešnice.

Prosetín did not escape an unfavourable fate during World War II, either. Many congregation members helped the partisans. The Evangelical rectory became a centre of revolt activities. Congregation curator Jaroslav Just was imprisoned and several brave members were killed. The memorable oak near the church is still there, it is still a silent witness of the past as well as the presence.



ŠÁZAVA





Sázava, with its nearly 600 inhabitants, lies on the upper Sázava river between Žďár nad Sázavou and Přibyslav. The village is surrounded by beautiful countryside of the protected landscape area of the Žďár Hills, the name of which comes from the old effort to populate the virgin soil and to stump (in Czech "žďřit") the local woods. Silver and iron ore mining started to develop here, too. The first written records of the village date back to the middle of the 13th century. At the same time a Cistercian monastery was built in Žďár nad Sázavou nearby.

At the beginning of the 15th century the first water drifted smithery started to be built on the Sázava river. One of these iron mills, which were very important for making farming tools at the time, was built also in Sázava and kept functional until 1714, when it was together with other mills and the whole village destroyed in a flood caused by a dam failure in Dářko lake. In the 17th century the village was struck by fires and epidemics. The cultural life of the community revived in the 19th century. Today, also due to its beautiful environs, Sázava is a pleasant place to live.

The history of the village is closely connected with the growth of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation and the Hussite tradition of the region. In 1422, Jan Žižka defeated the forces of Emperor Sigismund at then Německý Brod. He died in the nearby town of Přibyslav on the 11th of October 1424. Even after that the Utraquist faith survived and was not wiped out even by the forcible recatholization attempts of cardinal Ditrichstein in the

early 17th century. Secret meetings took place in mills and "heretical" books found their way into villages. In Sázava, the Protestants met at Špinar's mill.

In 1783, soon after the Toleration Patent, the Sázava Protestants joined the Augsburg confession congregation in Krucemburk. A year later, however, they founded their own Reformed church community and soon chose a place for a cemetery and a house of prayer. The construction started thanks to the financial support of miller Špinar on the 15th of June 1785 and on the 20th of November of the same year it was consecrated. The meeting house was given an exception to the strict toleration rules: a semi-circle apse. The floor was made of stone tiles and soon a new pulpit and benches were put in. In 1885 a Neo-Romanesque tower was built at the forefront. The bells inside come from the church in Černilov. The rectory was built between 1847 and 1848. Today it houses a minister flat as well as an assembly room and other premises serving various church activities. By the church, there is a big lime tree which dates back to the origins of its construction. During World War II the congregation suffered a great loss when its minister Emil Pokorný was arrested for hiding a Gestapo fugitive and died in prison in 1943.

In the post-war times Bible study courses for Brno and other congregations took place in Sázava summer camp. Sázava congregation has its preaching stations in Přibyslav and Žďár nad Sázavou.



SNĚŽNÉ





The market town of Sněžné (formerly Německé) is with its nearly 800 inhabitants situated in a protected landscape area of the Žďár Hills, 680 m above sea level. The foundation of Sněžné is connected with the colonization effort of the 13th and 14th centuries. The first written record dates back to 1335. The domain was partly owned by the noblemen of Pernštejn and partly by the Cistercian monastery in Žďár nad Sázavou. People made a living by weaving as the soil was not very fertile. There were also iron mines and several glassworks. The so-called welcoming goblet of the Pernštejns dating back to 1585, made in Vříšť glassworks, has been preserved even up to now. Later, in the 18th century, this region was affected mainly by the development of ferrous metallurgy.

The former Church of St. Catherine built in 1625 was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War. In the middle of the 18th century the Church of the True Cross was built in Sněžné. The town started to grow and develop in the 19th and 20th centuries. The beautiful landscape of Sněžné and its environs lured artists and poets, such as František Halas, Ludvík Kundera and Miloslav Bureš. In 1925 the memorial of Czech Reformation by Julius Pelikán was erected on the square in Sněžné. It depicts T. G. Masaryk, Jan Hus, Jan Žizka and J. A. Komenský.

Sněžné and its environs has always been Protestant. The counter-Reformation was here as tough as in the rest of the Vysočina Region. After the declaration of the Toleration Patent, the whole families or even villages joined the Reformed confession. The congregation was founded in 1784. The first preacher came from the Kingdom of Hungary. The construction of the house of prayer started in 1788. It was small and modest. In the middle of the 19th century it could not accommodate its needs any more so it was rebuilt. It grew higher and longer; a tower was added and a small apse was made opposite; the shape of the originally rectangle windows changed to semi-circle at the top. The organ was installed in 1937. The former rectory remained in service 110 years. In 1898 it was replaced by a new building which has been in use ever since.

The war times were hard in Sněžné. The congregation members often helped partisans. The communist regime then brought – apart from other hardship – difficult years of collectivization. The relief did not come until 1989. The church interior was refurbished in 1994 by Ostrava designer Daniel Balabán. The Protestant church in Sněžné has always been an impressive dominant of the town and the whole area.





TELČ



“Moravian Venice” or “West-Moravian Athens” are among numerous Telč nick names which best characterize the town, the centre of which was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1992. With its over 5,600 inhabitants, Telč lies in the southern part of the Czech-Moravian Highlands near the Jihlava Hills in 562 metres above sea level.

Telč was founded in the middle of the 13th century probably on the crossroad of two local trade routes in the basin of the Telč brook. A number of ponds which grew gradually on its winding stream created a unique urban water fortress, the area of which and its historical significance can still be seen today. Among the oldest monuments rank the late Romanesque tower, Gothic churches of St. Jacob and the Holy Ghost in the town centre, St. Mary's Church in the Old Town, the remains of the rampart with the Romanesque tower and also the original castle. It was later rebuilt by its owners, the noblemen of Hradec, and turned into a magnificent chateau in the Italian Renaissance style. The reconstruction was completed in the late 16th century by Zachariáš of Hradec, the most powerful member of the family. The arcade courtyard and rich interiors are still well-preserved and much-sought-after by visitors.

Along with the castle reconstruction the Telč square changed as well. Merchants together with Italian designers added arcades and thus gave it a unique Renaissance character which was later combined with the Baroque facades. Baroque style in Telč is represented by a number of historical monuments, namely Church of the Name of Jesus, Jesuit College (today University Centre of Masaryk University in Brno) and Marian Column on the Square. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries Telč became also an industrial centre of the region (textile manufactory), however, still remained an important centre of culture and learning. In this respect it envisages its future even today.

Susceptible visitors go and see not only the town centre including the chateau park but visit also the Old Town with its unique character and

view the town and its environs from Oslednice hill observation tower. From above they can see the Baroque Church of Jan Nepomucký nearby and the tower of much-visited Roštejn castle in the woods in the northwest. Not far from there, below the Javoříce peak (837 m) there is a holiday area with lakes Velký and Malý Pařezitý.

Immediately after the declaration of the Toleration Patent the Protestants from the nearby centre in Velká Lhota u Dačic could not get into the town which had been for decades influenced by Jesuit College. Despite that, at the end of the 19th century a great number of families which served as preaching houses of Lutheran and Reformed churches (since 1918 both under the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and prepared for the foundation of an independent congregation. Before that could happen, the Protestants acquired the Church of the Holy Ghost, which after its abolishment at the end of 18th century had served as a storehouse and later a theatre. After the purchase in 1922, the church was completely renovated in kind cooperation with the National Heritage Institute in Brno.

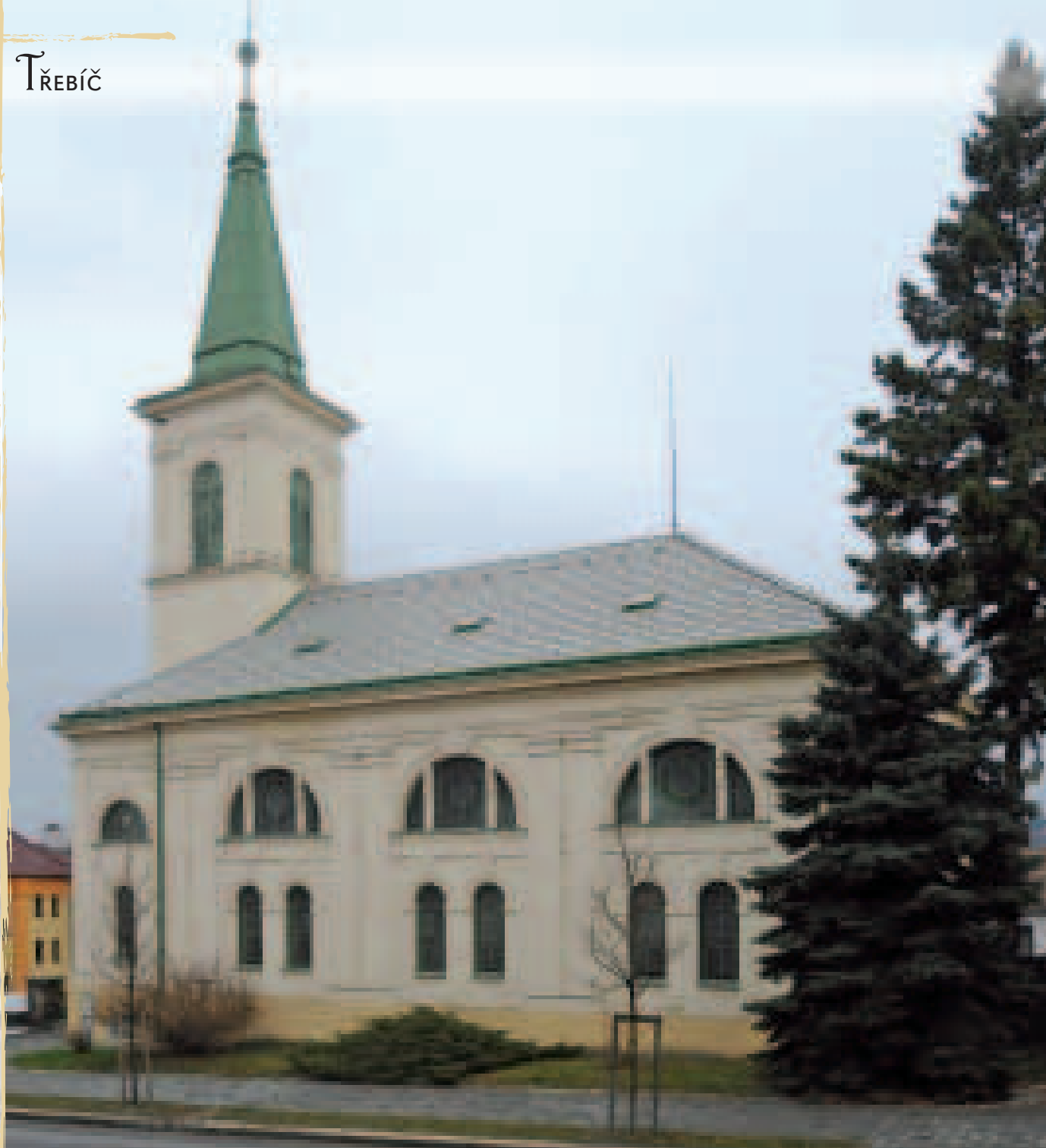
Beside this church, which houses also the Information Centre of the Reformation Heritage Project, the Telč ECCB congregation owns also a congregation house on the square where most regular congregation activities take place.

The Telč seat is not, however, the only place of the congregation activities. Its preaching stations can be found also in the towns of Dačice and Slavonice. Dačice, well-known, among others, for its beautiful Renaissance tower, was in the 16th century a significant centre of the Unity of Brethren. Slavonice, which lies on the border with Austria, is a listed town with wonderfully preserved architectural monuments mainly in Gothic and Renaissance styles.



TŘEBÍČ • MYSLIBOŘICE

TŘEBÍČ





Třebíč is situated in the southeast of the Vysočina Region. In the south we can find the Jevišovice Upland with national parks of Třebíčsko, Pohlaví and Rokytno. With its nearly 39,000 inhabitants, Třebíč is the second largest town of the Vysočina Region. It neighbours on the towns of Velké Meziříčí and Náměšť nad Oslavou. The town of Třebíč was founded in 1277 on the river Jihlava and fortified in 1355. At the same time a Jewish settlement (the Old Jewish Quarter) formed on the left river bank.

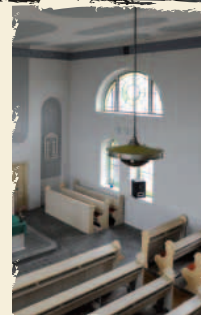
In 1101 a Benedictine Monastery was founded in Třebíč by the Přemyslid princes. In the following centuries the town suffered a lot of war hardship: it was conquered by Hussite and emperor's forces and in 1468 the town including the monastery was destroyed by the forces of Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. The monastery was abolished and after 1525 it was in possession of nobility. In the late 16th century, during the great cultural and economic development of the town, it was remodelled as a Renaissance style chateau. At that time the Unity of Brethren and Lutheran confession Protestants had a significant position in Třebíč. That was during the reign of the Žerotíns who, however, were for their views forced to leave the country in 1629. The Třebíč domain came into the possession of the Wallensteins. In the 17th and 18th centuries the town was struck by a number of fires, epidemics and floods. In the 19th century it revived and slowly started to develop: various cultural institutions and clubs were founded, and the National House was built. In 1886 the railway traffic was introduced in Třebíč, which accelerated the economic growth. Even before that drapery and tannery had prospered well in Třebíč. The latter expanded especially in the early 20th century when in Třebíč-Borovina a shoe manufactory and workers' semi-detached houses were built according to the fashion of Baťa works. During World War II the Jewish inhabitants were expelled and the town was occupied by German forces. After the war, the housing development and the population increase were caused mainly by the construction of the nuclear power plant in nearby Dukovany.

The historical part of the town is situated on the right bank of the Jihlava River. On the Charles Square which ranks among the biggest in the Czech Republic, we can find a statue of Cyril and Metoděj. One of the most significant monuments in Třebíč, however, is the Basilica of St. Procopius built in 1260 in the place of the former Benedictine monastery, which in European context represents a unique example of combination of Romanesque and Gothic styles. In the 17th century it was reconstructed by architect Kaňka, including the Baroque-Gothic arch. The abbey chapel with precious frescos and the subterranean crypt are also invaluable. In 2003 it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List together with the Jewish quarter, an outstanding testimony of Jewish culture in Moravia. In Třebíč we can also visit numerous other interesting historical monuments.

The following denominations operate in Třebíč: the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB), the Unity of Brethren and the Orthodox Church which owns the Church of St. Wenceslas and Ludmila built in 1940.

The ECCB congregation was originally a preaching station of Horní Vilémovice congregation. It was established – also due to the conversion movement – in 1920, after the foundation of the ECCB. The church was, however, built already in 1909–910 by architect Josef Zlatohlávek from Záhřeb. It is in a Neo-Classical style with a rectangle tower at the frontal side. There is a chalice above the entrance. The rectory was built in 1928 and today it serves as a congregation house with all premises necessary for church activities.

Not far from Třebíč, there is the Myslibořice chateau, built in early 18th century. In 1760 it was owned by Rudolf Chytek, the chancellor of the Kingdom of Bohemia. In 1921 it was bought by the state, since 1928 it has been and on and off in possession of the ECCB. Today it houses Diaconia Centre of the ECCB and serves as a home for the elderly and people with special needs.

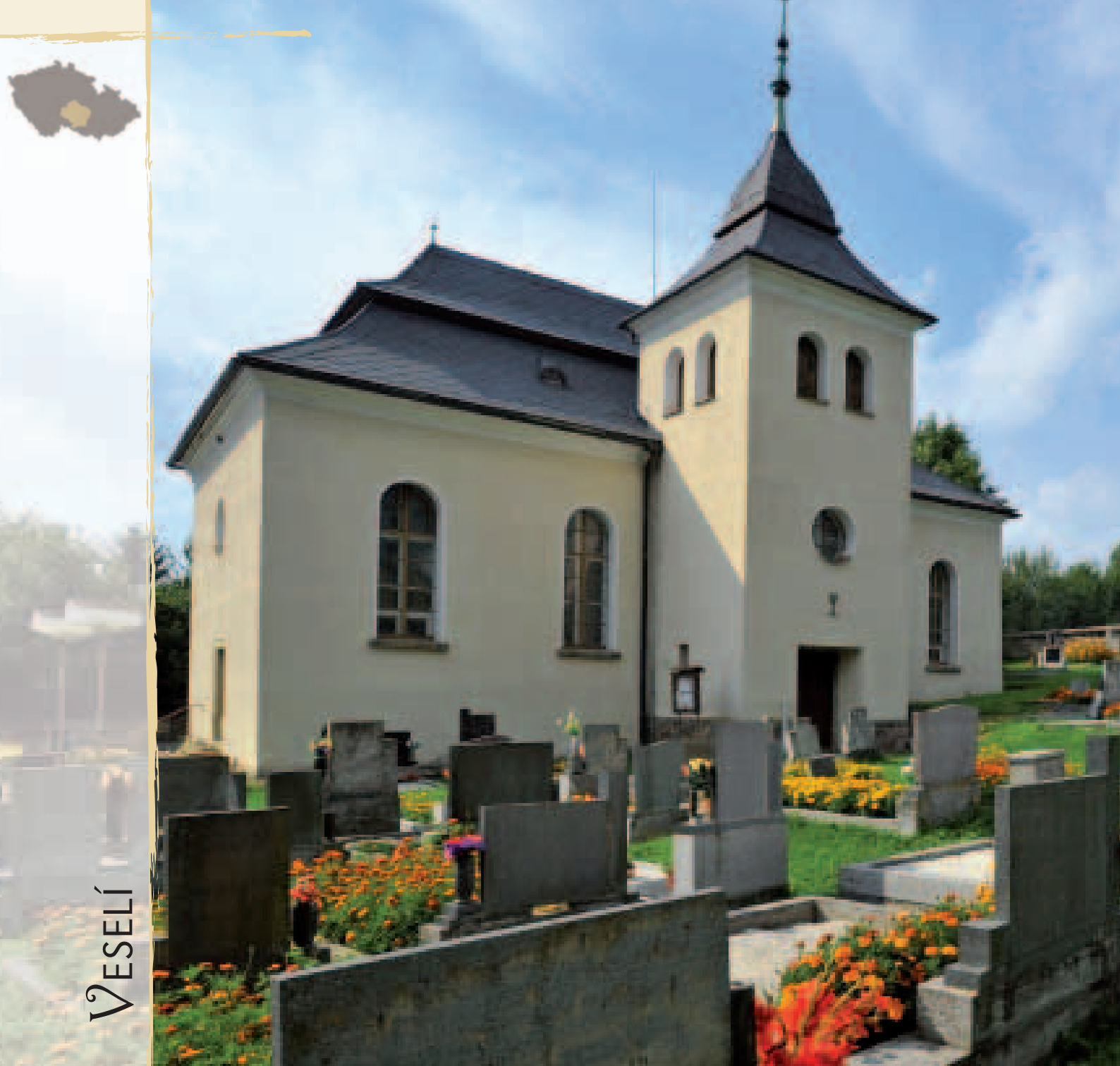


TŘEBÍČ



MYSLIBOŘICE





VESELÍ

Veselí, today a part of Dalečín, is situated in the wooded hilly countryside in the eastern part of the Žďár Hills protected landscape area close to the Svratka Highlands natural park. The whole village counts 690 inhabitants and lies at 472 metres above sea level.

In 1486 Veselí together with its surrounding land was bought by the Pernštejns and later by noblemen of Kunštát. This region was from way back Protestant. One of Dalečín owners, Vilém Dubský of Třebomyslice, even issued sacred (Lutheran) rules for his domain in 1608. The counter-Reformation was not very successful here. An interesting personality from that time was teacher Tomáš Juren who dared to go to Žitava (today German Zittau) and Prešpurk (today Bratislava) for prayer books. After the declaration of the Toleration Patent the local Protestants joined the Reformed confession. Tomáš Juren played an important role in the establishment of the Veselí congregation. The first church service took place under a big cherry tree at the end of May 1782, however, the congregation was not officially established until 1783. A stone toleration house of prayer with straight windows and mansard roof was completed the same year. In 1840 it was partly renovated: a new pulpit was moved to the longer side of the building and a year later a new organ was placed on the gallery. A bit later the windows were enlarged and arched at the top. In 1928 a tower was added to the longer, fron-

tal side. The author of all changes was architect Bohumír Kozák. The first wooden rectory was constructed already in 1783. The latter rectory was rebuilt in 1908. The cemetery surrounding the church is still in use. Worth mentioning is a fortified Gothic Church of St. Michael which can be found on a hill above Vítochov, close to Dalečín. It was erected in the 13th century and later partly rebuilt in a Baroque style. Inside there are the historic stone altar and the remains of old Gothic frescos. It is one of the oldest extant churches in Moravia.

Even a peaceful life of a remote congregation was influenced by World War II. In the woods surrounding Veselí hid partisans who could not survive without the help of the locals. They demonstrated their unpretentious and evident bravery. Miraculously, Veselí escaped the doom of Lidice: when German soldiers searched the village, the partisans were hiding in the church.

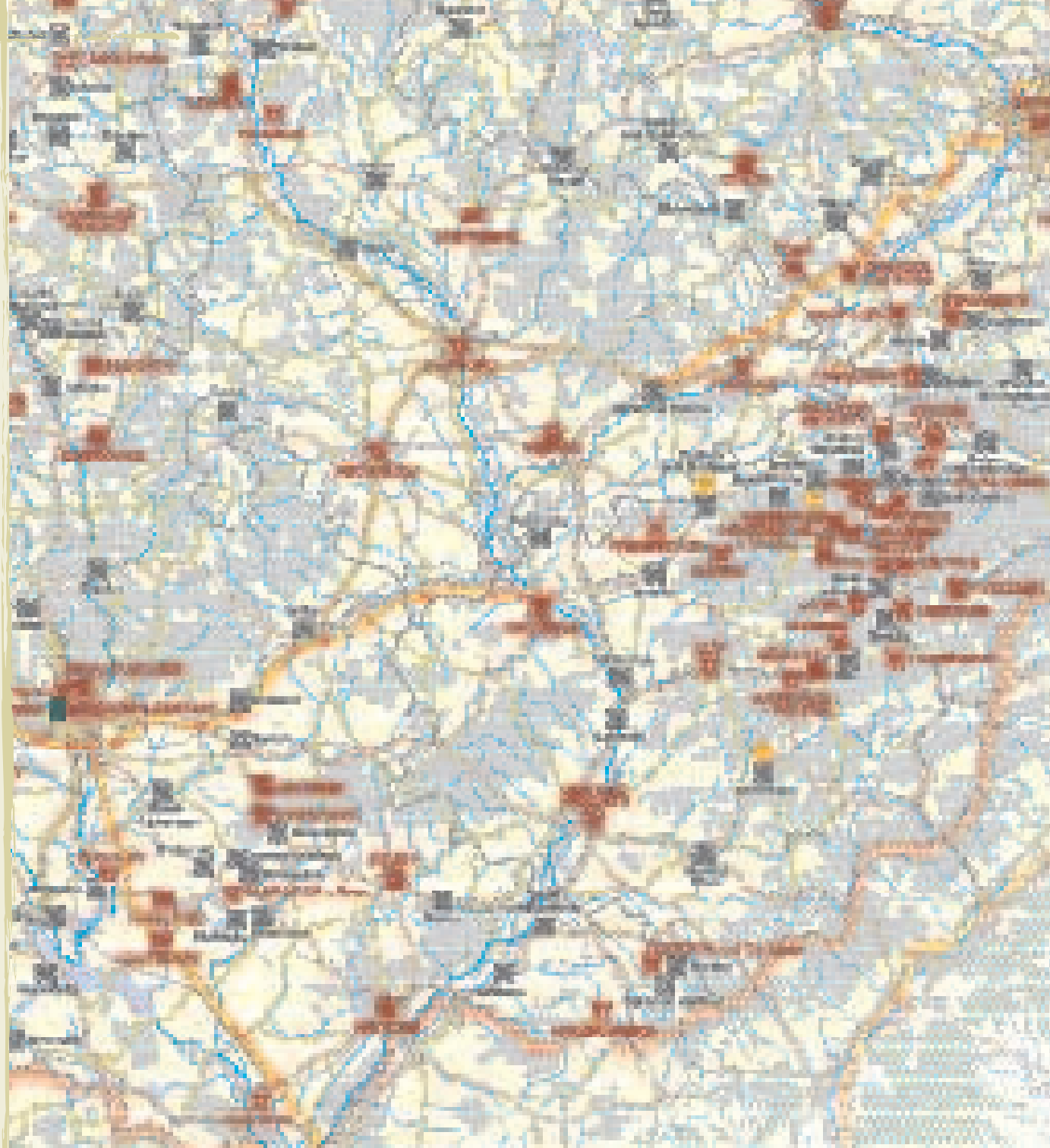
When Vírská dam was built on the Svratka river after the war, Veselí remained on its left bank. Chudobín and Korouhvice were flooded and the connection among other congregation villages became harder. Long ago, however, people got used to it and Veselí congregation with its beautiful toleration church lives on.

HOUSE OF PRAYER



RECTORY

THE ZLÍN REGION





The Zlín Region in the south-eastern part of the Czech Republic covers the area of 3,964 square kilometres and has the population of 596,903 people. In the southwest, it borders on the South Moravian Region, the Olomouc Region in the northwest, the Moravian-Silesian Region in the north and in the east there is a border with two Slovak regions: the Žilina Region and the Trenčín Region. Each of its four districts: Kroměříž, Vsetín, Zlín and Uherské Hradiště is very diverse. Two mountain chains – the Javorníky and the Bílé Karpaty – a biospheric area protected by the UNESCO, form the border with Slovakia. The Moravian-Silesian Beskydy, another mountain range of the region is stretching further to the Moravian and Silesian Region. As for rivers – Morava, Bečva, Vlára and Dřevnice are among the most important. The highest mountain of the region is Velká Javořina (970 m) in the Bílé Karpaty.

Except for fertile lowlands, vineyards and the agricultural area of Haná, you can visit the mountaneous and very specific area of Wallachia with a strong protestant tradition, the area of Uherské Hradiště with its characteristic folklore areas, and the area of Zlín with its unforgettable Baťa tradition. Apart from their industrial areas, all the districts offer beautiful historical towns, ancient landmarks and interesting castles. There is Kroměříž, a town on the UNESCO list of the world monuments, with its Garden of Flowers and a memorial of Max Švabinský, a famous painter. You can visit Luhačovice spa, Uherský Brod with its Museum of J. A. Komenský, Velehrad or the Memorial of Great Moravia in Staré Město, Vlčnov and its Kings' Ride as well as lots of other interesting places of natural beauties and historical sights which the Moravian-Silesian Region abounds with.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has their congregations in the Zlín Region, too. We have chosen some of them and will be pleased to accompany you while visiting them.

HOŠŤÁLKOVÁ





Z Hošťálková is a long village on the slopes of the Hostýn Hills, close to Vsetín. It is located 379 metres above sea level and has the population of 2,000 people. It was founded during a colonization in the 14th century. The first records about Hošťálková date back to 1505 when it was a part of the Vsetín domain. Since 1678 it frequently changed owners. In the beginning settlement was scattered and related to the stage of the colonization.

There were two kinds of colonization in the area of Wallachia: “clearing colonization” during which arable land was gained at the expense of feudal woods, and “Wallachian colonization” (peasant colonization) when greenwoods were used as pastures for goats and sheep. Menials looking after the livestock were called Wallachians. They are believed to have been rebels originally coming from today's Romania. The whole area got its name after them finally – Wallachia.

The 17th and the 18th centuries brought a severe oppression of the Wallachian Protestants and the years 1777–1781 witnessed a Wallachian uprising which was put down in a very cruel way. Paradoxically, it however helped the issuing of the Toleration Patent by Joseph II.

The Hošťálková Evangelic congregation was established in 1782 and the believers chose the Augsburg confession. Nevertheless, they used to meet already before, at the time of the counter-Reformation.

As early as in 1783 a wooden toleration house of prayer was built, and the second one, Neo-Classical and made of stone followed in 1831 and was built still under the toleration restrictions. Inside, we can find a valuable baptistery from 1791. The tower was raised in the middle of the 19th century and the rectory, a necessary part of the Hošťálková congregation, was built even three times, and totally rebuilt according to Bohumil Bareš's architectural design after World War II. The new congregation house was opened in 1950 and has served the congregation purposes since then. The church has been repaired several times, too, and a new organ was bought in 1964.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Cross Elevation in Hošťálková dates back to 1798. There is an Empire castle from the middle of the 19th century in the village and a memorial commemorating those killed in World War II.



CONGREGATION HOUSE

DRUSINOVICE • BYSTRICE POD HOSTÝNEM

DRUSINOVICE





Z North of Holešov in the Kelč Upland, 263 metres above sea level, there is a little town of Prusinovice with its 1,245 inhabitants. It used to be a place where the Prusinovice lords lived owning probably the Kasařov castle which became desolate later during the Czech-Hungarian wars between George of Poděbrady and Matyas Korvin. Up to this day, the place where the castle probably stood is called Pod Kasařovem.

The first mention of Prusinovice dates back to 1349. In 1521, Jan Vilém Prusinovský of Víckov decided to bring brethren to preach in the local St. Catherine's Church. There are valuable tombstones of the Prusinovskýs family of Víckov. Jan Adam of Víckov, a leader of the Wallachian uprising, was also descended from this family.

After the Battle of the White Mountain the Prušinovskýs' family property was confiscated. It changed owners several times in the following years. As soon as the Toleration Patent was issued, people began to profess the Augsburg confession but later, in 1789, they started to profess a Reformed religion. A toleration house of prayer was built in the 1790s and was in use

till 1848 when a foundation stone of a new church was laid. The Neo-Classicist church with a quadrilateral tower was finished in 1856. Ten years later, an organ was bought and some alterations were done afterwards.

The original rectory was damp and unsuitable for living. A new rectory was built in 1954 and it is used up to these days. The preaching station in Bystřice pod Hostýnem with Sola Gratia, its vacation centre, is also a part of the Prusinovice congregation. Apart from leisure activities, various courses and youth meetings are held here, among the most popular ones are events given by a music master of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.



PRUSINOVICE



BYSTRICE POD HOSTÝNEM
SOLA GRATIA



DRŽNO





Pržno, one of the villages of the Vsetín Hills is located near the Vsetín Bečva river between the towns of Vsetín and Valašské Meziříčí, 330 metres above sea level, has about 660 inhabitants. First records about Pržno date back to 1372. In 1505 it was already mentioned as a little town, and its old town seal was used even till 1856. The Wallachian uprising during the Thirty Years' War was put down cruelly in 1644 and Pržno was burnt down by the imperial army.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary Birth was built in 1889 on the place of a ruined, originally Gothic church from 1525. The stone crucifix dates to the late 18th century. There is also a memorable lime tree which is at least 300 years old and a war memorial commemorating the victims of World War I and World War II, built in front of a former Protestant school in 1924.

There were a lot of secret Protestants in Pržno and its neighbourhood resisting counter-Reformation for a long time and taking part in the great Wallachian uprising in 1777–1781. After

the Toleration Patent was issued, they chose the Augsburg confession. The congregation was founded in 1782 and the first toleration house of prayer was built a year later. The issue of the Protestant Patent initiated construction of a new church. The foundation stone was laid in 1866 and in six years, a spacious Neo-Gothic church was built according to Václav Urbánek's, Vsetín builder, architectural design.

The church was opened and the first ceremonial worship was held on the 27th of October 1872. The one-nave building has a slender tower visible from a long distance. Its organ was assembled by K. Neusser from Nový Jičín. The old rectory from 1782 was replaced by a new one in the 1930^s, and a winter house of prayer was additionally built later. The congregation has its preaching station in a nearby village of Mikulůvka.

CONGREGATION HOUSE



RATIBOŘ





Ratiboř, with the population of 1,739 people, is located in the Hostýn Hills near Vsetín (343 metres above sea level), on the confluence of the rivers Ratibořka and Vsetín Bečva and at the foot of Drastihlava Hill (695 m), right in the middle of a beautiful natural area (e. g. of the Zbrankova stráň national park with its rare plants). In 1306, Václav III signed the foundation charter of Charles Throne, a Cistercian monastery to be built in the place of nowadays Ratiboř. It did not happen, though, because Václav III was murdered in Olomouc in the same year.

The inhabitants of Ratiboř earned their living by working on their farms, weaving linen and making wooden tools. There was also a plant manufacturing bent-wood furniture and a wicker-peeling factory.

The people of Ratiboř were seriously affected by the Wallachian uprising (1777–1781) as well as by World War II when members of the Jan Žižka partisan group were hiding here. Memorials built after the war commemorate these difficult times. Today, Ratiboř is a prosperous village. It celebrated its 700th anniversary in 2006.

Ratiboř kept being Protestant even during the counter-Reformation period. Believers held their secret meetings in the fields and hous-

es. One of the most remarkable people was Jan Maniš (1746–1781), a lay preacher, who brought banned books and read them to the local people owing to which he was persecuted and finally relegated to Hungary.

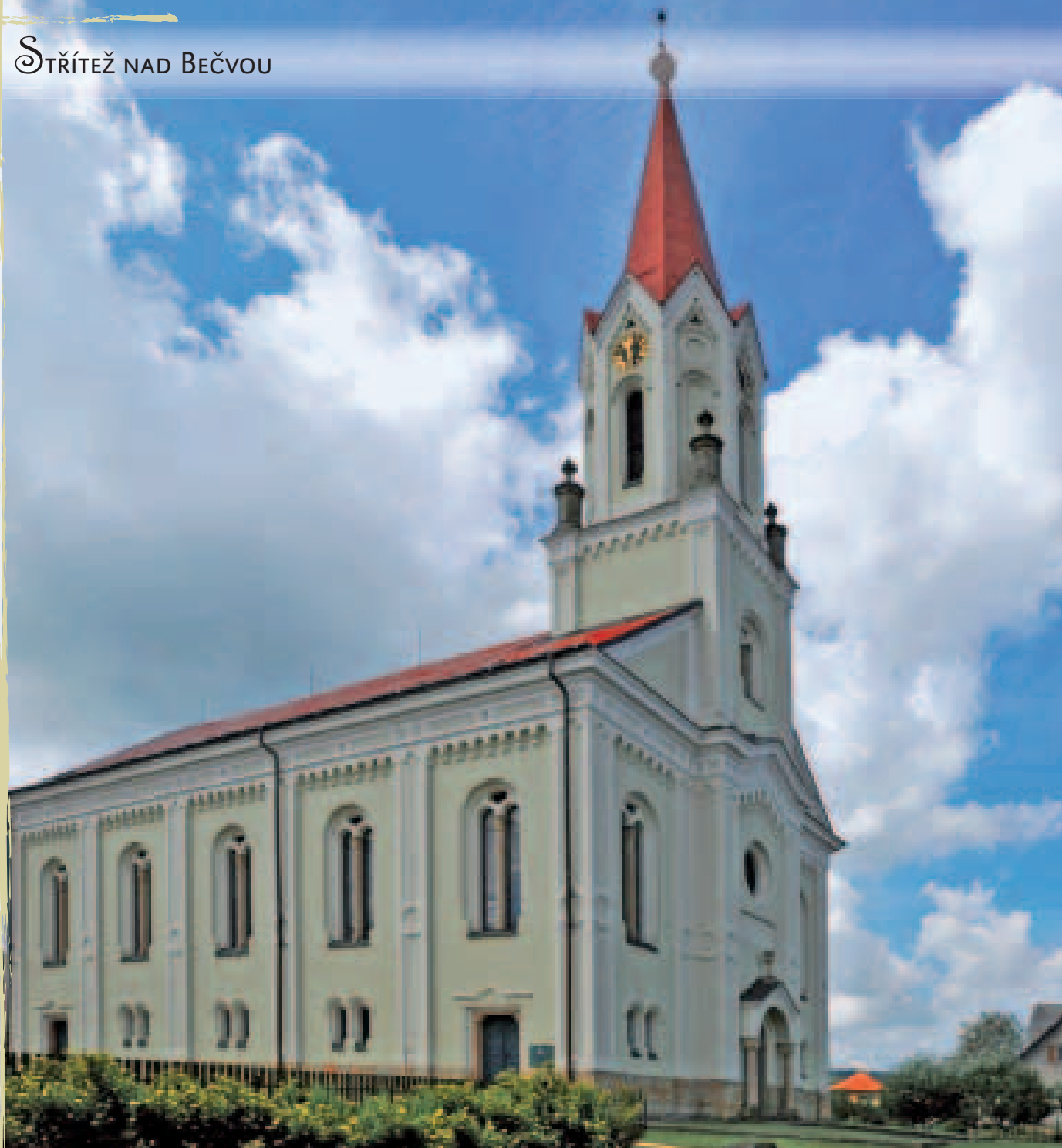
Protestant congregation of the Augsburg confession was established in 1782 and a toleration house of prayer was built in the same year, followed by a rectory and school. A new church, however, was not built until 1861. A Neo-Romanesque spacious church with a tower was constructed according to Ludwig Forster's architectural plan. Inside, behind the altar, there is a built-in stone in which banned books brought by Jan Maniš used to be hidden. His memorial is in Ratiboř, too.

In 1959 the original rectory was changed into a rest home for retired ministers. In 1949, a congregation house was built in Ratiboř according to Bohumil Bareš's architectural design. There is also a Protestant cemetery belonging to the building complex.



ŠTRÍTEŽ NAD BEČVOU • ROŽNOV POD RADHOŠTĚM

ŠTRÍTEŽ NAD BEČVOU





Střítež nad Bečvou, occupying the left bank of the Rožnov Bečva river, is situated at the border of the Vsetín Upland. Further eastward, the protected landscape area of the Beskydy Mountains starts. The first records about the village date back to 1376 when it was a part of the Rožnov domain.

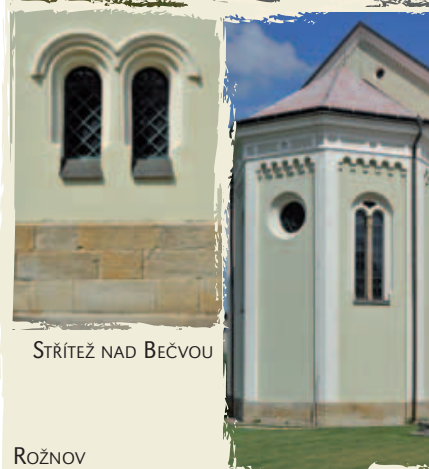
Long time ago, Střítež was a centre of the Czech Brethren congregation. After the Toleration Patent was issued, the Protestants from Střítež belonged to the congregation in Velká (Hrubá) Lhota, established in 1782. Later it was not clear which of these two places to choose as the congregation centre (there was an original toleration house of prayer in Velká Lhota) so in 1872 the congregation was split into the congregations of Velká Lhota and Střítež. The Střítež congregation was established on the 7th of August, 1872. Local believers, however, had started building their church much earlier.

The foundation stone was laid on the 29th of June, 1868, and a Neo-Romanesque church with a high tower visible from afar was opened eight years later. Its spacious nave has two side galleries and a choir with an organ. The pulpit with a double staircase is in the apse. In front of it, there is Lord's table. The church, decorated with rich carving ornaments, was not restored until the 1990^s when it was rebuilt according to a Prague architect Jiří Veselý's architectural design.

The year of 2005 brought great moments for the church in Střítež when a concert presenting a reconstructed original Baroque organ, probably from 1780, was held here. A year earlier, in 2004, the organ was recognized as a state cultural monument.

The Střítež congregation has had its preaching station in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm since 1924. The unique landmark of this town is its Wallachian Museum in Nature, founded in 1925, one of the oldest and biggest in our country. It is a well-preserved specimen of a typical, already extinct life in Wallachia. A replica of an original toleration house of prayer in Huslenky, dating back to 1782–1786, was placed in the museum in 2009.

The wooden church of the preaching station stands right next to the Wallachian Museum in Nature. When constructing it, its architect Bohumil Bareš took an advantage of this fact to built the church in a purely Wallachian style. The little church with its late Baroque small organ, moved here from the church in Rybníky, was opened in 1953 and has been used without any large repairs up to this day.



STŘÍTEŽ NAD BEČVOU

ROŽNOV
POD RADHOŠTĚM



VALAŠSKÉ MEZIRŘÍČÍ



Z Valašské Meziříčí is situated on the confluence of the rivers Vsetín Bečva and Rožnov Bečva, between the Hostýn-Vsetín Upland and the western border of the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy Mountains, 294 metres above sea level. The town has the population of about 28,000 people. The little town of Krásno (at the first time mentioned in 1491) on the right bank of the Bečva river became a part of Valašské Meziříčí (situated on the left bank of Bečva) in 1924.

The first records about Valašské Meziříčí were made in 1297 and by the end of the 15th century, it was already described as a town. During the Wallachian uprising in the 17th century the town supported and joined the rebels. When defeated in 1621, the leaders of the uprising were executed. During the Thirty Years' War, the town was plundered and burnt out by the Swedes several times.

The 19th century witnessed an industrial development – glass factories and gobelin manufactories were built, and at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries a lot of schools were opened so that Valašské Meziříčí started to be called the Wallachian Athens. The renewed 16th century Renaissance castle of the Žeroníns family has become a significant monument of the town. It was rebuilt in a Baroque style in the early 18th century. The castle, however, had an eventful past. It was changed into a military hospital after the Battle of Slavkov in 1805. After the year of 1854, when it was bought by the state, there was a women's prison and it kept being used as a military hospital and barracks even in later years. Today it is a cultural centre and looks beautiful again. In the Empire style Kinskys' Castle with its large park there is a museum. As for religious buildings, there is a congregation Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, originally Gothic, with its Renaissance tower and valuable portal annexed to it in 1581. The later alterations are from the Baroque period. The wooden Church of the Holy Trinity dates back to the 16th century. The St. Jacob's Church was used by the Protestants at the end of the 16th century. The town hall from the late 16th century, rebuilt in a Baroque style, is the only historical monument of the vil-

lage of Krásno and it is a town library today. At the time of the communist regime a lot of historical buildings were pulled down and prefab houses were built instead. The historical centre of the town has been declared a Historic Town Reserve.

The history of the Protestants in Valašské Meziříčí began in the 16th century, the important role being played by the Czech Brethren supported by the Pernštejns family and later by the Žerotíns. The congregation was established in the town and a school was opened. Jan Lanecius, a bishop of the Unity of Brethren and one of the ministers of the congregation, went to Přerov later where he taught Jan Amos Komenský and Karel Starší of Žerotín. In 1612 – 1625 Jiří Třanovský was a rector of the Lutheran school. He became famous as a poet and writer – his Cithara Sanctorum is an important Evangelical hymn-book.

Recatholization after the Battle of the White Mountain affected Valašské Meziříčí, too. A Czech gymnasium was opened here in 1871, with an Evangelical home for poor students. The number of the Protestants was growing steadily; in 1902 a preaching station was founded and a congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren was established in 1923. The church started to be built according to Leo Kalda's architectural design as early as in 1909. The modernism style church with a tetragonal tower with vertical windows, to which a rectory building was annexed, was opened on the 1st of November, 1909. There was a lot of construction work done on the church later – above all, it was lengthened. The church interior is not original, either. In 1989, a relief produced by Barbora Veselá picturing Biblical parables was placed on the front wall. She and her husband Jiří Veselý, an architect, also worked on new lighting of the church. The Protestant church in Valašské Meziříčí became a cultural monument in 1997.

There is also the Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren which belongs to the congregation and in 2003 the Protestants initiated building the Citadela hospice which was proclaimed "The Building of the Year" in 2003.



VELKÁ (HRUBÁ) LHOTA





Z Velká Lhota is situated in the hills of the Hostýn-Vsetín Upland, 540 metres above sea level. In the past it used to be called Hrubá Lhota. It has a population of about 400 people. It is not far from the town of Valašské Meziříčí and the Bystřička Dam. Between Velká Lhota and Malá Lhota, a high maple tree has grown, becoming an interesting natural point.

Since 1411 Velká Lhota became a part of the Rožnov domain. People still kept lots of books from the Reformation period which survived even the time of oppression. After the Toleration Patent was issued the Protestants established their congregation of the Augsburg confession in 1782. Later they joined the Reformed church. Also the Protestants from the villlage of Střítež and the area of Rožnov belonged to Velká Lhota before two congregations were founded (one in Střítež and the other in Velká Lhota) in 1872.

A rectangular wooden toleration house of prayer was built in Velká Lhota in 1783. It was made of solid beams and has a mansard roof covered with shingles. The interior keeps its toleration character, too: opposite the entrance on the wider side there is an ornamented pulpit and the Lord's table from 1839 in front of it. Sitting in any of the pews, you can see both the pulpit and the Lord's table. There are pews also

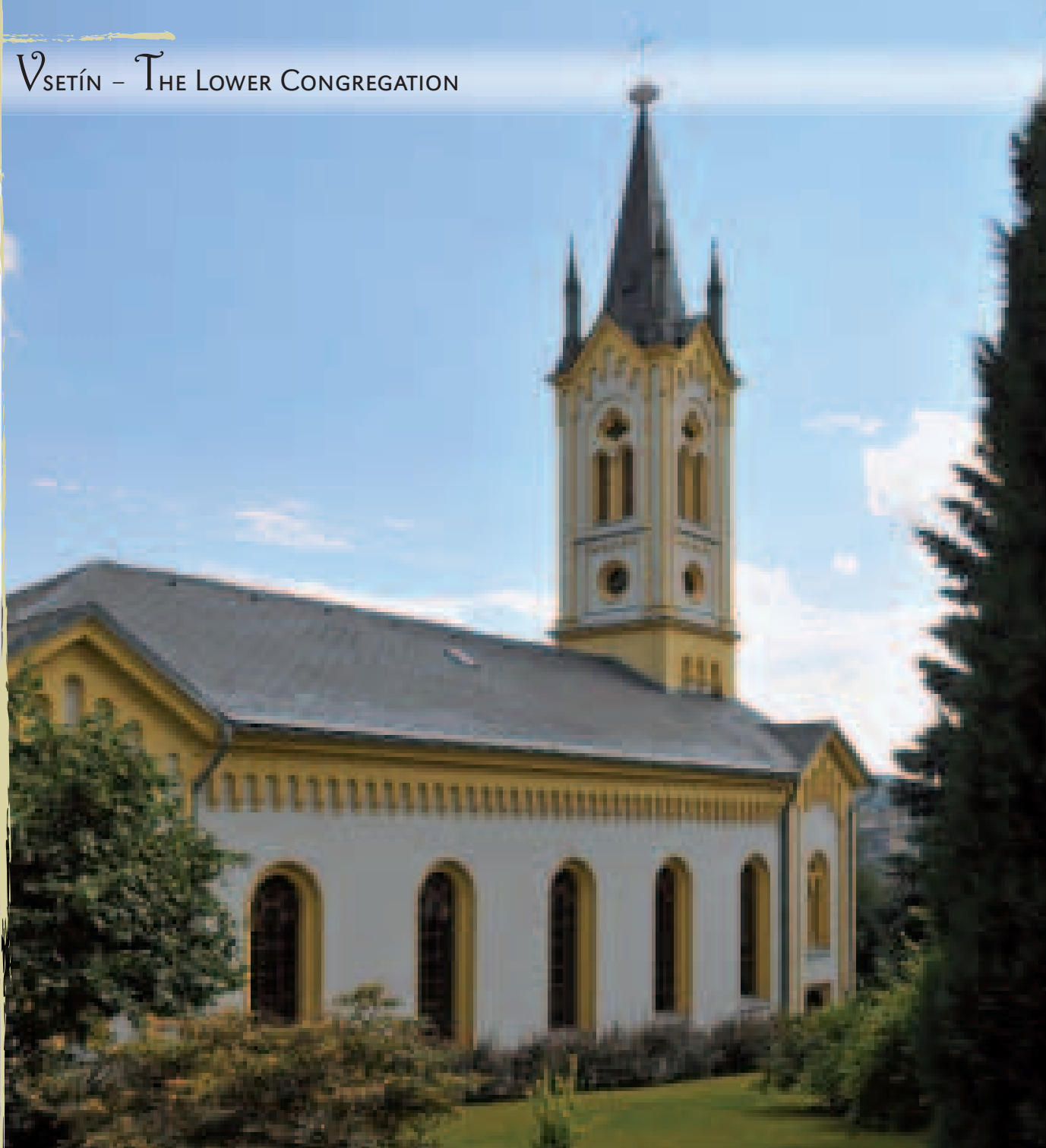
on the galleries with their carved railing. The organ, bought much later (the congregation was not very interested to have one), is placed on the gallery over the entrance. Under the pulpit, there is a pew for presbyters. Outside, the house of prayer is surrounded by wooden porches which cannot be seen anywhere else. People could take a shelter here when it was raining, and they could not get in. During a funeral, this was a place to put a bier with the deceased. There is a cemetery with old trees all around the house of prayer. The house of prayer which is looked after very carefully, still looks the same as it did in 1783 when it was built. It has kept its original simplicity making it even more valuable.

This rare toleration house of prayer where Jan Karafiát, the author of "The Fireflies", a famous children's story, preached in 1875–1895, was written on the list of the national cultural monuments in 2008.

The congregation also has a nice rectory building with a hall for winter worship and a flat for a preacher.



VŠETÍN – THE LOWER CONGREGATION



VŠETÍN



The town of Vsetín in the heart of Wallachia is situated in the Hostýn-Vsetín Upland), 345 metres above sea level. It lies in the valley of the Vsetín Bečka river and in the surrounding hills and has the population of 28,500 people.

Its history is not very cheerful. The first records date back to 1308. Later, a gradual colonization began, similarly as in the other parts of the region. Where there is a castle today, a fortress used to be built in the middle of the 15th century to defend the trading path to the region along the Váh river. At the time of Arkleb of Víckov in the late 16th century, the fortress was changed into a Renaissance castle with a frontal tower. After his death in 1608, his wife Lucretia married Albrecht of Wallenstein who became an owner of the whole domain and kept it till 1623. He played a very harmful role in the Wallachian rebellion at the beginning of the 17th century. The uprising which also became the fight for religious freedom of the Protestants led by Jan Adam of Víckov spread all over Wallachia. The Vsetín castle witnessed the disgraceful end of the uprising in 1627. The fight, however, did not stop, and in 1644 another rebellion was crushed bloodily. Hundreds of rebels were executed in Vsetín, the town was plundered and burnt down and the Jesuits started a severe recatholization.

Later Vsetín was seized by the Turks and the Tatars. In 1708, the town was ravaged by the kurucs, soldiers of the Hungarian count Rákoczy. The town was also affected by the epidemics. Its miserable inhabitants had a lot of difficulties to get over all these disasters but better times did not come until the middle of the 18th century. The first industries began to appear in Vsetín in the 19th century when Thonet, a furniture company producing bent-wood furniture was established here, and textile, glass and wood-processing industries started to develop. The industrial and cultural development of the town continued in the 20th century, too. But World War II brought heavy losses to Vsetín. Partisans, helped and supported by local people, were hiding round about. In 1944, Nazis shot dead Josef Sousedík, the town's mayor. Vsetín celebrated its 700th anniversary in 2008.

Interesting sights can be found in the Upper Square. Dominating the square, there is a

Renaissance castle with its 55-metre-high tower, later rebuilt in a Classicist style and changed into a Museum of the Wallachian Region. The Roman Catholic Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary is an early Baroque building while the Town Hall dates back to the year 1721.

Continuing the Wallachian folklore traditions, Vsetín lives a rich cultural life. Zdeněk Kašpar, a bandmaster of a dulcimer band, and Jarmila Šuláková, a famous singer, both have been given an honorary citizenship.

The history of the Protestant congregations in Vsetín is closely connected with the town's history. In 1777–1781 (after the issue of the false Toleration Patent), the Wallachian rebellion, in spite of being crushed by force, still continued. In 1780, the Vsetín Protestants handed over their petition requiring religious freedom directly to Joseph II who was staying in the town at that time. The Toleration Patent was issued a year later.

There are two Protestant congregations in Vsetín. "The Lower Congregation" professed the Augsburg confession and their congregation was officially established in 1782. In the beginning, the Protestants met in a barn, later at a school. The foundation stone of their house of prayer was laid in June 1782 and it was consecrated a year later. At the same time, the rectory was built which was used till 1903 when the congregation built a new Neo-Renaissance one. Although the congregation was not eager to replace the house of prayer by a new church, in 1881–1882 the original house of prayer was rebuilt in a Neo-Romanesque style including the tower. Galleries were made but the inside equipment and the organ were provided later.

"The Upper Congregation" was founded in 1785 based on the decision of those Protestants who preferred a Reformed religion. At first the Reformed Protestants used the "Lower" house of prayer but in 1827 the "Upper" Neo-Renaissance house of prayer was built following the toleration rules. Later it was rebuilt according to architect's Dušan Jurkovič and Vsetín architect's Quis architectural design. The house of prayer has a decorated front with a little tower. Its interior has been changed several times, too. The house of prayer was opened on the 6th of January, 1928. The new congregation house dates back to 1983.



THE LOWER
CONGREGATION



THE UPPER CONGREGATION



ZLÍN





Zlín, the regional capital of the Zlín Region, is situated on the river Dřevnice near the Vizovice Highlands, 230 metres above sea level. Northward, it is not far from the hills of the Hostýn-Vsetín Upland. The population of the town is about 77,000 people.

The first records about the Wallachian settlements date back to 1322. At the end of the 14th century Zlín already had a town status. The Zlín domain belonged to the Šternberks family who started building a fortress in Zlín. The domain changed its owners many times which, along with wars, resulted in damaging the castle that was totally ravaged by the Hungarian army. It was built again in the late 18th century, changed its owners several times and was eventually bought by the town of Zlín in 1929. There is the Museum of South-East Moravia there today, another place of the museum is in the Gothic castle in Malenovice which is a part of Zlín nowadays. The Roman Catholic Church of St. Philip and Jacob in Zlín dates back to the end of the 14th century and was rebuilt later. The new Salesian Church of Virgin Mary was finished in 2003.

The first Zlín manufacture was founded in 1779. In 1894, Tomáš Baťa opened his first shoe factory which made Zlín and its shoe industry as well as its unique architecture famous all over the world. In the 1930^s, a modern centre was constructed with the participation of several significant architects, e. g. Jan Kotěra and Vladimír Karfík. The town was built in a functionalist style. The “Twenty-One” skyscraper, the seat of regional and financial authorities nowadays, offers exhibition of the town’s life. At the end of World War II the town was bombed.

Close to Zlín, there are two interesting places: a well-known zoo in Lešná, and Štípa, a place of pilgrimage. Tomáš Baťa, the founder of the Tomáš Baťa company, who died in an air-crash in 1932, is buried in the local forest cemetery.

The Protestant tradition has a long history in Zlín. A Lutheran tradition prevailed but members of the Unity of Brethren lived there, too.

The Thirty Years’ War brought a hard time to the town. In 1644, five citizens were executed for their participation in the Wallachian uprising. Relief did not come until the issue of the Toleration Patent but nobody professed a Protestant faith in the town then. In 1922 a preaching station of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation in Zádveřice was established in Zlín. The first house of prayer was opened six years later. Members of the growing congregation started to consider building a church. The plans were thought over very carefully and finally, the architect Vladimír Karfík, a chief designer of the Baťa company, was asked to carry out the project. The church was built on the steep land between Štefánikova and Slovenská Streets. The foundation stone of the building was laid on the 17th of July, 1935. In 1936, the Zlín preaching station was appointed a congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

A new church built in a functionalist style within the Baťa conception of the town was ceremonially opened on Easter Monday, on the 29th of March, 1937. The pews in the main nave have a step-like design. The bell tower with the chalice dominates the building decorated by vertical rows of windows. The sign over the entrance says: “House of God is Sacred”. It is possible to say that the church in Zlín is a masterpiece of religious architecture of the interwar period. The rectory situated near the church and a beautiful garden complete its perfect look.



NEW HALL OF THE CHURCH

THE BRETHREN CHURCH



VŠETÍN

Z The congregation working within the Free Reformed Church was established in 1916 when it bought a little congregation house in Jasenka u Vsetína. The Vsetín congregation had its roots in a Christian community in nearby Hrubá Lhota where František Urbánek, a rector of the Reformed Evangelical Church and later Chairman of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren Council worked at the end of the 19th century, and where Ondřej Šrámek, the first Jasenka preacher, came from. In spite of being a blacksmith originally, he was a very versatile man interested in and good at writing. He was a congregation administrator first, and a preacher since 1920. At that time, the name of the Free Reformed Church had been changed for the Unity of the Czech Brethren.

In 1914 and 1915, the Protestants gathered in their homes, but in 1916 they bought a little house which, however, soon became insufficient for the fast-growing number of members and had to be rebuilt for a house of prayer with a flat for a preacher in 1920. The reconstruction was done in winter which had a negative impact on its quality. The cost was rather high (about 130,000 Crowns) and the congregation ran into debt. The debt even increased when a congregation's brass band was founded according to the model of the Salvation Army. Except for its evangelization mission, it was supposed to help to repay the debt but the project failed and after the preacher Šrámek left in 1922, the band was dissolved.

The house of prayer in Hrubá Lhota built before the war in 1938, at the time of the preacher Ladislav Mikulecký, belonged to the Vsetín congregation and for many years it was used by the church for different activities, such as conferences, youth clubs events, training courses and recreation. It was reconstructed between 1968 and 1972. Since 1999, Hrubá (nowadays Velká) Lhota has been an independent congregation having its preaching station in Hranice na Moravě.

The congregation was trying to build a new house of prayer for many years. The breakthrough did not come until 1968 when mutual relations between the state and the church improved. The need to build a new section of the main road in the valley of Jasenka village helped, too. The preacher J. Trnka fell ill and was replaced by M. Cvrček, a spiritually gifted man who sympathized with modern architecture and visual arts and was a very good organizer.

The congregation decided to have an architectural project worked out according to which their house of prayer and facilities would be built. Finally, the project by the architect Pavel Vaněček was chosen presenting a "mountain" sacred building constructed in the style of northern buildings and set in the Jasenecké Valley spreading from Vsetín to the Bystřička Dam.

In the autumn of 1968, the project started to be prepared, most of construction works being done by congregation's members as do-it-yourself build-up. The congregation house was opened at the end of September 1972.

The building is situated on the slope rising from the valley on the right bank of the river Jasenka. From the architectural point of view, it is a complex consisting of three parts. The dominant object is a house of prayer with its asymmetric saddle roof upright to the slope connected with a longitudinal building with a small hall, multipurpose clubrooms and other facilities. The third, two-storey building is situated on the bottom level linked with a road and a car park.

The architectural design of the hall seeks to open the space and connect it with beautiful nature of the valley to invite the passersby in. Religious character of the building is stressed by a crucifix set on a gable sandstone wall. The hall interior is designed as a simple meditation space, with front lighting of liturgic space where the Lord's table, crucifix and pulpit are placed.

The Lord's table is carved from a block of sandstone. The deep relief on its front side symbolizes God's presence (the Testament tables are folded in clouds). A crucifix made of solid wood hangs on the back wall. On the Lord's table, the centre of the whole composition, there is a walnut Bible holder with a circular medallion carrying a symbol of Holy Ghost. The Lord's table is a masterpiece of the sculptor Jiří Seifert.

The Vsetín congregation of the Brethren Church changed a lot in the course of time, and especially in the last decade. Originally it stretched from Ostrava to Kyjov. Recently, however, congregations have been divided into small ones. The Velká Lhota and Zlín stations separated from the Vsetín congregation and became independent. The Pozlovice station and the new station in Hranice na Moravě joined these newly established congregations. The new congregation Maják in Vsetín also came into existence by seceding from their parent congregation in Jasenka.



VSETÍN



VELKÁ LHOTA



THE COMPACTS OF BASEL:

Results of agreement between the Basel's Council and representatives of the Hussite Bohemia in 1436. Their most important points was granting the right to partaking from chalice for the Czech Utraquists.

THE CZECH CONFESSION:

The common confession of faith of the Czech non-Catholic estates arising during the participation of the Unity of Brethren. In 1575 it was submitted at the Provincial Congress. The Emperor Maximilian II committed himself to respect it only orally, it was confirmed later, in 1609 by the famous Charter of Rudolph II concerning the religious freedom.

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CZECH BRETHERN (ECCB):

The most numerous Protestant church in the Czech Republic following the spiritual traditions of the Czech Reformation. It was founded in December 1918 by uniting the Protestant churches (from the Toleration period to 1918) of the Augsburg and the Helvetian confessions. It happened at the General Assembly of representatives of these churches that took place in Prague.

THE DENOMINATION:

Name for various Protestant churches and streams or for various Christian confessions.

THE CONGREGATION:

The community of believers in the framework of basic administrative and territorial district of the church administration. It is also a name for this administrative district in its territorial extent. There are elected representatives as the heads of congregations – a minister (spiritual administrator) and a curator (representative of laymen). They both administer a congregation together with a group of the elders which consists of representatives of congregation and is also elected by them.

THE ECCB PREACHING STATION:

The lowest territorial administrative unit belonging to the congregation and it is administered by this congregation (the congregation can have several preaching stations in various places of its territory).

THE CONFESSION:

The formulation of confession of faith, in a wider sense religious confession or conviction.

CONVERSION:

In a religious sense it means a turn to other belief.

THE CONSISTORY:

The highest authority of the church administration established by state in 1784 for the Protestant churches of the Augsburg and the Helvetian confessions in the Monarchy in the Toleration era (after issuing of the Protestant Patent in 1861 the Consistory was replaced by the Supreme Church Council). The consistory's seat was in Těšín, later since 1785 in Vienna.

THE TREATY OF KUTNÁ HORA:

Declaration of religious toleration concluded in Kutná Hora in March 1485 between parties of one kind (the Roman-Catholic) and in both kinds (the Utraquist). Secular nobility was also supposed to respect these principles in relation to their retainers. The historical development of confessional freedom in the Czech Kingdom reached respect of coexistence of these two parties. Based on this Treaty certain principles of religious toleration were recognized. They were however limited to the participants of this Treaty only. The Treaty of Kutná Hora did not apply to the Unity of Brethren and its members.

THE PRESBYTERIAN-SYNODICAL ESTABLISHMENT:

Principles which the organizational system and administrative structure of the ECCB is coming from. In the bodies of church at all administrative levels there is an equal representation of clergymen and laymen. They also have decision-making authority. The Synod (a collective body)-Assembly of (in church) elected clergymen as well as laymen representatives decides about the most important theological and administrative matters. This Assembly meets once a year.

RECATHOLIZATION:

"Back catholicization, reconversion to the Catholic confession" in the Czech historical context it is a system of measures leading to an obligatory acception of the Roman Catholic confession by mostly Protestant population of the Czech Kingdom. Recatholicization was carried out based on the order of a sovereign and it was happening after the defeat of the Estates uprising since the 1620s in the cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic nobility.

THE CHARTER OF RUDOLPH II:

The document issued by Emperor Rudolph II on the 9th of July 1609. Based on the Czech Confession from 1575 it confirmed religious freedom for all inhabitants of the Czech Kingdom including the retainers. The Charter and the privileges confirmed by it were abolished by Emperor Ferdinand II after the defeat of the uprising of the Czech Estates.

THE ECCB SENIORATE:

The Seniorate is a community of the congregations joined in the territorial district. The Seniorate Assembly (Convent) consisting of elected delegates of the congregations within the district of the Seniorate elects the highest administrative body of the Seniorate – the Seniorate Committee with a Senior (clergyman) and Seniorate Curator (layman) as the heads of the Committee. A seat of the Seniorate is always a congregation where the elected Senior (as a representative of the Seniorate) is the minister. The ECCB has 14 Seniorates.

THE SUPERINTENDENCE:

Since the 1780s it is a territorial unit for administration of the Protestant churches of the Augsburg and the Helvetian confessions in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, at the same time it is the highest administrative authority for the Seniorates and the congregations on the relevant territory, with Superintendent as its head. The Superintendences were divided according to the territory and confession – they were created separately for the Protestant confessions authorized by the state – the Augsburg and the Helvetian confessions. The Seniorates are under the administration of the Superintendences and thus the congregations were also organized separately for both confessions.

THE ECCB SYNOD:

The regular meeting of elected delegates from the church (clergy-men and also laymen) which decides about fundamental questions of confession, learning and practice of the church including legal and property issues. The delegates of the Synod also elect persons to the highest administrative authority of the church – the Synodical Council.

THE ECCB SYNODICAL COUNCIL:

The highest six members administrative authority of the church elected by the Synod for a six-year period with the Synodical Senior (clergyman) and the Synodical Curator (layman) as the heads of the Synodical Council and as statutory representatives of the ECCB.

The Waldensian Movement:

The medieval religious movement aimed to reform the Christian life. Its founder was Lyon merchant Petr Valdés. The supporters of this movement were as well in Bohemia, in 1340 the Crusade was taken against them in the Jindřichův Hradec Region. It was declared by a bull of Pope Benedict XII.

The ECCB Central Church Office:

The Central Church Office is the central office of the ECCB which the Synodical Council (as its superior authority) establishes for particular sections of the church work.

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