

FOLLOWING THE TRACES OF THE REFORMATION MONUMENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague 2011

Wandering about the Czech and Moravian countryside, a pilgrim is used to see originally Gothic churches, mostly later rebuilt in a Baroque style or original Baroque buildings which can be usually found in the centre of the village, often together with a nearby building of the Roman-Catholic parish. Sometimes, it is hard to imagine that due to the historically determined and often complicated religious-administrative development of the Czech Lands connected with their specifically changing confessional character, in the same countryside, besides the above mentioned churches, one can also discover the Protestant houses of prayer and churches built especially during the last two centuries. The oldest of them are connected with the declaration of the famous Toleration Patent (1781) which opened a possibility for the rest of the members of at that time numerous Czech and Moravian community (who were joining the confessions arisen particularly from the Czech Reformation in the pre-White-Mountain period) to join two Protestant confessions of the world Reformation which were permitted by the Patent-Lutheran and Calvinist belief. And thus to demonstrate their right to freedom to choose other than the Roman-Catholic belief. To establish a congregation was part of this right. This brought a possibility or rather a necessity to build their own houses of prayer. The reasons why these toleration period religious buildings (built in 1781–1861) had rather bizarre character (which is paradoxically their valuable specificity today) and were located eccentrically at the edge of the village, were connected to a then low status of the Protestant churches within the Monarchy. It was allowed to build towers on the Protestant houses of prayer only later (after the issuing of so called Protestant Patent in 1861) which was also happening very often, and these towers are a unique example of the fact how the state legislation influenced

the architectural style of the sacred buildings of the Protestant churches in the Toleration period as well as during the following years.*

The present publication is surely not limited to the Toleration period religious architectural monuments only, but it mentions a lot of interesting sites which were originated later, either by rebuilding of the original houses of prayer or by building of the new Protestant churches in the second half of the 19th century or during the Protestant churches so called “building boom” in the 1920^s or the 1930^s or during the latest period. A reader or a potential traveller will have a chance to learn more about some churches which were built by the former German Protestant community on the territory of today's Czech Republic. In this connection it is necessary to mention a specific position of the Aš Region which kept a specific position as a foreign feud of the Czech Crown. This region was not affected by the recatholization practice which was reflected in a unique continuity of the German Lutherans' sacred sites ownership which lasted until the end of the Second World War. In the book, you will also find information about some sites administered by the Brethren Church as well as the Silesian Protestant Church of the Augsburg confession. The main attention is however focused on the architectural monuments and sites which are nowadays owned by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

With the regard to the above-mentioned information, the title of the publication referring to the Reformation monuments, might seem rather confusing. It is true, that with the respect to the specific historical development of the Czech Lands (which will be further described in another part of this introduction), today's Protestant churches are only rarely the owners of the architectural monuments which were originated in the pre-White-Mountain period, respectively before the legislative



* THE PROTESTANT PATENT FROM 1861 ABOLISHED THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE TOLERATION PATENT RELATED TO THE EXTERIOR APPEARANCE OF THE PROTESTANT HOUSES OF PRAYER. THEREFORE SOME OF THEM ADDITIONALLY GOT TOWERS AND BELLS. THIS WAS ALSO A CASE OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN JIMRAMOV. THE ORIGINAL BUILDING FROM 1786 WAS EQUIPPED WITH A TOWER AND BELLS IN 1883.

changes from the 1620^s, permitting the Roman-Catholic faith as the only possible confession of their inhabitants (of course, we do not speak about Judaism, the believers of which were labelled as "the Israelites" but we speak about the Christian believers). This was how the above-mentioned special situation arose—that in a country which is one of the cradles of the European Reformation, for the worship purposes the Protestant churches administer and use only the sites built during the last two centuries (except of a few exceptions connected mostly with the purchase of the desecrated churches in towns). Let us mention two interesting examples. An example of an exceptional continuity when a sacred site built in the pre-White-Mountain period, found itself again after many years under the Protestant congregation administration, is a case of St. Saviour's Church in Prague, the Old Town. This church built during the pre-White-Mountain decade by the German Lutherans, was obtained by the Protestant congregation of the Augsburg confession in Prague in the year of 1863 for the price of the land only. The church at that time was desecrated and in dilapidated condition. Now it is owned and administered by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. The opposite example when an important architectural site of the Reformed church which has never been used by this church after the post-White-Mountain ban of the non-Catholic confessions, is Borgorelli's construction of the Czech Brethren congregation in Mladá Boleslav coming from the middle of the 16th century, the origin of which was supported by the then owners of the domain, a noble family of the Kralovičs of Krajek.

On the territory of the Czech Republic we would definitely find some small churches which were originally Utraquist or Brethren, built during the Reformation period which however remained under the Roman-Catholic church administration, even after the declaration of the Toleration Patent. The Roman-Catholic church took over them in a period when the only permitted confession was Roman-Catholic. Therefore the members of the Protestant churches had to build their own houses of prayer after the declaration of the Toleration Patent. That's the reason why among the oldest sites owned and administered by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, are mostly those above-mentioned village buildings from the Toleration period which for the first sight (if we do not consider mostly later added tower) might look as a granary or other agriculture building. Its exterior appearance, clashing with the usual Centre European image of the church building, is not an evidence of only one specific stage

of the architectural development of these sacred buildings but in its hidden meaning it also brings an interesting cultural-historical aspect, let us say a testimony of the toleration level of the then state administration permitting the other confession on the one hand but on the other hand restricting its believers beside others by the legislative building regulations.

Generally, the architecture however reflects the spirit and cultural atmosphere of the given period which is certainly valid not only about the Toleration houses of prayer but about many other later built building sites of the Protestant churches which are described in this publication**.

Symbolic depiction of the origin and spreading of the European Reformation:

Wyclif strikes sparks, Hus lights a candle, Luther already holds a torch in his hand.

Painting by academic painter Jan Bedřich Minařík for the Hus House Club in Prague according to the miniature in The Lesser Town Graduale from the year 1572.

No matter how the medieval Europe, namely its part administered by the Roman-Catholic church, which the Czech Lands also belonged to, might for the first sight seem as a spiritually monolithic unit, it is still a fact that from the very beginning of acceptance of Christianity in this territory, the religious history was full of dramatic events in the course of which there were clashes of various interests, ambitions and ideas about fulfilling power as well as purely spiritual needs. Those were the interests and desires of the mighty and non-mighty ones of the world of that time. That was not only the phenomenon of the Christian belief itself which went through gradual mutations. Those who were its announcers and those who were later spreading this belief on behalf of the religious institution as well as the ordinary believers went through the changes, too. At the same time, we must not forget that the religious development was not isolated from the political and social turns, but on the contrary, it was strongly influenced by them and at the same time it determined them to a certain extent. In the course of

** SYMBOLIC DEPICTION OF THE ORIGIN
AND SPREADING OF EUROPEAN REFORMATION:
WYCLIF STRIKES SPARKS, HUS LIGHTS A CANDLE, LUTHER
ALREADY HOLDS A TORCH IN HIS HAND.
PAINTING BY ACADEMIC PAINTER JAN BEDŘICH MINAŘÍK
FOR THE HUS HOUSE CLUB IN PRAGUE ACCORDING TO THE
MINIATURE IN THE LESSER TOWN GRADUALE
FROM THE YEAR 1572.



this difficult development, the unity of the theological teaching which generally characterized medieval west Christian Europe as well as the official monopoly of the Roman-Catholic confession, was gradually breaking.

The Czech Lands used to be labelled as one of the cradles of the European religious Reformation. If we omit the Waldensian episode, after another one hundred years the decisive role was played by the rising Hussite movement, the clash of which with the privileged position of the Roman-Catholic church led into the later coexistence of several religious communities in our territory. It was a difficult process accompanied by many hard confrontations. After many problems it however brought a certain compromise which was experienced and realized by the inhabitants of the Czech Lands from a necessity. The result of this compromise was a multiconfessional situation and a higher degree of confessional freedom in comparison with other European countries of that time.

To remind and summarize the key moments of the Czech Reformation, it is true that it was a long process from the crusade against the Waldensians in the first half of the 14th century to Hus' appearance several decades later, continuing with hard clashes during the Hussite wars, the positive result of which are the famous Compacts of Basel. It was however also the process, the other milestones of which was for example establishing of the Unity of Brethren, the Kutná Hora Treaty between the parties of one kind and of both kinds from the year 1485, the principles of which should have also been followed by the secular nobility in relation to its retainers; declaration of the Czech Confession which was formed with the participation of the Unity of Brethren in 1575, and its actual legalization by the Charter of Rudolph II in the year 1609 which was also hard to achieve. The Charter was closely connected with the issue of so called Comparison between the estates of one kind and both kinds which was solving the practical relation among individual churches. These important milestones reflect the religious development in the Czech Lands very clearly and show that they were in fact ahead of their time by this development. By issuing the Charter of Rudolph II in Bohemia at the beginning of the 17th century, a condition of for that time non-standard right to confessional freedom for all the people including the retainers, was codified. This unique freedom of conscience however did not last long.

Defeat of the Czech Estates revolt in 1620 meant a triumph of the Viennese court policy which resulted beside others in the principal change of the religious situation in the Czech Lands. Legislative measures and power pressure against the believers of until that time majority non-Catholic confessions brought total liquidation of their religious administration and establishing an actual monopoly of the only acceptable confession-Roman-Catholic. The tendencies to strengthen the position of the Catholic church which were already appearing in the previous century and became stronger again at the beginning of the 17th century, reached practically their final stage by this development. If we should speak about confessionaliza-

tion, it is possible to say that it was reached by legalization of the Roman-Catholic confession as a state religion which was directly connected with the restoration of the Catholic religious administration and a whole area recatholization.

It is necessary to realize, however, that the process of recatholization was not a single action. The patents restricting the religious freedoms were gradually being issued, starting from expelling the Protestant clergymen from Prague and the royal towns in 1621 (in 1622 it was also applied to the Lutherans), followed by a series of regulations for the royal towns inhabitants from 1624 and including a famous patent from the 31st of July 1627 as a consequence of which the members of non-Catholic nobility had to decide between two legal alternatives, either a conversion to Catholicism in a half year limit (later this limit was prolonged until May 1628) or emigration. Those who chose the second alternative, preferred their confession and a religious tradition to a certainty of their home, social position and material background.

Conversion of the nobility represented a key task, the fulfilling of which in its final consequence should have made a process of recatholization of their retainers easier. The retainers (unlike the non-Catholic merchants of the royal towns) did not have a right to leave a country, (*ius emigrandi*) anyway. This brought an interesting situation to the Czech Lands. While the non-Catholic nobility, having a certain right of choice, practically stopped to exist in the Czech Lands, some of the retainers, especially the village ones kept their originally confession (they accepted the Catholic belief only optically) however under the circumstances that practising or spreading other than the Roman-Catholic confession was considered to be a crime against the state.

It is a historical reality that the right to confess other than the Roman-Catholic confession which was legislatively denied by Ferdinand II in the name of strengthening of the Habsburg dynasty's position in the Czech Lands, after more than one hundred and fifty years was returned back to their inhabitants by Joseph II, a monarch connected with the unifying tendencies in the field of the state administration more than hardly any other ruler. Effort to strengthen the position of the Monarchy paradoxically became one of the important motives for both different steps. Only an idea of what is or might be the role of the religious freedom in this context, was diametrically different.

Declaration of the Toleration Patent in October 1781, its introduction into practice and its influence over the confessional situation in the Czech Lands, is a very wide and interesting topic and was a theme of number of specialized studies as well as several individual book titles. We will however mention just the basic facts. On the one hand, the Patent enabled the Czech Protestants to show freely their real confession and to establish their own congregations under certain conditions (if a limit of 100 families or 500 persons was reached), on the other hand it was just and only a "toleration" act in a real sense of this word. Two permitted Protestant confessions and their believers were just tolerated by the state, not at all emancipated with until

that time ruling Roman-Catholic church. This fact brought a series of restrictions to the new Reformed and Lutheran congregations which had to be respected. In this connection, the building regulations of that time-the Protestant houses of prayer could not have towers, bells and entrance from the street-corresponded with the fact that the life of the Protestant congregations should have been unofficial and detached from the world (with the exception of permitted public funerals). Another restrictions were related to the issue of upbringing the children in mixed marriages and their religious faith, payment of a stole to a Catholic priest and so on...

The major legislative measure by which the Toleration Patent restricted the Czech Protestants was a necessity to join only one of two confessional streams of the world Reformation-either the Reformed (Helvetian) or the Lutheran (Augsburg) confession. When they were joining the non-Catholic confession, they had to face special committees established by the nobility. The above mentioned necessity meant that their more or less concrete ideas about a possibility to return to the heritage of their predecessors and follow the roots of the Czech Reformation, either Hussite or Brethren, remained unfulfilled. The court decree from December 1782 was to prevent from other cases of joining the Protestant churches. Starting from spring next year, the Protestant believers were required to undergo so called "six weeks religious practice" (which could last several months or years) at the pertinent Roman-Catholic parish. A year 1782 was considered to be a so called "year of mercy", about seventy thousand of people joined the Protestant churches. If we look at the map of Bohemia and Moravia, the Protestant toleration congregations were mostly being established in a continuous belt stretching from the Podřipsko region (around the Říp Mountain) to the south-east through the Polabí region (around the Elbe river) to the Vysočina Region; another considerable cumulation of the Protestant settlement can be found in Wallachia.

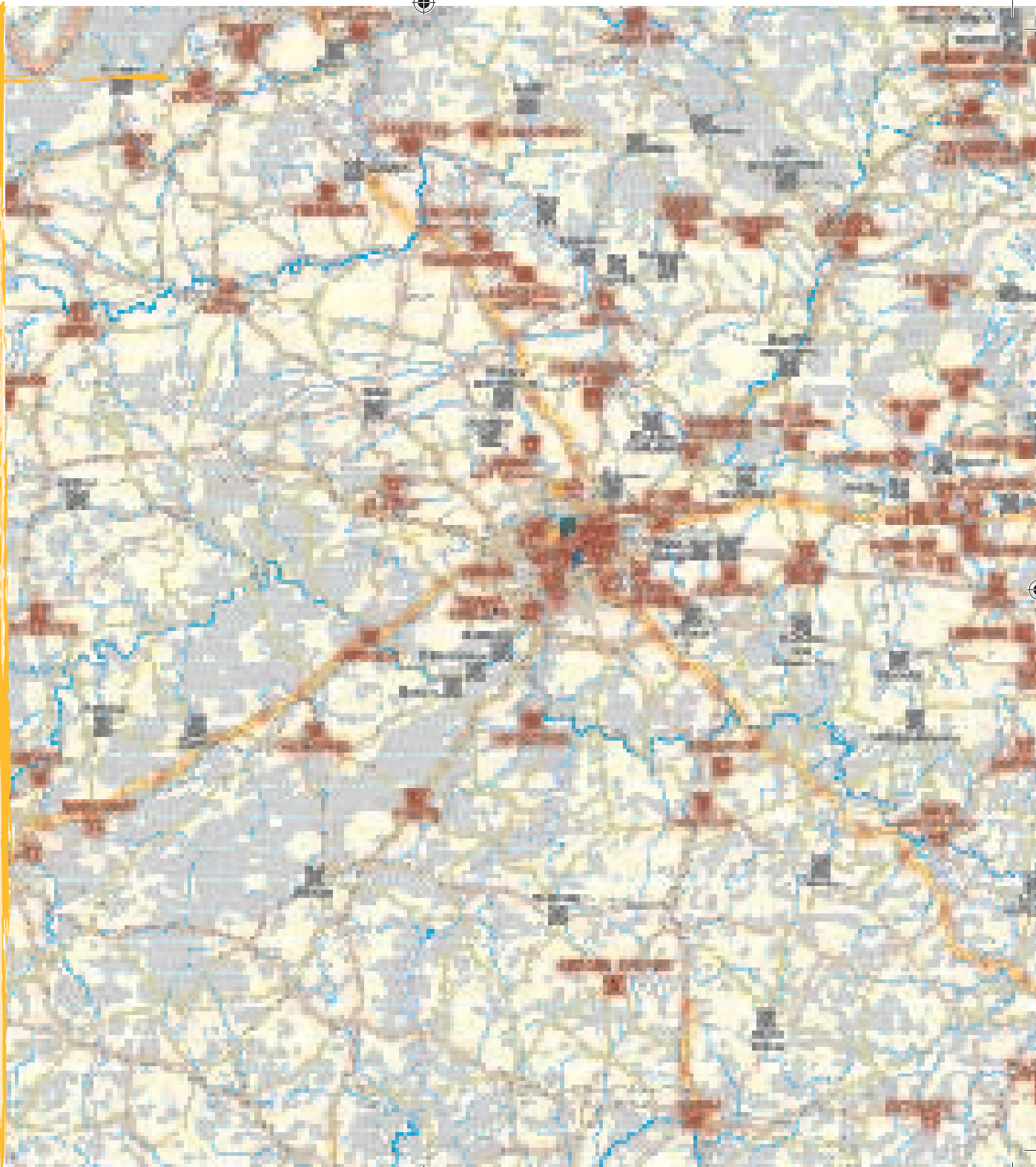
The members of the Protestant congregations were building their own houses of prayer at their own costs, were choosing their clergymen who were called "pastors" (term "priest" was used only for the Roman-Catholic parish administrators) and the group of the elders (administrative body of the congregation) led by a curator. They also paid their clergyman or teacher by themselves. A consistory and also superintendence were determined by the state as the decisive bodies for the administration of the Protestant churches. These were working separately for congregations of both confessions and individual countries. Superintendences over both confessions were further territorially divided into the Seniorates administered by the Seniors. The development of the Czech and Moravian congregations after the declaration of the Toleration Patent was characterized by calling the Protestant clergymen from the then Kingdom of Hungary, which is today's territory of Slovakia and Hungary. The reason was simple-in the territory where the Protestant confessions were until recently forbidden it was not possible for the congregations to find their ministers. The Evangelic Faculty of Theology in Vienna was established as late as in the year 1821 and therefore it became a habit that the Czech and Moravian Protestant theologists were receiving also later their education abroad - besides Hungary (which was a part of the Monarchy), they were leaving to study especially for Switzerland, Germany or Scotland.

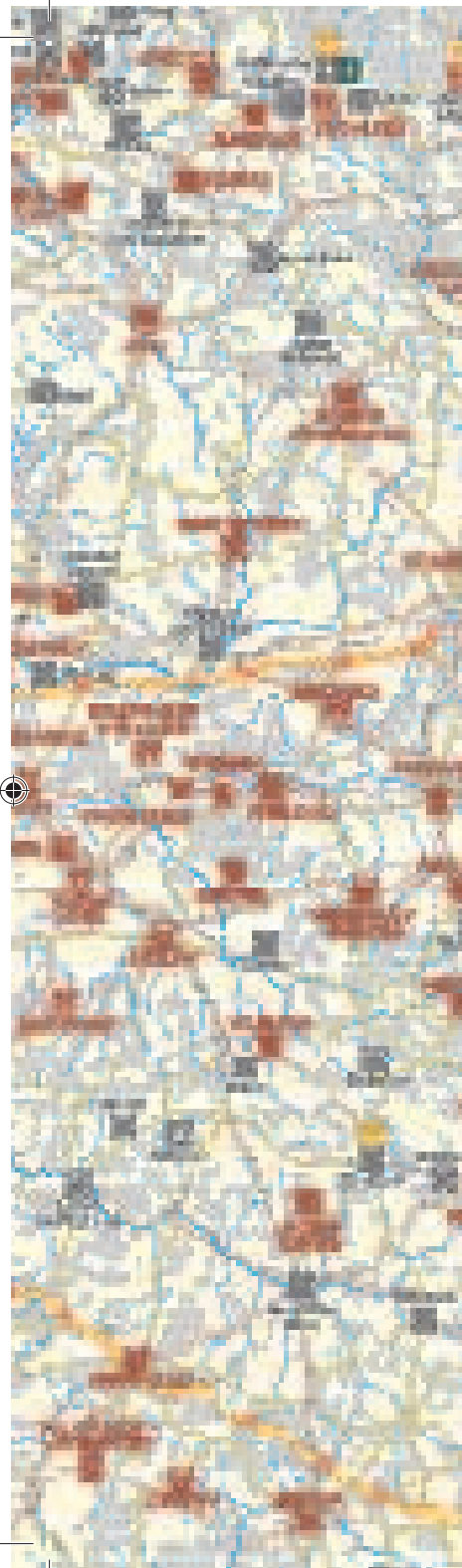
Only the year 1848 brought a chance to change the relation between state and the Protestant churches. Eventhought, the hopes for abolishing some of the toleration restrictions were partly fulfilled, it neither brought so much hoped-for emancipation, nor the fulfilling of the demands of the Czech Protestants for bigger religious freedom and permission of the "Czech (Brethren) confession" as their representatives at the then established National Committee expressed their wishes. The formal emancipation with the Roman-Catholic church was reached in the year 1861 by issuing of so called "Protestant Patent" which abolished already unacceptable restrictions of the Toleration Patent and brought much bigger freedom for the Protestant churches regarding public manifestation, press as well as in social and club activities. There were also visible changes connected with the abolishing of the toleration restrictions-the churches were being built with towers and bells and there were as well bells added to many former houses of prayer. The Protestant churches of both confessions were however still ran by the Vienesse headquarters, by a body established by the government (the Supreme Religious Council) and effort of the Czech Protestants to achieve a bigger autonomy, more free (presbytery-synodical) system and free choice of the confession arisen especially from the Protestant Reformed church, remained again unfulfilled until the year 1918.

At that time the General Assembly of the Protestant churches of both confessions which still existed in the Czech Lands (with the exception of the German Protestants who established their own church in 1919) decided to unite them within one religious organization which is known until now as the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. It would be however short-sighted to perceive it only as a church with a history of almost one hundred years. It is necessary to realize all the historical connections of the confessional development of the Czech Lands as this was realized by those religious representatives who had been continuing their effort to achieve a Czech religious autonomy and to return to the spiritual traditions of the Czech Reformation. This effort can be observed already from the period of the political détente in the middle of the 19th century and it became even more intensive at the beginning of the 20th century by organizing the first national congress of the Czech and Moravian Protestants (in the year 1903) and this effort is also connected with the establishment of the Unity of Constance (in the year 1905) as an inter-denominational organization of the Czech Protestants, with the later celebration of the 500 years anniversary of Hus death (in the year 1915) and with the later negotiation of the representatives of both confessions (in the year 1917) about the future unity. A clear reference to a return to the Czech Reformation is a fact that the newly established church by the decision of its Assembly in December 1918 officially professed to two significant Czech confessional documents-to the Czech Confession from the year 1575 and to the Brethren confession of J. A. Komenský from the year 1662. This step cannot be interpreted as a rejection of the bonds to the Calvinist and Lutheran Reformation (no matter how much these confessions were restricted for the Czech Protestants by the Toleration Patent) but it should be interpreted as a conscious effort to appreciate and respect their own Reformation roots.

Eva Fialová

PRAGUE – THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC





P Our journey to discover the Czech Republic usually starts in its capital-in Prague. It lies on the Vltava river before its confluence with the Elbe but already in the places where the waters of Vltava are merging with the waters of the Sázava and Berounka rivers. Its location in its diversity thus forms a unique and so admired panorama of Prague: hills bordering the valleys of the rivers and brooks in the south, west and north while its eastern part is gradually opening itself into an area that is slowly changing in a fertile Polabí lowland. The city lies at an average altitude of 235 metres above sea level and has 1,286,008 inhabitants and is divided into 22 administration districts.

The centre of Prague is listed in a world cultural and natural heritage UNESCO and its detailed description can be found in numerous tourist guide books. Many interesting places and architectural monuments can also be found in particular districts, out of the centre.

We can just mention some of them which are directly connected with a reformation past and presence of Prague. A big number of the most important of them can be found just in the centre of Prague (for example the Bethlehem Chapel in which Master Jan Hus was preaching; St. Martin's Church in the Wall where the communion of both kinds was renewed in the year 1414; Týn Church in the Old Town Square which was a main seat of the Czech Reformation in the past; the Old Town Hall in front of which 27 representatives of the Estates revolt against Ferdinand II were executed in the year 1621; churches from Reformation period, only two of which nowadays serve the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB)- St. Saviour's Church and St. Clement's Church. Not far from the Wenceslas Square in Jungmannova Street there is also Hus House, the ECCB headquarters.

In the capital Prague there are altogether 22 ECCB congregations. They have been building their churches, houses of prayer and congregation houses since the second half of the 19th century already without toleration restrictions. The builders of these buildings have been using architectural expressions of various styles, from the historicist styles, Art Nouveau and Cubism to functionalism and modernism of various kinds and finally to a live presence. Let us name at least the following: Prague 3 – Congregation of Ochranov, Prague 1 – Deutschsprachige Evangelische Gemeinde Prague, Prague 1 – the New Town, Prague 1 – the Old Town, Prague 2 – Vinohrady, Prague 3 – Jarov, Prague 3 – Žižkov I, Prague 3 – Žižkov II, Prague 4 – Braník, Prague 4 – Jižní Město, Prague 4 – Modřany, Prague 4 – Nusle, Prague 5 – Radotín, Prague 5 – Smíchov, Prague 6 – Dejvice – Bubeneč, Prague 6 – Střešovice, Prague 8 – Kobylisy, Prague 8 – Libeň, Prague 9 – Horní Počernice, Prague 10 – Strašnice, Prague 10 – Uhřetíněves, Prague 10 – Vršovice.

So, take a good map and have a happy journey !



DRAGUE 1 – Hus House





P Hus House in Jungmannova Street No. 9 in Prague 1 has a close connection to the period before the establishment of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and today it is its spiritual and administrative centre.

Already in the 90^s of the 19th century the students came with an idea to create a religious and spiritual centre for the Czech Protestants in Prague. Also a significant theologist Čeněk Dušek was a big supporter of this idea. Nevertheless, it was still a long way from the idea to its realization. As late as in the year 1912 two houses with a big yard were purchased in Jungmannova Street. In the year 1923 (at that time the ECCB had already existed for five years) a reconstruction according to architect dr. Bohumír Kozák's design started and Hus House was ceremonially opened on the 1st of May 1924. In this house there was not only a seat of a Synodical Council but there were as well rooms for gathering and accommodation of students and guests.

On the front of the building there is still a statue of Master Jan Hus by sculptor Jan Ladislav Kofránek and symbols of a Bible and a lamb.

In the 30^s of the 20th century architect Kozák designed a new construction of a courtyard wing. The construction was finished in the year 1937. A large hall was built, offices and archives were added. Hus House was a temporary home for students, a place of work of the Comenius Evangelic Faculty of Theology, a seat of the ECCB Diakonia. At that time the Evangelical bookshop "Kalich" (Chalice) was also established.

The back wing is a seat of a Synodical Council, the Central Church Office and the ECCB archives. Church Pension and Information Point "Reformation Heritage" is also part of the building.



DRAGUE 1 – THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN IN THE WALL





P Near Národní and Spálená Street a Romanesque Church of St. Martin was built between the years 1178–1187 at a then settlement called Újezd. When the walls were being built around the Old Town in the 13th century, St. Martin's Church remained touched to the fortification wall by its southern side. And this is the reason why the church has been called "In the Wall".

The original Romanesque church was one-nave. During the reign of Charles IV the church was rebuilt in a Gothic style; a presbytery with a valuable groined vault and two side naves were added.

During the Hussite period the Church of St. Martin in the Wall was sort of a "partnership" church of the Bethlehem Chapel which was a centre of the Czech Reformation. Master Jan Hus was preaching in both places. With his permission, in the year of 1414 when he was already a prisoner of the Constance Council,

the Lord's Supper was communicated here in both kinds which means by bread and wine, to all the believers.

St. Martin's Church in the Wall burnt down in the 17th century and it was abolished in the year 1784. It had the same fate as the other ancient churches. It was used as a store room. As late as in the years 1905–1906 Prague municipality bought it and has it at least partly reconstructed. In the 20^s of the last century the church was lent to the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) which participated in the extensive repairs. The new organ was as well bought.

St. Martin's Church in the Wall is a place for not only the evening worship meetings of the Evangelic youth but also the worship of the Prague Evangelical congregation of the German language. Organ or chamber music concerts are also very popular and much-frequented.



DRAGUE 1 – ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH





P An original Romanesque little church came from the 11th century. In the year 1226 the members of the Dominican order got it into their ownership and already at that time it was considered to be ancient. In the 14th century (probably after the fire) it was demolished and replaced by a Gothic church. During the Hussite time Master Jan Hus used to preach here and he was spied on by a former Clement preacher Jan Protiva who informed the archbishop against Hus and gave a testimony against him even at the Council of Constance.

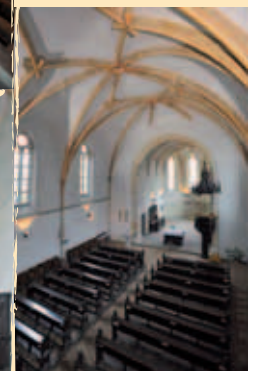
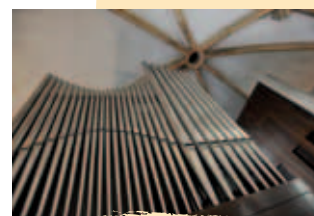
St. Clement's Church was a Hussite church and until the year 1621 it belonged to the Utraquist church. Here it was communicated in both kinds, by bread and wine. After the Battle of the White Mountain it was in the Catholic ownership until the year 1784 when it was deconsecrated in the framework of the Joseph's reforms, and it was changed into a granary.

As late as in the year 1850 the church faced its revival. Thanks to a minister Bedřich Vilém Košut the church was purchased at that time

for the newly established Protestant congregation of the Helvetian confession.

The church had been undergoing a lot of repairs, especially at the end of the 19th century. Thanks to architect Bohumír Kozák's effort there was a detailed archaeological research done in the 1970^s based on which a big historical value of the church was revealed. Valuable frescoes in a presbytery from the pre-Reformation period were as well discovered and restored. These are the Gothic frescoes of the Angels and rests of passion scenes (the interesting one is especially the Christ's head during entering Jerusalem).

Another valuable monument is also a stone Renaissance board from the year 1578. Its text is passing through the history and is still relevant to the current time "The Word of the God is Eternal."



DRAGUE 1 – THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH AT SAVIOUR



P Near the Old Town Square and Pařížská Street stands the biggest Prague Evangelical Church At Saviour. Besides worship activity it is also a place for important religious gatherings and is also a favourite place for various concerts.

Its history is complicated. Soon after the declaration of the Rudolph's Imperial Charter (1609) which brought a religious freedom also for the reformed churches, the German believers of the Augsburg confession started to build their church. It was built during the years 1611-1614 in a German Renaissance Gothic style, it was a three-nave church and the interior space reached the height of 20-21 metres. The vault was decorated by valuable frescoes. The presbytery was equipped with five high windows.

The revolt of the Estates, the Battle of the White Mountain in the year 1620, execution in the Old Town Square followed by the counter-Reformation brought the end of the religious

freedom. The Catholic order of the Paulans got the church. They rebuilt it in a Baroque style and they used it until the year 1784 when it was abolished by Joseph's decrees and it was changed into a mint. The side naves were changed into stables for horses who were used for a work in the mint. The mint was definitely abolished as late as in the year 1857.

The Czech Protestants of the Augsburg confession got the devastated church back as late as in the year 1863. Since that time until the establishment of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and even later it has been undergoing an intensive reconstruction. The latest extensive reconstruction was done at the end of the 20th century. In this church the unique ceiling frescoes representing a blessing Saviour were preserved.



DRAGUE 2 – VINOHRADY



NOUWĚM ZÁKONĚ PŘE
NAJPRWĚ: ABY
 ČESKĚM SVOB
 STÁNSKÝCH KNĚŽÍ B
DRUHĚ: ABY WĚLO



P The congregation in Prague – Vinohrady was established in 1889, at that time Royal Vinohrady which used to be a quickly spreading suburb of Prague. Its members originally belonged to the reformed Prague congregation at St. Clement's. In the beginning the new congregation members used to meet at school in Smetanka. Since 1892 they had their own house of prayer which was however not big enough. Therefore in the year 1904 a land was bought in Korunní Street which was already a busy street at that time. A congregation house in a Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance style with a tower was built here according to architect Antonín Turek's design. The construction was led by a curator of the Vinohrady congregation, builder Antonín Dvořák. The front part of the house was reserved for the tenant flats and rooms for congregation activities.

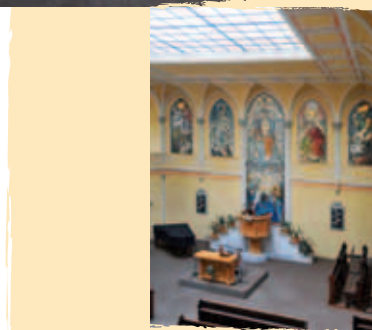
The worship room itself can be reached by going down a few stairs and a spacious, light house of prayer with a pulpit and the Lord's table will spread in front of us. There are as well galleries and an organ placed on the shorter

gallery above the entrance. The floor of the house of prayer is going down little bit so there is a good view from each pew.

The congregation house started to be used on the 25th of March 1908 and in the year 2008 it celebrated the 100th anniversary of its existence. Its house of prayer belongs among the biggest in Prague and therefore there were big religious events taking place there.

On the 18th of December 1918 it was a place where the General Assembly of the Czech and Moravian Protestants continued. The day before this Assembly decided that two Czech Protestant churches will be connected by which the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was formed. The Synod meetings of this church have been taking place in Vinohrady for many years.

During the years the house of prayer underwent several repairs according to architect Bohumil Bareš's architectural design. In the year 2000 five big picture compositions by the academic painter Miroslav Rada were placed on the front of the house of prayer.



PRAGUE 3 – ŽIŽKOV I





P At the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century Žižkov was not fully developed district of Prague and the number of the Protestants was not high, either. Nevertheless, there was a success regarding work with children. A Sunday school was established. Thanks to the help of the Clement congregation and Hus House Club for Žižkov, Karlín and Libeň (which was formed later) also the adults started to come. First meetings, prayer moments and lectures were being held in the flats. A considerable assistance came also from the laymen public. A preaching station was established in the year 1904 and its members found a suitable room for a house of prayer.

Together with a development of Žižkov, the number of believers was also rising; in the year 1911 a branch congregation was established and it was possible to start thinking about a house of prayer. In Prokopova Street a block of flats with a garden was bought and between the years 1913–1914 the Bethlehem Chapel according to architect Emil Králíček's design, in

a late Art Nouveau style with Cubist elements, was built in this garden. The chapel was built by Matěj Blecha's building company. The house of prayer was solemnly consecrated on the 28th of June 1914. Later a congregation hall which is called "A Swiss Hall" and a belfry were added. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation was established on the 1st August 1920. Gradually, the congregation was growing more and more and finally it was necessary to divide it. Thus, Žižkov II congregation was formed and later a congregation in Strašnice and in Jarov.

In the 1930^s the part of the house facing the street was repaired. In the 1970^s, during absurd demolishing of big parts of Žižkov, the same fate was threatening also to the buildings of the Žižkov I congregation. Luckily, it did not happen and instead, the interior was adjusted and its Cubist character was underlined.



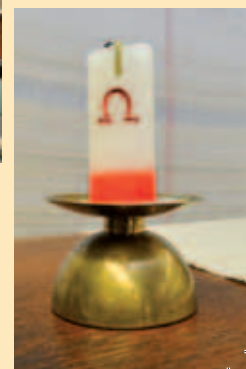
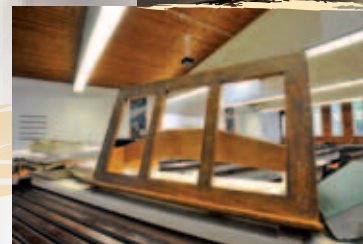
DRAGUE 4 – BRANÍK



P The Church in Prague – Braník cannot be missed even though its construction seems to be insignificant in comparison with a huge sharp rock of the former Braník stone pit. A small wooden church designed by architect Pavel Bareš was opened with ceremonial worship on the 9th of May 1948.

The whole wooden construction distantly reminds us of the original toleration houses of prayer. In the course of the years there were several building adjustments. A new apse was built according to a design of architect David Vávra, in the year 1976 a congregation got a

new organ. Originally a temporary small church below the Braník rock has been standing and serving for more than 60 years.



PRAGUE 5 – SMÍCHOV





P The beginning of the Smíchov congregation dates back to the early 20th century. During the first years the Protestants from Smíchov used to meet at a school Na Zatlance where the children often together with their parents had religion lessons. Besides the Roman Catholic chapel there was also a Protestant chapel built in this new school in 1916. First, this chapel became a seat of the Clement congregation preaching station and later a seat of the ECCB congregation in Smíchov which was established in 1924.

The number of the members was rising and soon an idea to build a church appeared. The congregation got a land from the town near the park Santoška and on the 5th of October 1930 a foundation stone of a Congregation House of Jan Amos Komenský was laid. The architectural design was done by Filip Křížek and his son and the house was constructed by a builder Josef Svaták. The extensive building has a large prayer hall and a spacious gallery in a style of a toleration house of prayer which was an inte-

tion of the builder. The House was opened by solemn worship on the 28th of September 1931. The main building is connected with a rectory, there is also a tower.

The chronicle of the congregation reflects both, the cheerful events as well as hard times of World War II when many congregation members were imprisoned in concentration camps. Thirty seven of them did not return home. Mr. and Mrs. Horák were as well the members of the Smíchov congregation. Dr. Milada Horáková survived the hardship of a concentration camp but she did not escape a tragic fate during the communist regime. She was imprisoned and based on a false process she was sentenced to death. In spite of the protests coming from the whole civilized world, she was executed on the 27th of June 1950.

In October 2010 Olbram Zoubek's statue of dr. Milada Horáková was revealed in front of the ECCB church. O. Zoubek realized this statue without claiming any payment for it.



DRAGUE 6 – ŠTŘEŠOVICE





P An important monument from the functionalist period of the 1930s is a Protestant Church in Prague – Střešovice. A congregation was established in the year 1932. The member of the congregation was also architect Bohumír Kozák who designed a purposeful congregation house, house of prayer with a tower and with an adjoining rectory on the delimited piece of land. According to his idea a worship place resembling the old Christian basilica was built. In the tower there is still an original clock which comes from Ruzyně prison. The church and its whole interior is on the list of the protected monuments.

On the 18th of May 1939 the church was ceremonially consecrated. Until now, by a purity of its style it dominates Prague district of Střešovice.



DRAGUE 8 – KOBYLISY





P The congregation in Prague-Kobylišy was established in the year 1951. The housing estate construction in its surroundings brought a wider congregation work as well as a necessity to think about a suitable place for gathering. It looked almost like a miracle that in the period of a starting normalization (in the years 1969–1971) it was possible to build a modern church according to a design of the Swiss architect Ernst Gisel. An impressive worship room designed in a modern way was a part of the building together with the other rooms for gathering and accommodation which at that time served not only the youth but they also provided a possibility to meet for the believers from the divided Europe.

The church was consecrated on the 6th of June 1971. During the years 1995–2001 other adjustments were done. A 26-metre high belfry with two bells from the workshop of Rudolf Manoušek was built. The name of the Church “At Jacob’s Ladder” also comes from this period.

Besides the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation there is also a community of the South Korean Presbytery Church in Kobylišy.



DRAGUE 11 – JIŽNÍ MĚSTO





P The basis of this congregation was in Prague – Spořilov where the believers started to gather in a joiner's workshop of one of the families since the year 1929. Later Spořilov became a preaching station of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) congregation in Nusle.

The ECCB congregation in Spořilov was established on the 1st of November 1946. In the 1950^s it was undergoing hard times when it lost a house of prayer and an apartment for a minister. Thanks to hard effort of the congregation members a new congregation house was built and a congregation work started here in the year 1957. In the year 2000 the congregation started to consider building a new church in Jižní Město.

A foundation stone was laid on the 30th of March 2003. The church was built according to architect Jiří Veselý's architectural design. A semicircle building with a tower is formed by

a worship room which is surrounded by a spacious gallery with an organ. In front there is the Lord's table with a pulpit. In the building complex there is also a flat for a minister and several rooms which are used for the congregation work. The construction was financed by money from home as well as from abroad. In the year 2006 Spořilov congregation moved to the new church. Ceremonial opening worship took place on the 7th and the 8th of October 2006. Thanks to the generosity of foreign donors an Asylum House was built near the church. The congregation established an active cooperation with this House. This was an example of a unique project which connects spiritual and social network. In spite of the protests of the institutions and individuals, the City Office of Prague 11 however abolished this House.

PRAGUE 1 – THE CHURCH
OF ST. MICHAEL

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION (ECAC)





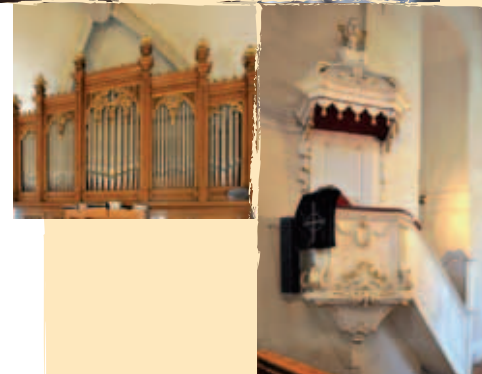
P The name of Opatovická Street near Národní třída Street in Prague reminds us of a medieval municipality Opatovice which was established in the year 1115. A Romanesque small parish Church of St. Michael comes from that time. In the year 1348 it was rebuilt in an Early-Gothic style.

The later adjustments enriched the building by a presbytery with a valuable vault. The church was later extended from a one-nave to a three-nave church. In a Baroque period, in the year 1717, the church got a tower and a Baroque chapel was as well added.

During the reign of Joseph II the church was deconsecrated and it was used as a store room. Already in the year 1791 it was however bought by the German Protestants of the Augsburg confession. By a special decree they were allowed to keep the tower (normally, it was forbidden for the toleration churches to have it).

During various adjustments, for example the one in the year 1912, a new organ was bought. St. Michael's Church was used by the German Lutherans until the year 1945.

At that time the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) got the church together with a nearby religious school under the condition that the church will serve the Slovak Evangelical congregation of the Augsburg confession in Prague. This is until now and St. Michael's Church is the only Lutheran church in the territory of Prague and besides the Slovak congregation it as well serves the Czech and English congregation of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg confession in the Czech Republic. The permanent exhibition about the Bible is installed in the interior of the church.



THE BRETHREN CHURCH

PRAGUE 1 – OLD TOWN

P The congregation of the Brethren Church in the centre of Prague started its activities in 1880, at first in rented houses. At the turn of the century, its members gathered in Petřská Street 23, and in 1907, they bought the house No. 15 in Soukenická Street. It was an attached house from the 19th century with business premises and big shop-windows facing the street on the ground floor, and flats on the others. It had a large yard allowing to build quite a spacious house of prayer. In spite of the fact the house cost all the money the congregation had from the sale of their house in Petřská Street, and also the big amount received from a sponsor, the intention to use a courtyard as a place for building a large house of prayer with good facilities was not given up.

As early as on the 8th of March, the foundation stone was laid, with a prayer to make the building a source of spiritual stream flowing to all directions.

The project was given a shape by A. Dvořák, snr. of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Prague – Vinohrady who had already succeeded in building several Protestant churches and houses of prayer of the Brethren Church in Vinohrady and Smíchov.

The construction proceeded very quickly and was helped by a lot of sponsors, and even by the poorest friends of the congregation. The preacher Alois Adlof wrote at that time: "Poor people encourage us donating from their poverty."

The opening ceremony was held already on Sunday, the 17th of November, 1907. The building has several floors, the main meeting hall being on the first one together with a small assembly room, dressing room and library – office. The big hall has a gallery. There are other meeting rooms in the building and flats of the administrator and preacher. There used to be also a gym and printing-office.

The big hall is full of light and very spacious – it can seat up to 300 people. The windows face the south. There are two ceiling windows on which quotations from the Bible used to be

written: "God is Love" and "Christ – Our Life". A small organ was originally located on the gallery but since 1980 a new organ is placed in front together with a new Lord's table and a pulpit. The architectural style of the building corresponds with the date of its construction – the beginning of the 20th century when outside and inside walls used to be decorated with Art Nouveau ornaments, in this case rather austere but still with valuable architectural elements on both inside and outside walls of the building. On the top of its front, there is a metal chalice under which the year 1907 when the house of prayer was built is written, and a sign saying: "Christ's Gospel, God's Power for the Redemption of Every Believer."

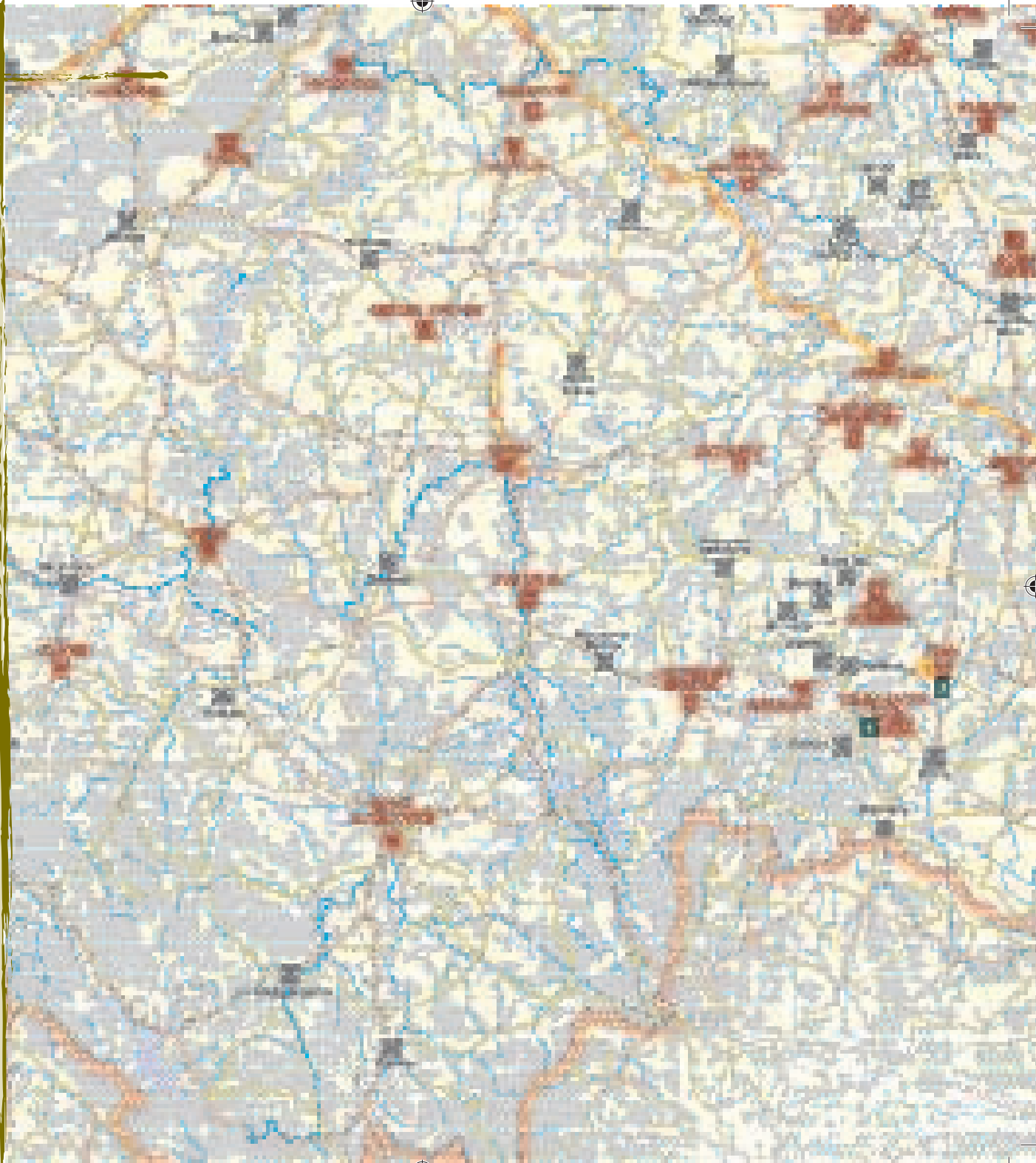
While used, the building was repaired continuously. But some changes affected the interior. When communists ruled the country, the Church could use the house of prayer to held the worship but a part of it was occupied by the state administration and changed into a storage of civil defense.

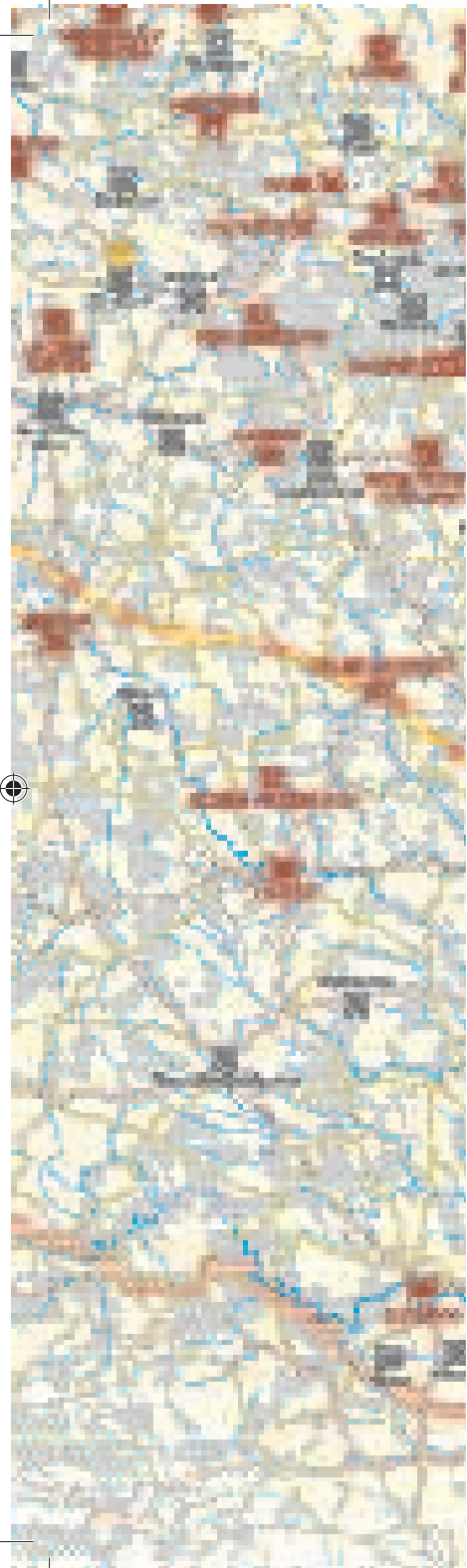
Since 1989 and after its reconstruction, the Church has been using all the house of prayer again.

In 2002 the house was badly affected by floods. The basements and ground floors of both the historical buildings were flooded as well as their cellars, stock rooms, boiler room and meeting rooms on the ground floor. Thanks to selfsacrifice of many people in the Czech Republic and abroad – members and friends of the congregation, the houses were reconstructed again to its original beauty.



THE SOUTH BOHEMIAN REGION





The South Bohemian Region is situated in the south of the Czech Republic. Its area of 10,056 square kilometres represents 12.8 per cent of the total area of the country. 642,734 inhabitants live here. The altitude is between 400–600 metres above sea level.

In the west the South Bohemian Region borders on the Pilsen Region, in the direction to the south it borders on the German federal state of Bavaria and on the Austrian federal states of Upper and Lower Austria. In the east it touches the Vysočina Region and in the north it opens towards the Central Bohemia Region.

The Basin of České Budějovice and Třeboň between which the regional capital of České Budějovice is wedged, is surrounded by the mountains. National park Šumava with the highest mountain Plechý (1,378 metres) forms the border zone. We can find here the protected landscape area Blanský Forest with the highest mountain Klet (1,084 metres) and the Novohradské Mountains.

South Bohemia is rich in forests and ponds. We must go back to the 16th century to discover the creator of the South Bohemian fish farming system Štěpánek Netolický and Jakub Krčín of Jelčany as well as the magic of the South Bohemian ponds. The pond Rožmberk with its 489 hectares of size is the largest pond in the whole Czech Republic and it is a part of a protected landscape area of the Třeboň region. The most famous river of South Bohemia is Vltava with its hydroelectric power stations Lipno and Orlík, another famous rivers are Otava, Lužnice and Nežárka as well as Malše or Blаницe.

South Bohemia is a region glorified by the poets and writers, it is a region that was already long time ago discovered by the painters, it is also a region with unique towns, castles and chateaux. They are counted in dozens and each of them has its own unique story – whether it is Zvíkov or Orlík, Hluboká or Červená Lhota. Each of the eight district towns is a jewel by itself. We can also visit the charming South Bohemian villages that have been preserved until now as a rare examples of folk Baroque.

Here in South Bohemia Master Jan Hus was born in Husinec and after his death a town of Tábor was founded. Its inhabitants decided to live according to a model of the early Christians. The leading thinkers whose names are linked to the first, Hussite (or also Czech) Reformation in the 15th century: Matěj of Janov, Petr Chelčický, Tomáš Štítňý of Štítné also came from this region. In Trocnov Jan Žižka was born. In this region a Waldensian community found their home. They spread an idea of returning to a poverty and simplicity of the early church; they came here to protect themselves from persecution which they faced in their native country. The history of South Bohemia reflects the glorious as well as tragic fate of the country where in some periods the country flourished and at some other time it was being destroyed by the wars.

After centuries the South Bohemia Region is now a peaceful home for thousands of people and also the region which is much-sought-for not only for its natural beauties but also for an inexhaustible wealth of historical monuments.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has only eight congregations in South Bohemia. We will visit three of them – České Budějovice, Jindřichův Hradec and a toleration area in Velká Lhota near Dačice. Other congregations are in Písek, Soběslav, Strmilov and Volyně.

You yourselves will surely find the way to the Historic Town Reserve Tábor, the cradle of the Hussite movement. The local congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren cannot boast about a church but it has a nicely maintained congregation house and beside others it also takes care of the exemplary Christian kindergarten. At a nearby Kozí hrádek where Master Jan Hus lived, the Divine service is held every year under the open air to commemorate his burning to death. This tradition is carefully followed by both the members of the Czech Brethren congregation as well as the parishioners of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church.



ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE • KAPLICE

ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE



J České Budějovice is a regional capital and at the same time the biggest town of the South Bohemian Region. It lies on the confluence of the river Vltava and Malše between the Basin of České Budějovice and the Třeboň Basin at an altitude of 381 metres above sea level and has about 96,000 inhabitants.

From 72 metres high Black Tower built in a Gothic-Renaissance style which dominates the town is a nice view of a main square (in a shape of a square) which is one of the largest in the Czech Republic. The edge of the square is well-preserved, mainly Renaissance merchants' houses with typical arcades. The square is named after Přemysl Otakar II. In 1265 he founded here a royal town as an important centre on the trade routes but also as a barrier against the expansion of a noble family of Vítkovec and later the Rozenbergs. There is a Baroque fountain called "Samson" in the middle of the square. The early Gothic Monastery Church of the Virgin Mary from the 13th – 14th century as a unique Gothic church of the Přemyslids era is worth mentioning among the significant church monuments. St. Nicholas' Cathedral Church was mentioned already in the 13th century. Later it was rebuilt in a Baroque style.

In České Budějovice there was also a monumental synagogue which was destroyed during occupation. In 1924 a basilica of Hus congregation of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC) was built here. The Brethren Church also has its house of prayer here.

The town flourished mainly in the 16th century when crafts and trade flourished, beer was brewed, fish-pond cultivation was developed; silver mining brought the wealth, too.

In the Hussite time České Budějovice stood on the side of the Emperor Sigismund; the town did not support a revolt of the Estates in 1618. During the Thirty Years' War and later the town did not escape destructive fires and plague.

In 1751 České Budějovice became a centre of the region. In 1762 the Piarists founded a grammar school here and in 1785 a Catholic Diocese of České Budějovice with a seat of a bishop was established here. The town became strongly Catholic. A number of the German inhabitants was rising.

In the 19th century the town began to develop rapidly. In 1832 a horse-drawn railway pulled out from Budějovice to Linz – the first train in the European continent. Vojtěch Lanna introduced a voyage on the river Vltava. This positive development continued also in the 20th century.

In the year 1900 a Czech Protestant preaching station was founded in České Budějovice. After the establishing of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in 1918 a number of new members was rising and an ECCB congregation was founded in 1922.

Later a building in Lannova Street was purchased and rebuilt as a congregation house. After the 2nd World War the congregation obtained a church after the German Evangelical Church at today's Street of the 28th of October. This Neo-Romanesque church comes from the year 1889.

Today's house of prayer is located on the 1st floor. A hall is multifunctional- except regular Divine service also gatherings of ministers and also weddings take place here. In the building there are rooms for congregation work in addition to a flat of a preacher: children and young people gather here, Bible lessons are held here. There is also a possibility of accommodation.

Thirty kilometres south of České Budějovice a small town Kaplice lies in a beautiful landscape of foothills of the Novohradské Mountains near the river Malše (537 metres above sea level, about 7,000 inhabitants). It is mentioned already in 1382, a well-known "Salt Track" went here. St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church and St. Florian's Church come from the late Gothic period. In the 16th century originally Protestant St. Joseph's and St. Barbara's Chapel was built. Until the end of the 2nd World War predominantly German population lived here.

České Budějovice congregation has its preaching station here. Long distance from a home congregation led to the idea of building a separate house of prayer in Kaplice which would serve the domestic as well as international meetings besides the Divine service. Thus so called "Ark" with a modern house of prayer for 85 people and a possibility of accommodation was opened in 2005.

If you wander about the Novohradské Mountains, don't forget to stop there.



ČESKÉ
BUDĚJOVICE



KAPLICE



JINDŘICHŮV HRADEC



J Once you visit Jindřichův Hradec, you will always like to come back. It is a charming town, located 475 metres above sea level, surrounded by greenery and water and there are so many historical monuments that you do not even manage to see all of them in one day. The town has more than 22,000 inhabitants. Its historical centre was declared a Historic Town Reserve. On the surface of the Lake Vajgar not only buildings of a historical castle and chateau are reflected but also picturesque original small houses of the tanners. Now there are Gobelin tapestry workshops and studios in these small houses.

The founder of the castle was Jindřich from the Vítkovec dynasty. He was the first bearer of a name of the lords of Jindřichův Hradec. His son Oldřich finished the building of the early Gothic castle which is preserved in the present chateau (a valuable mural cycle of St. George's life dates back to the year 1338). At the same time a settlement bearing George's name was being established. History of the castle and later the Renaissance chateau is the history of fights between a royal power and proud lords of Jindřichův Hradec. The town as well as the chateau reached their biggest development in the 16th century during Renaissance rebuilding. A garden summerhouse, known as a *rondel* comes from 1591. The whole chateau complex is even more valuable thanks to the fact that it has been preserved in its Gothic and Renaissance form and it was not rebuilt in a Baroque style.

In 1604 Vilém Slavata of Chlum and Košumberk, a famous victim of Prague defenestration from 1618, became an owner of the chateau. After the finishing of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 Jindřichův Hradec was the second biggest Czech town. In 1801 the whole chateau burned down. It was restored as late as at the beginning of the 20th century thanks to Earl Evžen Černín who was the owner of the chateau at that time. Today it is an admired place for many visitors.

The town also suffered by the fire. A number of late-Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque merchants' houses in the square have however been preserved. The provost Church of the Assumption of Our Lady from the 14th century with a tower more than 68 metres high (in the 15th century church belonged to the Utraquist church for many years) dominates the town.

St. John the Baptist's Church with a former Minorite monastery is a unique monument of the Central European importance. A Gothic completion of a construction from the first half of the 14th century follows the Romanesque foundations from the third quarter of the 13th century. The preserved wall paintings are unique.

You will certainly be able to find other important monuments by yourselves. Let us also mention Krýža's Christmas crib in the town museum. A trip by a narrow-gauged small train from Jindřichův Hradec to Nová Bystřice or to Obrataň is also one of the local attractions.

A history of local Protestants is connected to the history of town and its surroundings. Oldřich of Hradec led the crusade war that the Pope announced in 1340 against the Waldensian community.

During the 16th century a favour of the lords of Hradec to the believers of the Utraquist Church was changing according to their confession. The Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 meant as everywhere in the Czech Lands the end of religious freedom. At that time the Protestants met secretly especially in the villages. At the beginning, not even the Toleration Patent from 1781 had any influence over fully Catholic town Jindřichův Hradec. Gradually, however, the Protestants began to appear here as well, mostly the members of the village congregations with the others. It was the way how a preaching station of a congregation in Horní Dubenky was established in Jindřichův Hradec in 1904. (The congregation in Jindřichův Hradec was set up as late as in 1921). Soon after establishing a preaching station the idea of building a church appeared. The foundation stone of a building was laid on the 29th of April 1906 and already on the 28th of September 1906 the church was inaugurated. It was built according to architect M. Blecha's plan in the Art-Nouveau style enriched by Neo-Gothic elements and also elements of folk architecture. (It is interesting that very similar Protestant church can be found in the Austrian Heidenreichstein). Later sensitive extensions and modifications of the church and rectory did not interfere with a character of the building. Today a modern congregation house with a house of prayer and other common rooms serve the needs of the live and opened congregation.



VĚLKÁ LHOTA NEAR DAČICE



J The village of Velká Lhota can be found in the eastern part of the South Bohemian Region – unlike Velká (Hrubá) Lhota in the Region of Wallachia. Velká Lhota near Dačice lies in a slightly hilly landscape at 603 metres above sea level, it has about 185 inhabitants and it is a part of the village Volfířov.

Dačice is about 10 kilometres from Velká Lhota. Telč is not far, either. Both of these towns have an interesting history and they are very rich in architectural monuments. And what is interesting about this small village Velká Lhota?

It is an interesting history and a specific set of architectural monuments. You will see it soon, as soon as you reach the hill just before arriving at the village: a road is going down again and disappearing on the opposite hill between towers of two churches. Two towers, two churches and also two rectory houses create an unforgettable view from afar.

Both churches are Protestant. The older one comes from the year 1783, it means from the period after proclamation of the Toleration Patent by Joseph II. This Patent brought tolerated existence to the Protestants who existed only as the secret people before. With the regard to the fact that the Toleration Patent was not officially declared and that it was possible to profess only the Augsburg Confession or the Helvetian Confession (not the continuation itself of the Czech Reformation), at the beginning Protestants from Velká Lhota were all registered as the Lutherans. When a news about a possibility to join the Helvetian Confession (which was closer to the Czech Protestants) reached them, in 1787 also a Helvetian congregation was formed in Velká Lhota in addition to the rest of the Lutherans.

Then members of both congregations used together the Lutheran house of prayer which was originally built according to the restrictive toleration rules. The change came after 1861 when so called Protestant Patent was issued. This Patent formally emancipated legal churches with the Roman Catholic Church

and all (members of the Protestant churches) could build churches with towers and bells. In 1868 the reformed Protestants began to build their own church on the other side of the road, according to a position which is called “top”, in a historicist style with Neo-Romanesque and Neo-Renaissance elements, with a Neo-Baroque pulpit at the front and with a quadrilateral tower. This church was consecrated on the 21st of October 1873. In 1876 a quadrilateral tower was added to the existing Lutheran house of prayer and the church got its Neo-Gothic appearance. The same style is also reflected in the interior (an altar, a pulpit). In the 1830^s both rectories were rebuilt in a Neo-Classical style.

In 1918 Czech Reformed and Lutheran congregations were connected in the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and congregation in Velká Lhota had suddenly a speciality: in one village there were two churches and two rectories very close to each other and connected by their ground plans.

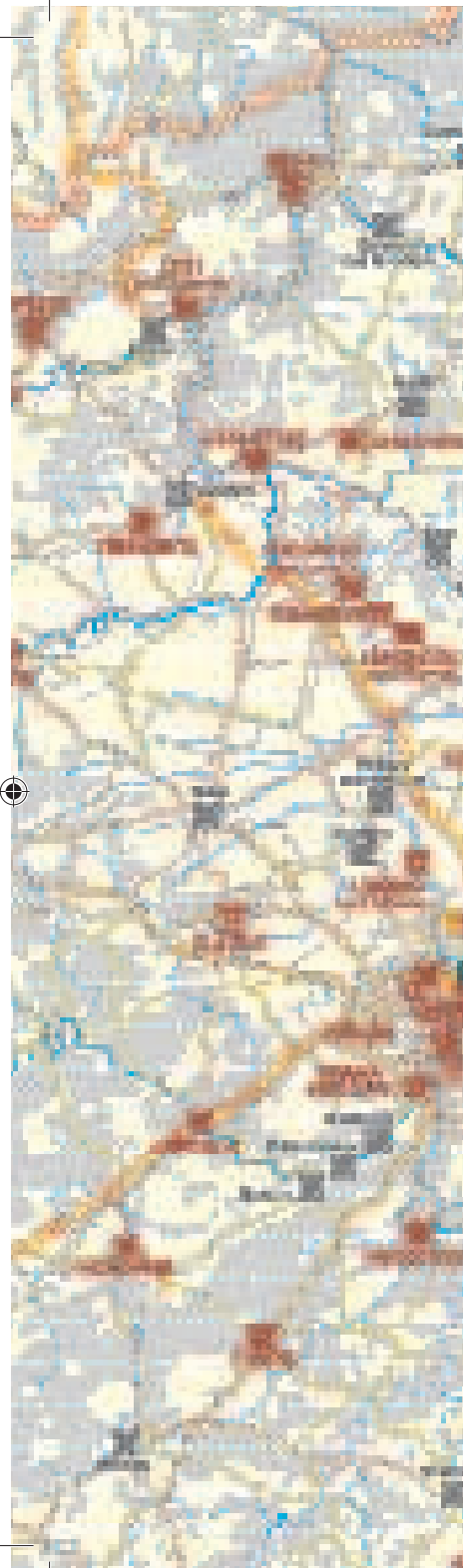
Today this Protestant Toleration complex is a protected site; an organ from 1873 is a special item on the list of the protected monuments. An educational route goes through the complex and there is a permanent exhibition of the Czech Reformation in the European context which was officially opened in May 2001 during the 11th Conference of the European Protestant Museums. On behalf of the Czech Republic this conference took place in Telč and in Velká Lhota.

The local educational route is linked with a tourist track “The Way of Waldensian and Czech Reformation”. Its middle part in the surroundings of Velká Lhota is already equipped with signs and information boards.



THE SOUTH MORAVIAN REGION





J The South Moravian Region covers the south-eastern part of the Czech Republic. There are 1,140,000 inhabitants living in the territory of 7,196 square kilometres. Its natural centre and a regional capital is Brno, the second biggest city in the Czech Republic. In the west the South Moravian Region borders on the Vysočina Region. In the south there is a border with the Austrian federal state of Lower Austria and with the Slovak Republic. The eastern border is shared by the Zlín Region and the Olomouc Region. Small part in the north borders on the Pardubice Region.

The South Moravian Region is administratively divided into seven districts: Blansko, Brno-City District, Brno-Country District, Břeclav, Hodonín, Vyškov and Znojmo. Sixty per cent of the total region area is covered by an agricultural land. The lowland to the south and east of Brno is a famous vine growing and folklore area. Vine has been growing here for a long time and local wine belong among the best in Europe. There are as well excellent conditions for fruit-growing, especially apricot and apple growing. But we can also find important industrial areas, especially near Brno, Blansko or Vyškov. In the district of Hodonín there are oil and natural gas fields.

The South Moravian Region is rich in the rivers. The Dyje river creates a border with Austria on its journey. The dam keeps its water under a magnificent castle Vranov nad Dyjí then the river continues through Dyje-Svratka Vale, then through Novomlýnské reservoirs and together with the river Svratka (which rises in Žďár Hills) the river Dyje flows into the River Morava. The River Svitava rises near a town Svitavy and it flows mainly in the direction to the south. It flows through Blansko and Brno and then it runs into the River Svratka.

The South Moravian Region is not only a lowland area; small parts of the Czech-Moravian Highlands reach this region. The Dražanská Highlands with a protected landscape area of the Moravian karst cave system (Moravský kras) is one of the most frequented tourist areas. Another famous tourist areas is for example Pálava. Near Znojmo there is a National Park Podyjí (area along the river Dyje). Villa Tugendhat in Brno and Lednice-Valtice area belong among the monuments listed in the UNESCO world cultural and natural heritage. Slavonic settlement in Mikulčice with a monument Great Moravia is also a national site. The South Moravian Region is rich in numerous towns with rare historical monuments as well as castles and chateaux, which we did not mention yet.

In this region the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) besides having four congregations in Brno has also its congregations in another 17 places. We cannot however introduce each of them to you; we hope you will be impressed by those which we chose for you.



BRNO-ŽIDENICE • BRNO-HUSOVICE

RED CHURCH



J Brno is the second largest town in the Czech Republic, it is an administration centre of the South Moravian Region and the whole Moravia. Until the year 1945 the whole one quarter of Brno citizens were of German nationality.

A favourable location on the confluence of the River Svitava and the River Svatka in the middle of the Brno Basin tempted for settlement. Already in the 8th century the Slavs came, at the beginning of the 12th century the first colonists appeared, especially from Germany but also from other places, the Jews also appeared. A royal town of Brno reached its biggest development during the 14th century when it became a seat of the Margraves of Moravia. It has its law-today we would say-organizational order. Many churches and monasteries were established here. Let us mention at least two of them: the oldest church in Brno with its foundations from the 12th century, late-Gothic Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul is a national cultural monument. In the 18th century the cathedral was altered in a Baroque style, the altar is pseudo-Gothic. It boasts about two 84 metres high towers. In the years 1904–1905 the church was rebuilt in a neo-Gothic style. The second most famous church is a late-Gothic Church of St. James in Rašín Street which stands on the place of the original parish church of a market settlement of the German and Flanders colonists from the 13th century.

From the wealth of the historical monuments we cannot forget Špilberk with a Baroque fortress which dominate the town. In its eastern wing we will find a Gothic palace of the royal castle from the end of the 13th century. Špilberk also became discredibly famous as a prison.

Eventful history of the Czech Lands during over the next centuries also touched Brno. At the time of the Hussite wars the town was on the side of king Sigismund, later Brno opposed George of Poděbrady who however settled the disputes thanks to his diplomatic abilities.

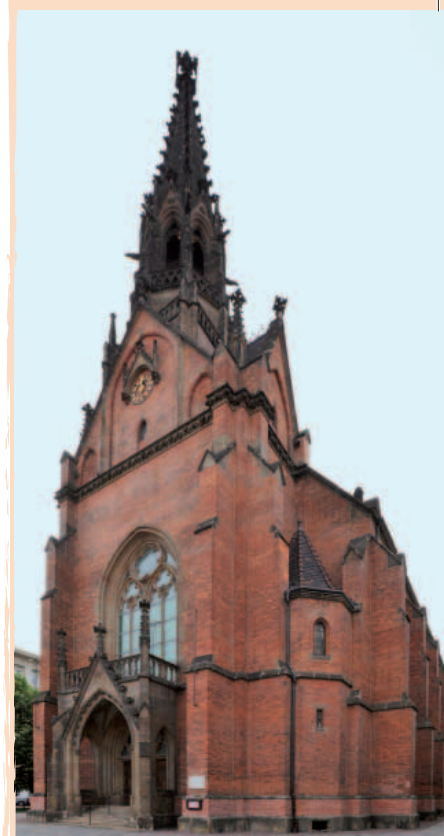
In the 16th century the teaching of Martin Luther appeared in Brno and was positively

accepted and spread quickly, especially among the German inhabitants, similarly as the teaching of Jan Kalvín was spreading quickly among the Czech Protestants.

Brno was a town of tolerance until an arrival of the Jesuits in the year 1572 and cardinal František of Dietrichštejn. They enforced Catholicism very strictly. After the Battle of the White Mountain the inhabitants of Brno were cruelly punished for supporting the revolt of the Estates in 1618. There were however no such executions as in Prague thanks to Karel Žerotín, snr. Although, he did not agree with the revolt of the Estates but he supported less strict punishment for the accused ones. The Restitution of the Land Order from the year 1627 meant the end of hopes of the Moravian Protestants for a return of a religious freedom. In the year 1630 a recatholization of Moravia was basically finished.

During the Thirty Years' War the town resisted the Swedish invasion and together with the whole country was going through the hard times of a long time religious oppression. The Toleration Patent brought at least partial religious freedom. At that time there was a development of industry, the first manufactories (it was especially fine cloth that was manufactured here) and the villagers, especially the Protestants were coming to towns. A new chapter of the town of Brno as a forming city and a metropolis of Moravia starts to be written.

The Germans living in Brno were happily accepting Luther's teaching; thanks to the understanding of a factory owner J. L. Koffler, an Augsburg congregation of the German Evangelical Church was established here. In the years 1863–1867 in a later Comenius Square a Neo-Gothic three-nave church was built. The church was built according to a design of Vienna architect Heinrich of Ferstel and its tower is 45 metres high. At that time the "red" Christ Church was the biggest Protestant construction in the Catholic countries. Inside, besides the impressive interior, worth noticing is also a marble pulpit and the organ from the year 1887.



RED CHURCH



BETHLEHEM CHURCH

BRNO-ŽIDENICE • BRNO-HUSOVICE

BRNO-ŽIDENICE



After World War II the red church in Comenius Square was entrusted to the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and together with the Bethlehem Church in Pellicova Street it serves to Brno I congregation. In Opletalova Street there is a congregation building which is partly used by one of Brno schools of the Evangelical Academy – Social-Law Academy. (the second Brno school is Secondary Medical School of EA in Brno-Líšeň).

Let us however return to the topic of the Czech Protestants in Brno. After a proclamation of the Toleration Patent there used to be a common worship with the German Protestants. Later the Czech Protestants of a reformed confession became a preaching station of a congregation in Nosislav and in the year 1906 an independent congregation was formed in Brno. At that time the Bethlehem Church in Pellicova Street was already built. The first worship in a Neo-Classical church with a unique entrance and spacious worship space took place on the 23rd of May 1895. The church and the rectory were seriously damaged at the end of the Second World War during Brno bombing.

The number of the Protestants in Brno was increasing and therefore already at the beginning of the 20th century it was decided to build a congregation house, similar to Hus House in Prague. The magnificent plans were interrupted by the First World War. Modern Blahoslav House was ceremonially opened on the 14th of December 1924 and it serves its purpose as the Brno II congregation until now. The House has many purposefully equipped halls and a worship room. There is also a possibility of accommodation (suitable also for students, soldiers, believers from the village). A residential house where ministers and other religious workers live is attached to the worship space.

In Brno-Židenice, in Konečného Street a congregation was established in 1929. Soon a live congregation started to consider building a church and thanks to the plans of a congregation member architect Miloslav Tejč and diligence of a builder Zukal as well as the congregation members, a spacious

functionalist church with a necessary facilities and with a rectory was opened on the 2nd of June 1935. Three bells (gift from congregation members) were hung in the tower. But just one of them was preserved...

Air attacks at the end of the Second World War however also hit the new church in Židenice. It was almost completely destroyed but thanks to the dedication of people it was consecrated again as early as on the 2nd of June 1946 and it has been maintained perfectly until now.

The fourth congregation in Brno-Husovice was formed in the year 1945 and it owns a congregation house in Netušilova Street. The congregation is young and it relies on a community of young families with children. In the garden of the house a log-cabin for children and youth was built. A regular cultural event "Yard of Husovice" with a vernissage of exhibitions and theatrical performances is held here. Bigbeat worship is as well very popular.

The Czechoslovak Hussite Church has several congregations in Brno: it is Hus congregation, a functionalist church from the year 1929 in Botanická Street and a church in Brno-Královo Pole, the first sacred constructivist building from the year 1925. There is a Church of the Saviour in Brno-Židenice.

The Church of the Brethren has its congregation in Kounicova Street. The house of prayer with a big and small hall was built in the years 1924–1925; another congregation is in Brno-Královo Pole. Brno-Betanie congregation belongs here, too.

The Jewish synagogue from the year 1885 was burned to ground already on the 16th of March 1939. The other synagogues did not survive the Second World War, either. Only a synagogue in Skořepka Street was renewed in the year 1945 and it serves to the worship purposes. It is the only live synagogue in the whole territory of Moravia and Silesia.

The Orthodox Church has been using St. Wenceslas' Church in Špilberk since 1931. Many other churches have also their tabernacles in Brno, the town of tolerance.



BRNO – ŽIDENICE



BRNO – HUSOVICE



BLAHOSLAV
HOUSE

HERŠPICE

HERŠPICE • ŠLAVKOV

J Heršpice, a little village in the South Moravian Region, is located only six kilometres from Slavkov, at the border of the Žďárnický Forest National Park, 281 metres above sea level. The village has the population of fewer than 600 people. In the 13th century Heršpice belonged to the Slavkov domain. In 1237 Václav I presented the Order of German Knights with it and in 1411 it became possession of Václav IV. From the early 16th century to 1919 the domain was owned by the Kounics whose most notable member V. A. Kounic, after being appointed a Chancellor by Marie Terezie, was influencing Austrian foreign policy for forty years. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, Dr Václav Duke Kounic built hostels for students in Brno. The hostels became famous during German occupation as a gestapo prison and its torture and execution place.

Close to Heršpice, you can find the remnants of Konůvky which was a medieval village supposed to have been destroyed in 1468 during a campaign of the Hungarian army against George of Poděbrady. In the house No. 45 Franz Joseph I, the Austrian Emperor met the Russian Czar Alexander II before the Battle of Slavkov in 1805. There is a Roman Catholic St. Matthew's Chapel from 1870 in Heršpice.

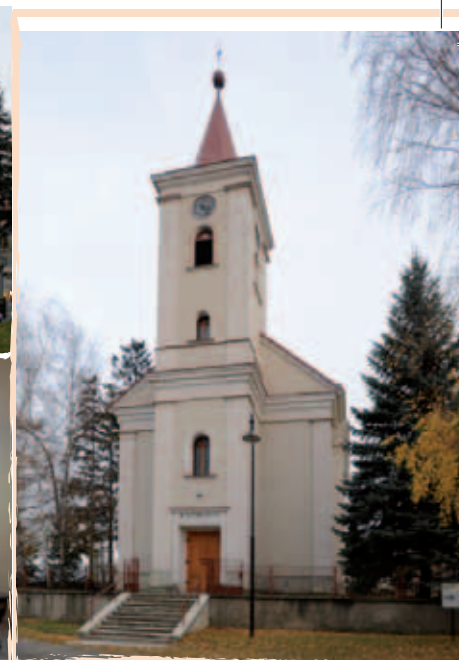
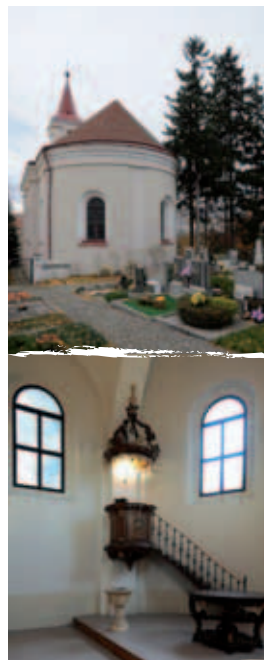
The Protestant church with its tower visible from afar dominates the village. History of the congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Heršpice is connected with the history of reformation movement in the Slavkov area. Members of the Unity of Brethren were working here in the 16th century and until 1622, they were a majority together with other Protestants. After the lost Battle of the White Mountain, though, no other religion except for Catholic was permitted and secret Protestants met in "a prayer valley". When revealed, they were severely punished and many of them forced to leave their homes where they never returned again.

After the Toleration Patent was proclaimed, the Protestants started to meet in Heršpice. At first, they attended the Klobouky congrega-

tion – the worn "Helvetic pavement" is recalled up to these days. After lots of delay, an independent congregation was established in 1870. Protestants in Heršpice started to build their own church in 1864. The building, not amenable to reform law, was consecrated five years later, then its tower was erected in 1899. The large, light, one-nave church with a valuable organ has been repaired several times but the biggest restoration was done in the 1990^s. The rectory dating back to 1874 was later rebuilt to get its present look. There is also a Protestant cemetery which is a part of the whole complex.

The local Protestant congregation experienced a great event on the 31st of August 1880 when it was joined by professor T. G. Masaryk.

The Heršpice congregation also has a preaching station in Slavkov in a nice little functionalist chapel near the local castle.



HERŠPICE

SLAVKOV



JAVORNÍK NAD VELIČKOU



J At the edge of the protected landscape area of the White Carpathians, south of Velká nad Veličkou, there lies Javorník nad Veličkou, a municipality of the Hornácko Region (345 metres above sea level, 726 inhabitants). The name of the village is said to be derived from a word “maple trees” which used to be found here in a big number. The first record of the municipality dates back to the year 1350. According to the preserved records, in the 16th century almost the whole municipality was Protestant. The big fire in the year 1856 destroyed also the Protestant church. The municipality was as well affected by the floods and war events. Nowadays, Javorník is a place with a long and still alive tradition of folk art. The embroideries and local costumes are particularly amazing. We will also find here typical buildings in the place called “Kopánky” as well as nice old haylofts.

A nearby hill of Hradisko (636 metres) used to be a fort at the end of the first millenium-nowadays, there are only ramparts which remained. A National natural reservation Jazevčí is also worth mentioning-it is a unique meadow complex with rare kinds of plants. In the year 2009 a look-out tower Drahy was built on the base of a common Czech-Slovak project supported by the European Union which is located in the area of the White Carpathians and is 20 metres high.

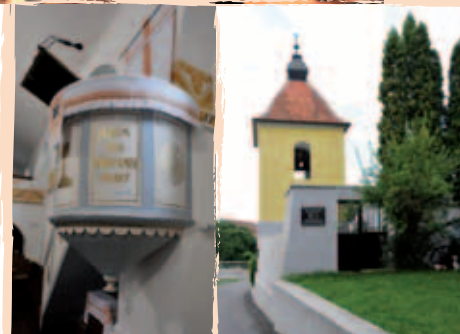
The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren congregation in Javorník nad Veličkou has kept its intact Czech Brethren tradition from the Reformation period. At the end of the 15th century the Czech Brethren established their congregations here and in a nearby Hrubá Vrbka. In Velká nad Veličkou there was also a congregation and a Brethren house. After the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 there was an intensive persecution of the non-Catholics also in this area. Majtán's mill in Javorník was a place where the Protestants had their secret meetings. The Toleration Patent was accepted with a big pleasure. The inhabitants of Javorník joined the Reformed confession; after the arrival of preacher Štěpán Breznay, in the year 1782 the congregation was established and already on

the 27th of July 1783 a house of prayer was consecrated. A typical toleration house of prayer without a tower was equipped with a pulpit, Lord's table and benches in rows around it. This equipment was in the line with the customs of the Reformed confession.

Unusual but typical decoration of the house of prayer is a cover of the Lord's table and curtain above the pulpit, both with beautiful embroideries. Eventhough, the house of prayer was later damaged by fires and floods, it was always repaired into its original condition. The walls of the house of prayer also look like white and yellow embroidery. The main entrance is built in the front wall and above it there is a Biblical verse “Come to Me All”. There is also a symbol of a Bible and a chalice. In later years the galleries were added; the organ comes from the year 1881. The rectory near the house of prayer was built as late as after World War II. The original one was taken away by the floods and the other one was hit by a mine during the hard war years.

The congregation also owns a congregation house and it looks after all the buildings with care and attention. The interesting site in Javorník is a Protestant cemetery which was used until the middle of the last century. In its vicinity there is a belfry from the year 1733 which was replacing a church tower; it was not allowed for the Toleration houses of prayer to have a tower. At the same time the belfry was used as an entrance to the cemetery.

We will also mention Hrubá Vrbka, another municipality of the Hornácko Region which has a strong Reformation Protestant tradition. After the declaration of the Toleration Patent the local Protestants joined the Augsburg confession, in the year 1782 the first worship took place and already a year later the first Toleration house of prayer was built. The new house of prayer, still following the Toleration regulations, was built in the year 1830 and only during repairs in the 1940s a four-sided clock tower was added. Today, congregations in Hrubá Vrbka and in Velká nad Veličkou form a double congregation.



RECTORY BUILDING



KĽOBOUKY U BRNA



J Klobouky u Brna is located in the valley of the Klobouky Brook, in a pleasant, slightly downy countryside of vineyards, fields and extensive forests, 228 metres above sea level, with the population of 2,200 people, many of them commuting to Brno, 30 km distant from here.

The place was first mentioned in the late 12th century. In 1298, it was raised from the village to a small town by Václav I. There is a Renaissance castle here dating back to the late 16th century, later rebuilt in a Baroque style, nowadays a town museum and an office of the village administration. The Roman Catholic church is dedicated to St. Lawrence. The Baroque chapel of St. Barbara was built in 1669.

Evangelicalism has had an unshakable tradition in Klobouky and its neighbourhood. Protestants used to be a majority here in the 16th and 17th century, later, after the Battle of the White Mountain, the situation changed violently, their ancestors' belief, though, was not been eradicated completely and soon, after the Toleration Patent was issued, first families chose a reformed confession. The congregation was established in 1782. The first gatherings were held in a barn and it was very difficult to find a place for a house of prayer. Eventually, in 1786, the emperor provided the Protestants of Klobouky with building where barrels were made (it was called "a coopery") to change it into the first chapel which was not – despite numerous adjustments – very convenient.

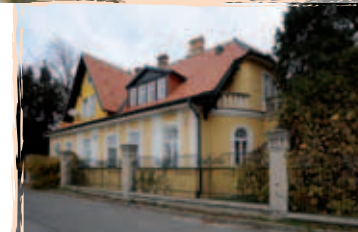
When issued, the Protestant Patent brought religious relief. People in Klobouky dealt with the new situation in their own way: first they built a brick tower in 1861. Their decision to build a church did not come until 1882 when the foundation stone was laid. The Neo-Classical church, built according to Antonín Strnad's architectural plan, was annexed to the front tower. The church was consecrated on the 4th of November 1883. Its front wall with the Lord's table, pulpit and choir loft with a valuable organ draws attention immediately. The combination of wooden and metal units (cast-iron columns

carrying longitudinal galleries, circular stairs to the choir lofts, ornamental railings etc.) is very interesting, too. Experts mention an unusual construction of a vaulted ceiling and a walled-up steel frame.

The ornamental wall of window-panes with Biblical motives situated under the gallery at the entrance has a very attractive design and helps make the place warmer.

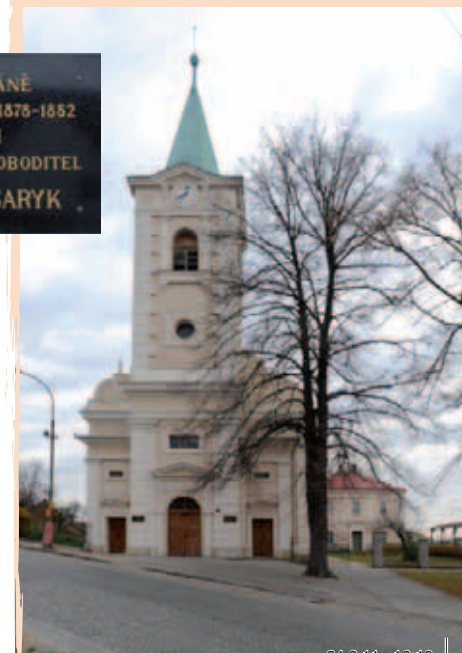
Along with the church also the rectory was built and it still serves until now. In 1990, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren decided to build "the Bethlehem", a centre of their Diaconia near the church. The centre was made in a house which was returned to the congregation in a restitution. Brumovice, one of the preaching stations of the Klobouky congregation, is a place where members of the Unity of Brethren lived in the 16th century and where Jan Herben, a writer, was born.

One of the most famous members of the Klobouky congregation was Dr. Ferdinand Císař, a rector and later superintendent who used to host T. G. Masaryk who was persuaded by the emperor to join the reformed church. In 2008, the Klobouky congregation celebrated the 125th anniversary of their church construction.



BETHELEHEM

V TOMTO CHRAMU PÁNĚ
SE ÚČASTNIL V LETECH 1878-1882
SLUŽEB BOŽÍCH
POZDĚJŠÍ PRESIDENT OSVOBODITEL
DR. TOMAŠ G. MASARYK



MIROSLAV

J Grapevine and apricots distinguish the area where Miroslav (240 metres above sea level, 3,000 inhabitants) lies less than 50 km from Brno. Even the very first documents mentioning Miroslav describe vineyards: in 1222, Přemysl Otakar I issued a deed about a wine tithe to Benedictines in Rajhrad. Weinperky, from where wine was transported to Vienna in the Middle Ages, are the most famous vineyard route in Miroslav. The local vineyards produce top-quality wine even today. There used to be a water fortress in the village in Gothic times, converted into a Renaissance castle by its owners, the Valecký of Mírov family, in the middle of the 16th century. And it was then that Miroslav was proclaimed a small town (and in 1965, it received the status of a town). Since long ago, both the Czechs and the Germans have lived together in Miroslav. In the 15th century when the Jews were driven out from Brno and Znojmo, a quite strong Jewish community was established here. The castle had different owners very often and, as well as the whole town, it suffered a lot during the Thirty Years' War, falling into disrepair eventually.

The St. Peter's and St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church from 1729 belong to the significant Baroque sights. The town hall was built at the beginning of World War I. During World War II, Miroslav was a part of the German Empire. At the end of the war, the town was bombed and the castle damaged. A mass transfer of population followed. German citizens were forced to leave. The Jewish community disapper, nobody returned. People from Bohemia and various parts of Moravia and Slovakia started moving to Miroslav, especially those from villages flooded during the construction of the Vírská Dam.

Nowadays Miroslav is a lively and hospitable village. Costumed feasts, fairs, traditional tastings and apricot-harvest festivals are given here. The Jewish cemetery which survived was in a very bad condition. However, young volunteers from different countries have helped to

restore it and it is looked after very carefully now. Hopefully, there are better times to come for the castle, too.

The history of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Miroslav dates back to the 19th century. At the time after the Toleration Patent was issued, local Protestants belonged to the Nosislav congregation, and an independent congregation was not founded until 1850.

The house of prayer, one of the last ones built according to the toleration rules valid in those days, was placed on the hill-top outside the village. The spacy Neo-Classical house of prayer with historicist elements was extended later, but did not change too much over the years. However, all necessary repairs were done. A tower was not added to the house of prayer anymore. Its front part is decorated with columns and a window was made above the entrance. A tall big birch tree, growing in the well-cultivated garden, partly shades the face of the building.

The rectory was built by the roadside in 1851. Getting its final look later, it is both a place for the congregation activities and a preacher's house. The preaching station in the village of Bohutice deserves to be mentioned, too: a small functionalist church built in 1935 has become a protected site.



AVTOSLAV

J Nosislav lies south of Brno, on the river Svatka, just a few kilometres from Židlochovice and 186 metres above sea level and has a population of 1,200 people. Fertile countryside verges from Ždánický Forest into the Dyje-Svatka Vale. The region abounds in vineyards and there are large plantations with apricot and apple trees.

The very first records about Nosislav date back to 1278 when it was a part of Židlochovice domain. Later it was owned by the Žerotíns. All the area professed the Utraquist faith, members of the Unity of Brethren were very active here from the middle of the 15th century. There used to be a late Gothic water citadel of which only a part of a dwelling-house and remains of a moat have survived till these days. Nosislav received the status of a little town in 1486. After the Battle of the White Mountain, Roman Catholic priests were instituted to Židlochovice and Nosislav. During the Thirty Years' War, the town underwent a lot of suffering and almost all local people died. The St. Jacob's Church from the 16th century was allegedly built on the place where a Romanesque building used to stand. It burnt down in 1643. Poverty and suffering kept tormenting Nosislav in the 18th century, too.

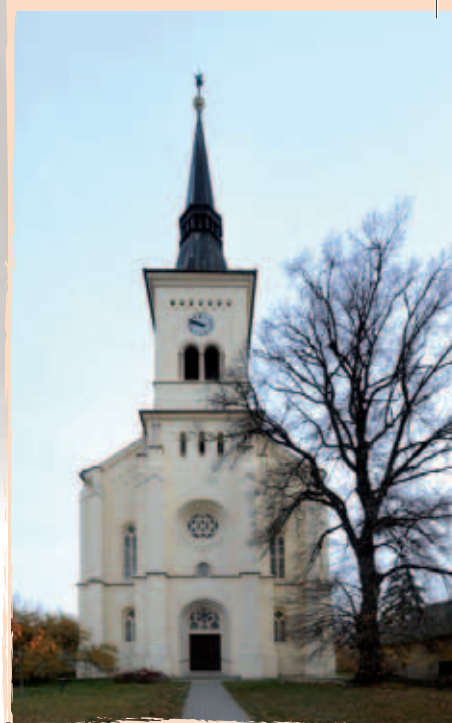
The 19th century passed, followed by the period of the Czechoslovak Republic. A short relief after World War II was followed by the hard times which the communist regime brought, especially to rural areas: forced collectivization along with harmful interventions in nature.

In spite of all difficulties, the Protestant tradition of the region was not forgotten. Secret Protestants wanted to establish their Reformed

congregation already in 1781 but officially it was formed a year later in 1782. In the beginning, Protestants from Miroslav and nearby villages were coming to Nosislav. Brno had also been its filial congregation, before an independent congregation was established there in 1906.

The first house of prayer was built between 1782 to 1783 and was used by the congregation for a long time before the decision on building a new church free from the toleration restrictions came in 1872. It was constructed according to František Schmoranz's architectural design on a piece of land opposite the rectory. The three-
 nave Neo-Romanesque church with a quadrilateral tower was finished in four years and has become an important building for the whole congregation. The Nosislav congregation built also a rectory, reconstructed in the 1960^s when it got its present look.

Hus House, another building important for the Nosislav congregation, was built in 1913 and modernized recently. Its prayer hall, the youthclub room as well as the garden behind the house are all used by the congregation now. Range of events, organized here by the congregation members, are popular with inhabitants of Nosislav and frequently attended.



VANOVICE



J The village of Vanovice is located seven kilometres north of Boskovice, in the region called Malá Haná, 430 metres above sea level. Eastwards, there is the Dražanská Highlands tip. The place with the population of over 500 people now was first mentioned in a deed of King Vladislav II in 1176. The history of Vanovice commemorates the originally Gothic St. Wenceslas' Church from the 15th century which used to be a fort in the past. From 1540 till the Battle of the White Mountain, it belonged to the Protestants, living in the area in large numbers, but in 1622 it was taken over by the Catholics. The church burnt out in the late 17th century and was restored later.

Vanovice is dominated by a Protestant church with two towers. When the Toleration Patent was issued, the Protestants quickly started to choose the Reformed confession – it was 35 families in Vanovice. In 1783 a congregation was officially established as well as the first house of prayer, “poor, shabby, made in haste”, opened in February 1783. Soon it became insufficient. The demand for building a new house of prayer came in 1826, the construction itself, though, despite of numerous interventions, was delayed by authorities and was not allowed to start until 1839. It took five years to build this monumental house of prayer. Its consecration on the 11th of August 1844 became a great Protestant event. The house of prayer, though, lacked towers. They could not be built until the Protestant Patent was issued – then two were

annexed to the Neo-Romanesque house of prayer. Since it was not possible to provide the church with bells, a special device started being used instead from 1843 – it consisted of three steel horseshoe bars hit by wooden mauls. The rectory was built and later repaired simultaneously with the original house of prayer.

The nearby town of Boskovice, in spite of its Protestant tradition, used to be a mere preaching station of Vanovice from 1924. Its members went regularly to the Vanovice church regardless the distance. Despite this and thanks to both Kamil Nagy, a Vanovice minister, supporting the effort to build their own church, as well as due to the courage of the members of the Boskovice preaching station, the church began to be built according to Karel Fabiánek's project in the war year of 1940. This functionalist church was opened on the 29th of June, 1941 when the ceremonial worship was served here in the presence of prominent representatives of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. Eleven years later, the independent congregation was established on the 1st of April, 1952.

Boskovice is an interesting town with many historical sights. The Protestant church is definitely worth seeing – it has been listed among cultural monuments since 1997.



RECTORY BUILDING



THE BRETHREN CHURCH

BRNO – KOUNICOVA STREET

J Until recently, the house of prayer of the Brethren Church in Kounicova Street in Brno was quite difficult to find. In contrast to other Brno churches, it cannot be seen at first sight since it is hidden behind a residential house. The house of prayer is built in the courtyard of the house and it is accessible only by the archway going through the house. The gate of the archway has been renovated recently and a cedar crucifix hung over letting visitors know that there is a tabernacle here.

History of the Brno congregation dates back to the 19th century, having its roots in missionary work of Henry A. Schauffler who lived there in 1875–1881. At that time, a new Church was established called the Free Reformed Church (later it changed its name twice: to Unity of Czech Brethren in 1919 and finally to the Brethren Church in 1967) and was joined by the people who he taught. In 1908, at the time of Schauffler's successor – the preacher Josef Kostomlatský, this group became an independent congregation. After his death, the congregation split into two parts in 1918, continuing meeting in two different places: Nové Sady and Nový Lískovec. The Lískovec group joined by people from Bohumilice, Nosislav and Slavkov established a new congregation on the 23rd of March, 1919.

It was difficult, however, to find a place for their gatherings. After several years when they were borrowing rooms at schools in Koliště and Na rejdišti from the town, they finally excepted the offer to buy an old house in Kounicova Street in 1925. Money started to be collected immediately to build a house of prayer. František Uherka, a member of the congregation, was entrusted with the project. The foundation stone of the building was laid in June 1925 on a free space in the house courtyard and the house of prayer was opened for the public on the 19th of September, 1926.

The building was designed to have three floors and an attic. All facilities are placed on the ground floor, the main hall, foyer and a rec-

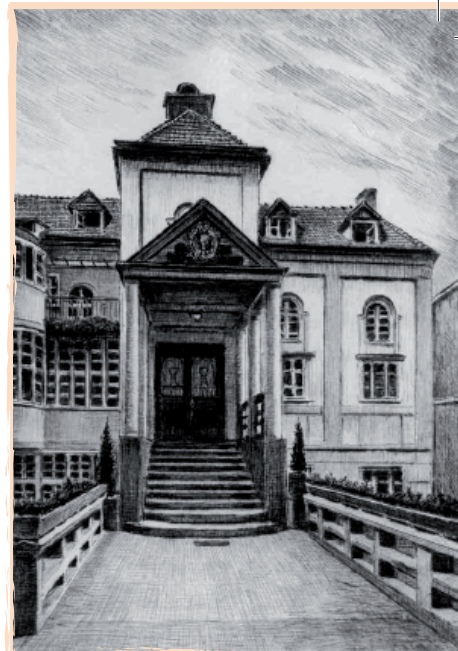
tor's office is on the first floor. On the second floor, there is a gallery seating 58 people.

A lot of construction work was done both inside and outside the house of prayer in 1967. Ground of the yard in front of the building was raised to the level of the access bridge which lost its importance and therefore was removed. A side hall (Karpíšek Hall) and a south wing were annexed to the house of prayer. Finally, as mentioned above, the archway gate was changed and a cedar crucifix placed on the facade of the front house in 2010.

A visitor's eye is immediately caught by the pseudo-Classicist stoa protecting the main staircase of the house of prayer. A plastic of the chalice in the crown of thorns with the opened Bible behind is placed in its triangular tympanum. The letters A and Ω and the sign "Truth Wins" are written at the bottom of the picture. The entrance door is decorated with two forged chalices.

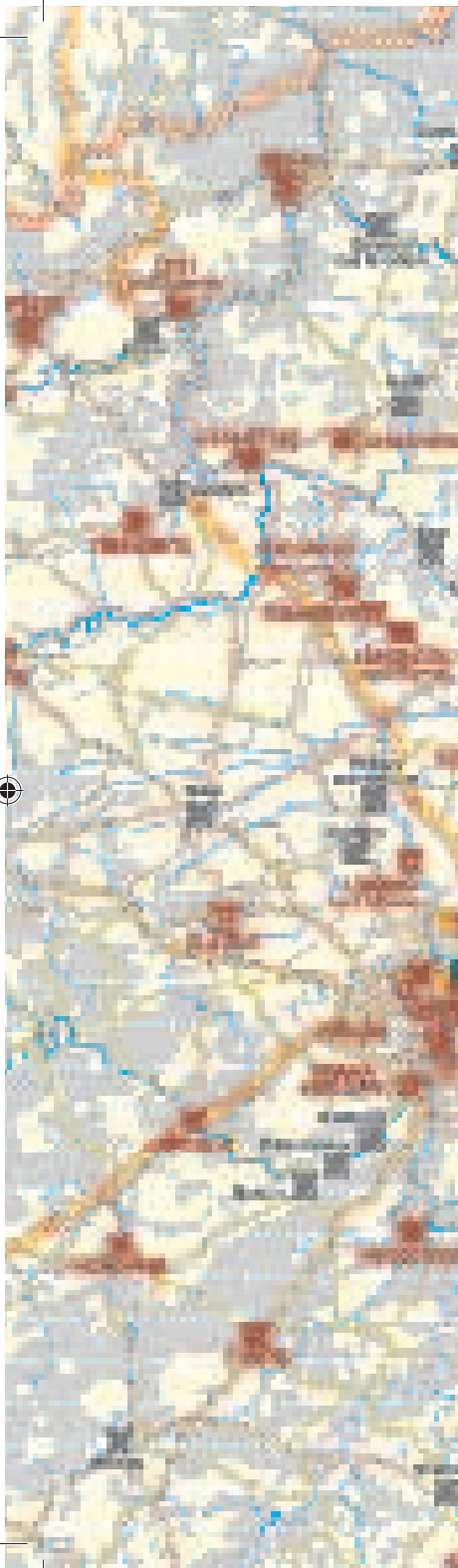
The main rectangular hall with its temperate decoration has a simple wooden crucifix hung in the centre of its front wall, to which the crown of thorns or colour fabric are being added in the course of the ecclesiastical year. Under the right arm of the crucifix, there is a Bible motto: "Don't Fear, Just Believe." On the lifted stepped platform, there is an original wooden pulpit from the 1920^s. Pews in the main hall are also original, dating back to the time the house of prayer was opened. The whistle organ made in the 1980^s and placed on the right side of the hall is remarkable, too.

The Brno congregation house of prayer with its large capacity and good facilities has become a widely popular place where various conferences and worship broadcast by radio and TV are held.



THE KARLOVY VARY (CARLSBAD) REGION





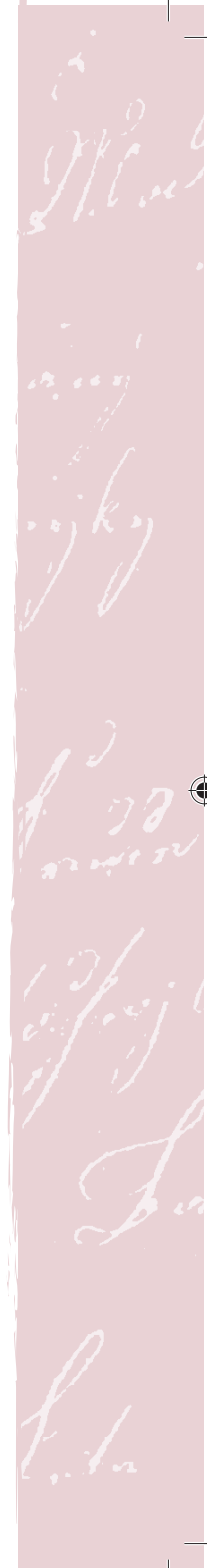
K The Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) Region is situated on the western border of the Czech Republic. Border with the Federal German State of Saxony is formed by the Krušné hory (the Ore Mountains) with the highest mountain Klínovec (1,244 m). Aš westernmost tip is wedged between Saxony and the Federal German State of Bavaria. There is the river Ohře flowing from the west to the east.

It is our third smallest region: its area is 3,314 square km and its population is approximately 315,300 inhabitants. Its history is as in other border regions marked by centuries of coexistence of the Czech and German population (some areas were mostly German), by war events and by the departure of Germans after World War II. New residents began to build a diverse communities; they were however as well influenced by further historical development.

Natural beauties are definitely not missing in the region. For example: the Krušné hory with the highest located town in the country called Boží Dar (God's Gift) and with many opportunities for summer and winter recreation; natural reservation area Slavkovský Forest, fortunately untouched by coal mining, unlike especially the area around Sokolov. Smrčiny Hills dominate the area of Aš tip.

The treasure of the Carlsbad Region is the spa. The unique spa triangle – Carlsbad, Františkovy Lázně and Mariánské Lázně- is registered as a candidate for entry into the UNESCO World Heritage List. Noteworthy is also the town of Kraslice and Luby which have a long tradition in manufacturing of musical instruments. In each of these three districts (Cheb, Carlsbad and Sokolov) we can find besides the natural beauties also stories of a rich past. But it is also a region that lives in the present and that has good prospect for future.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has its congregations in Aš, Horní Slavkov, Cheb, Chodov, Carlsbad, Mariánské Lázně, Nejdek, Ostrov nad Ohří, Sokolov and in Teplá. It may seem strange for you that we are not inviting you to Carlsbad. There is certainly no extra need to introduce this town. The world famous spa with many historical monuments but especially with healing water and a legendary thermal spring will impress every visitor. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has also its congregation in Carlsbad where you are warmly welcome – its residence is a congregation house in a spa quarter. This house however does not have much to do with the Reformation heritage. You will certainly find the way to Carlsbad by yourselves. But we will introduce some preaching stations to you, the churches of which have a great historical value.





KIn Aš tip, the westernmost part of the Czech Republic, near Smrčiny Hills there lies a town of Aš (666 metres above sea level, 13,420 inhabitants). It is surrounded by the German Federal States, Saxony and Bavaria. Hill Háj (757 m) with a view tower is a popular place for walks.

The first written records come from the year 1270. King Sigismund gave Aš region to Zedwitz family in 1422. This was important in matters of religion in this region (the counter-Reformation was not carried out so hard), and therefore the religious monument treasures could appear here – Baroque churches in a Protestant Baroque style. Only in 1775 Aš region was attached to Bohemia. Later there was a great development of the textile industry. In the late 1930's German population strongly supported Henlein movement so that most Czech families had to leave the town. After World War II (Aš was liberated by the Americans in 1945) it was the German inhabitants for a change who left the town, including the Lutherans, the descendants of the Protestants who already in 1622 built the Church of the Holy Trinity. In its place a new church with three galleries and a remarkable altar was built in 1749. Up to 2,500 people could gather here.

After World War II the Church of the Holy Trinity, the most valuable religious building not only in Aš but in the whole western Bohemia region was given to the congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) for using. During its repairs in January 1960 the church burnt to the ground. Only a memorial of Martin Luther from 1883 survived. These days the whole place is piously maintained.

The Protestant church in Hranice which is under the congregation in Aš comes from the year 1682. At that time one-nave Baroque-Classical church was built here, in 1719 it was rebuilt into its current form. Inside of the church there is a Baroque altar by M. Zeitler; a pulpit was built over the altar. Baptistry dates back to the year 1763. Equally massive church tower as in Hranice can be as well found in Podhradí.

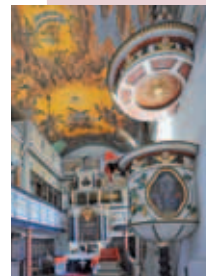
Also a tower of a burned church in Aš was built in the same way. Modern rectory from the twenties of the 20th century serves as a chapel in winter. The church is used for worship in the summer months.

Few people know that in a tiny village of Podhradí, distant 5km from Aš, there is another rare building of the German Protestant Baroque-Church of the Good Shepherd. The original church was built in the late 15th century, in the years 1678–1712 it was rebuilt into the present form. From outside it is a Baroque-Classical church with a strong tower. An amazing sight however awaits the visitors inside: not only painted wooden galleries and a choir, painted ceiling but also wooden benches from the end of the 16th century which are painted at their sides. Altar made by M. Zeitler dates back to the year 1710. Not for nothing the Church of the Good Shepherd is a protected site and its visit is for sure recommended. From Easter to Christmas there is a religious service in the German language.

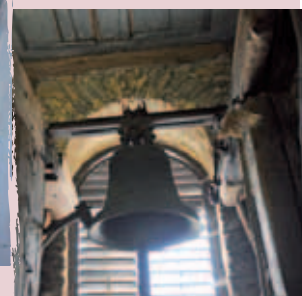
Aš congregation also takes care of one more important religious building: it is a church in Mokřiny, built by a famous German architect Otto Bartning in 1914 in a style of German Art Nouveau. After World War II the church was in a deplorable condition. Thanks to the collections within the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and foreign financial assistance the church was restored in the 90's of the 20th century. Also here as well as in Podhradí there is a worship in the German language from spring to winter.



AŠ



PODHRADÍ



HRANICE



MOKŘINY



ČHEB • FRANTIŠKOVY LÁZNĚ • PLESNÁ

FRANTIŠKOVY LÁZNĚ

K Historic Town Reserve Cheb (459 metres above sea level, approx. 35,000 inhabitants) lies on the river Ohře near the border with Germany. It was founded in 1204 and since 1322 it is a part of the Czech state. At the time of the Hussite wars the town supported Emperor Sigismund. In 1432 there was an important event in Cheb – legates of the Basel Council met here with the leading representatives of the Hussites. Their negotiations resulted in an agreement of 18 May 1432 which was called “Cheb Judge”. This agreement ensured the safety of the Hussites on the way to Basel and free defence of Prague’s four Articles at the Council of Basel. Only the law of God which was followed by the early Church should have been recognized as the most fair judge. This major concession of the official church-to deal with “heretics” in Basel on the basis of equality, was a victory for the Czech Reformation which for the time being prevented fragmentation of the Western Church. Thirty Years’ War also affected the history of Cheb. On 25th February 1634 commander Albrecht of Wallenstein was assassinated here.

There are a lot of historical monuments in the town and they will surely become an aim of the eager visitors. We can find here remains of the Romanesque castle from the end of the 12th century with the Black Tower. The Church of St. Nicholas also dates back to the Romanesque period; its towers have been partly preserved. The church was rebuilt in the 15th century in a Gothic style; both towers were repeatedly damaged over the years and only in 2008 they received a definite pseudo-Gothic appearance. Lovely “Špalíček” in King of Poděbrady Square is formed by a block of eleven half-timbered medieval merchants’ houses.

At the beginning of the 20th century Cheb is becoming an industrial town and an important railway junction. Munich Agreement from the year 1938 and the situation in the border forced the Czech residents to leave Cheb which was predominantly a German town at that time. After World War II it was for a change the German population who had to leave Cheb. After the war a newly formed congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) including the Protestant newcomers from various parts of Czechoslovakia and from abroad started to use a church and a

rectory after the German Evangelical Church. This church was built in a pseudo-Gothic style according to the project of Cheb architect A. Haberzettl from the year 1871. Preaching stations in Františkovy Lázně and in Plesná also belong to the congregation in Cheb.

Františkovy Lázně is a Historic Town Reserve. It lies at an altitude of 442 metres and has about 5,500 inhabitants. Together with Mariánské Lázně and Karlovy Vary it forms a world-famous spa triangle.

Mineral springs and their healing effects were known here already in the Middle Ages. The spa was founded in 1793. Emperor Francis Joseph I declared it a town and gave it his name. Františkovy Lázně was built in an early Classicist style. The streets are running in the direction of the oldest spring, the Francis Spring. Simultaneously with the town also the parks in the English style were being built. Another springs are as well used for spa treatment. In the past the spa was visited by many prominent personalities. A municipal theatre is named after a writer Božena Němcová.

There is an Empire Roman Catholic Church of the Elevation of the Holy Cross in the town which comes from the beginning of the 19th century. Protestant three-nave Church of St. Peter and St. Paul was built in 1880 in a neo-Romanesque style according to the project of Cheb architect A. Haberzettl. The church serves the Czech Protestants and also the spa guests from abroad. Religious service is held here regularly in the Czech and German language.

In Plesná, a village near a small German town Bad Brambach we will find a Baroque Roman Catholic church from the year 1849 which was rebuilt in an Empire style.

Local Protestant church was built in the years 1847–1849. It is a building in a neo-Classicist style. Inside we will find a valuable Baroque altar with images of Christ on the Mount of Olives and the Last Supper of the Lord and a pseudo-Gothic font. In the church there is also an organ which is on the list of protected objects. The church is mentioned in connection with Gustav-Adolf’s Club in Germany. This Club supports Protestant minorities and repairs and construction of churches in various countries including the Czech Republic.

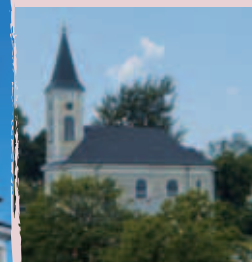
In the church in Plesná a worship takes place only occasionally.



CHEB



FRANTIŠKOVY
LÁZNĚ



PLESNÁ

MARIÁNSKÉ LÁZNĚ

K The spa town of Mariánské Lázně lies in the Southern part of a Nature Reserve Slavkovský Forest at an altitude of 630 metres above sea level, with 15,000 inhabitants. Its history-unlike other towns- does not date back to the late past. Local springs were known already in the 16th century but only at the beginning of the 19th century they began to be intensively developed. This was thanks to dr. J. J. Nehr who was the first one to analyse chemical composition of the springs but especially thanks to an Abbot of Teplá Monastery, K. Reitenberger who initiated the establishment of the settlement and supported its development. The first spa house was built in 1808. The town was built according to a well-thought-out plan of architect Václav Skalník who established a large English park. In 1866 Mariánské Lázně has been declared a town and more and more guests were using the spa springs. We can see here the traces of some significant European personalities such as the English king Edward VII, famous poets and composers of that time. Our first two presidents T. G. Masaryk and E. Beneš also liked to visit this spa.

Mariánské Lázně reached its highest development at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. Houses and spa buildings in a historicist style were surrounded by parks. Spa colonnade comes from the second half of the 19th century. We should also mention the churches: Neo-Byzantine Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Virgin, Anglican and Russian Orthodox Church of St. Vladimir. The Jewish synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis during the “crystal night” in 1938. Empty space where the synagogue originally lay is now piously maintained.

In the thirties of the last century the same history as in other border towns with the German population majority was as well repeated in Mariánské Lázně: Munich Agreement, land occupation, fanatic belief of the local inhabitants in Adolf Hitler. The end of World War II had hard consequences for the local Germans. They had to leave. After 1945 new residents came to the town and its life gradually revived.

Nowadays, Mariánské Lázně is an important and beautiful town in the middle of the parks

with a remarkable “Singing Fountain”. Since 1992 Mariánské Lázně is an urban protected area.

After World War II many Protestants from the whole Czechoslovakia, but also reimmigrants from Silesian Husinec and Polish Zelow came to Mariánské Lázně. On 1st July 1947 a congregation was established here, its first minister and later a Senior became dr. Jiří Otter. The Protestant repatriots from Silesia established a live preaching station in Tři Sekery, the repatriots from Zelow settled in Teplá where an independent congregation was as well established in 1952.

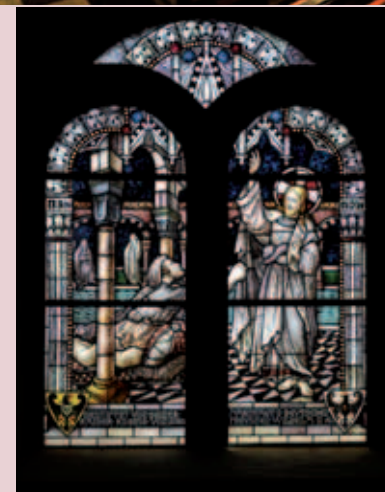
The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) took over the church after the German Evangelical Church as well as a Neo-Classical rectory from 1888. In 1857 an interesting Jesus Church was built in a Neo-Romanesque style and its construction was supported (and later the church was also owned) by the German king Frederick William IV. The side wall of the three-nave church is facing the street front. It does not have a tower, just a little bell tower. Inside we will be impressed by a picture of blessing Jesus Christ with a chalice in his left hand. An author of the picture which is situated in the front above the Lord's table is Jan Bochenek who was born in Hlučín. The stained-glass windows make the interior of a church very impressive. Their common motive (in connection with spa) is water. They represent biblical stories: dialogue of Jesus Christ with Nicodemus (John's Gospel 3,1-15) and with a lady from Samara (John 4, 5-29), the picture on the last stained-window represents a story of recovery near a pond Bethesda (John 5, 1-9).

Both congregation buildings are carefully maintained. In the year of 2007 the congregation members together with numerous domestic and foreign guests commemorated with gratitude 150 years since the building of Jesus Church which serves the believers until now.



CONGREGATION HOUSE

CHURCH



NEJDEK

NEJDEK • JÁCHYMOV

K The town of Nejdek (560 metres above sea level; 8,500 inhabitants) near Carlsbad is situated in the valley of a small river Rolava, surrounded by high hills with forest slopes. Until 1945 it was predominantly a German town. It was already noted in the 13th century as a mining settlement. Tin was mined here, and later iron. The village reached its highest development in the 14th to 16th century, later the mining activity declined. Then the local people made their living by making bobbin lace; in the 19th century a spinning mill of worsted yarn and ironworks were built here.

By building a railway line from Carlsbad to Saxony in 1899 Nejdek region became a very attractive tourist area. It is worth noticing 24 metres high stone view tower on Tisovský hill or a view tower on Plešivec. There are a lot of interesting historical monuments in the town. On a rocky promontory surrounded by the river Rolava there is a Romanesque-Gothic tower, perhaps the rest of the castle from the 13th century, with a rare Renaissance bell from 1579. In a Baroque Church of St. Martin from the second half of the 18th century we can see valuable woodcarvings on the side altars. In the second half of the 19th century the stations of the Cross leading through the forest park with beautiful views were built in the hill above Nejdek. In the main square our attention will be attracted by a modern fountain Rolávka which was designed by architect R. Kautský and which describes the story of the Rolava river.

The congregation of the German Evangelical Church was established in Nejdek in 1922. However, the German Lutherans have already been gathering since 1873 and soon they began to consider the construction of a church. On a hill above the town a foundation stone of a church according to the project of Leipzig architect J. Zeissig was laid in 1903. Already in 1904 it was consecrated and until now it is one of the town's dominating features. The stone fair-faced church in a Neo-Gothic style

has a special double tower. Apse is decorated by two stained-glass windows representing St. Peter and St. Paul. The organ is located along one of the side walls.

After World War II, the abandoned church was taken over by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB). In the congregation set up on 1st May 1947 Czech repatriates from Volyně, Silesia and Romania began to meet each other. There were also Protestants coming from other places.

Today's congregation is live and it takes care well and with respect of its Church of Saviour.

The congregation in Nejdek has its preaching station in Jáchymov, a town rich in history, a town of silver thalers (which began to be minted here before the year 1520, they were known as Joachim's thalers and much later they gave its name to the U. S. Dollar). Jáchymov is also famous for its spa and is well-known as a centre of popular summer and winter sports. Uranium mining was not only its wealth but also its damnation, especially in the unfortunate 1950's, when the prisoners of a totalitarian regime suffered in its mines.

German Protestants built their congregation house with a church in 1914. After 1945 it was taken over by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. The house now serves not only for religious purposes but also for meetings of the youth as well as for the family recreation.

Visitors of the congregation house will be impressed by a memory board dedicated to Johann Mathesius, a German Lutheran minister, a colleague of Martin Luther. He lived here between 1504–1565 and he was an important spiritual figure of Jáchymov.



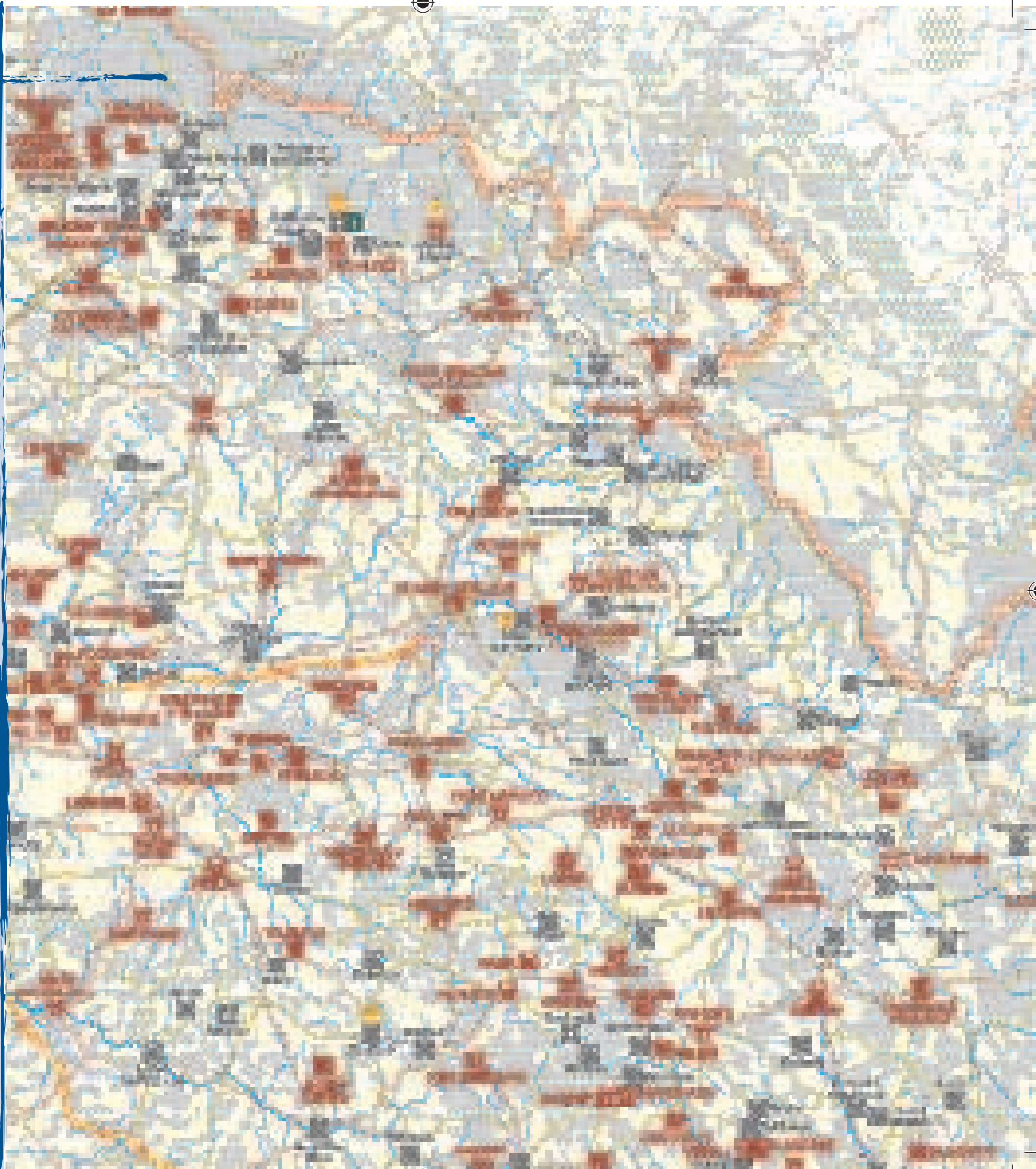
NEJDEK

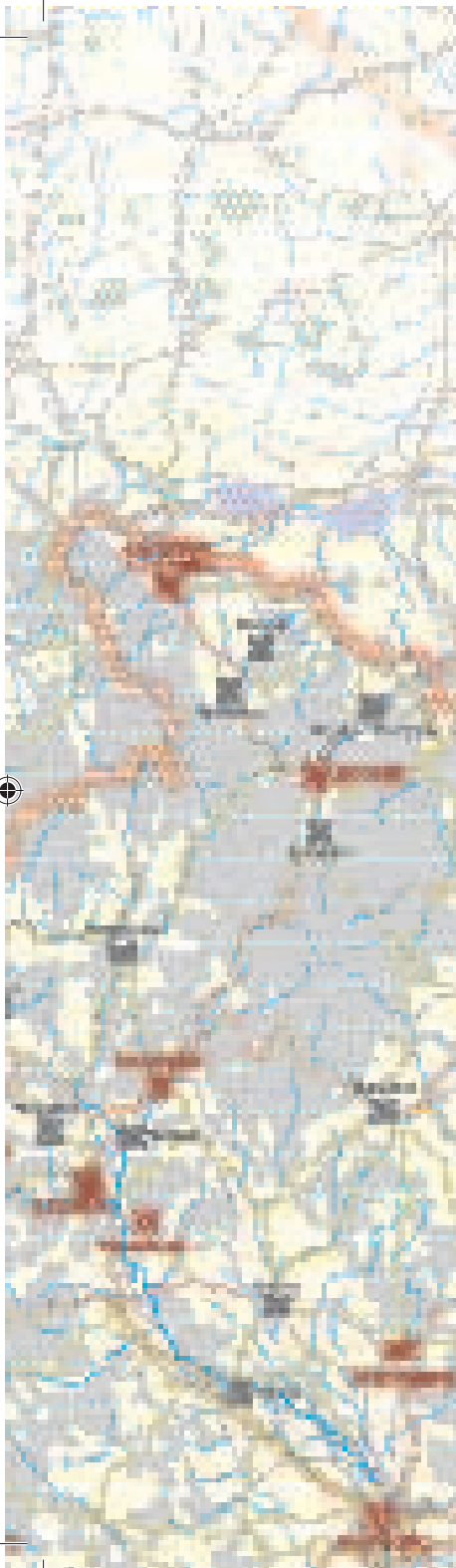


JÁCHYMOV



THE HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ REGION

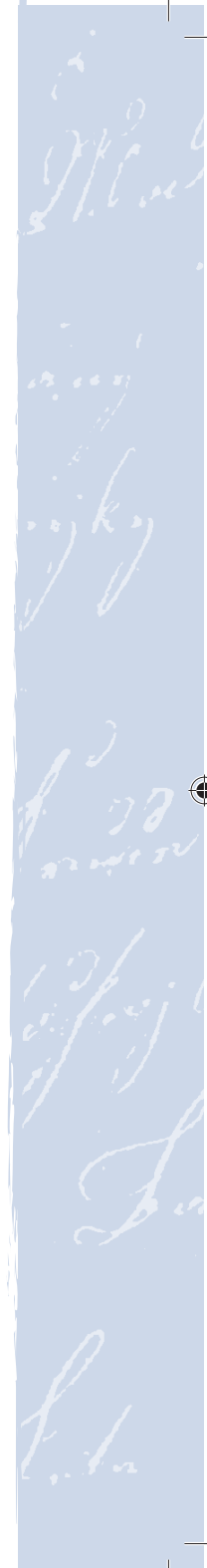




K The Hradec Králové Region is situated in the northeastern part of the Czech Republic. It occupies an area of 4,758 square kilometres and almost 562,000 inhabitants live there. In the northwest it borders on the Liberec Region. It shares its western border with the Central Bohemia Region, the Pardubice Region lies to the south and a big part of border in the northeast creates at the same time the border of the Czech Republic with the Voivodeship of the Lower Silesia. The region shares with Poland not only our highest Mountains Krkonoše with Sněžka (1, 602 metres) but also a part of the Orlické Mountains.

The Hradec Králové Region is divided into five districts: Hradec Králové, Jičín, Rychnov nad Kněžnou, Náchod and Trutnov. The rivers Orlice, Metuje, Úpa and Cidlina create graceful natural sceneries, they are parts of many historical towns and finally they flow into the Elbe – our largest river. The Elbe rises on the Labská meadow in the Krkonoše Mountains, flows through the region and leaves our country on the other side of the republic near Děčín. In the Hradec Králové Region we will find maybe the biggest number of the protected landscape areas: the Bohemian Paradise and the Prachovské skály rock formations, the region around Kozákov, Broumov, the Orlické Mountains, the National Park of the Krkonoše Mountains. Besides many really very valuable natural sites, in this region we can visit many castles, chateaux and ancient towns. Where to go first ? To Safari park in Dvůr Králové, to the Špork's Kuks, to the castle Kost and to Plakánek, to the Grandmother's Valley or to the Ratibořice castle? To the Dahlia festival in Česká Skalice or to Opočno or to the castle in Náchod? To Broumov or to the Teplice-Adršpach rocks? To the Pecka castle where Kryštof Harant's from Polžice and Bezdrůžice home was?

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has 17 congregations in the Hradec Králové Region. We will visit seven of them.



HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ



K Hradec Králové, metropolis of the Hradec Králové Region, lies in its southern part at an altitude of 235 metres. It covers an area of 4,758 square kilometres and almost 96,000 inhabitants live here. The advantageous location on the confluence of the rivers Elbe and Orlice predetermined its importance already long time ago. In 1225 Hradec was mentioned for the first time as a royal town. By decree of King Wenceslas II Hradec became a dowry town of the Czech queens. Eliška Rejčka and Eliška Pomořanská lived here.

In the 14th century Hradec was the most important Czech town after Prague. The Hussite Wars did not seriously affect the town, its prosperity continued also in the 15th century. The Thirty Years' War however brought a forced counter-Reformation to Hradec and also Swedish occupation, all of this damaged the city very much. The 18th century was also accompanied by fires and wars – and controversial plans of Joseph II to transform Hradec into a fortress town. In 1856 Hradec Králové became an independent town and its modern history started.

Let us return for the moment to the monuments of Hradec: the historical centre of the town is formed by the Big Square with the examples of three architectural styles. The Gothic Holy Spirit's Cathedral comes from the 14th century. Eliška Rejčka, a widow after King Wenceslas II and Rudolph I the Habsburg, takes credit for the building of this cathedral. The Renaissance White Tower from 1574 is 72 metres high and offers a beautiful view over the surroundings. In the tower there is a bell called Augustin which is the second biggest bell in Bohemia. The Renaissance town hall was later rebuilt in a Baroque style. The Baroque period in Hradec is represented by an early Baroque Jesuit the Assumption of Our Lady's Church from the middle of the 17th century, the work of builder Carlo Lurago. The former Jesuit college is also built in a Baroque style. The native of Hradec Králové Bohuslav Balbín was a teacher at the former Jesuit grammar school. In 1664 the bishopric was founded in Hradec and at the

beginning of the 18th century the bishop's residence was built here. The 19th century brought a development of railway and beginnings of industry. A production of pianos by the Petrof company made Hradec Králové world famous.

At the beginning of the 20th century a new stage of modern development of a town began. The mayor František Ulrich called architects Jan Kotěra and Josef Gočár to Hradec. They designed as the first ones in the country a general urban solution of the town. Kotěra built the Municipal Museum in the Art Nouveau style. Now, it is a National cultural monument. His pupil Gočár continued in a modern construction of Hradec Králové. He enriched the city by functionalist buildings. Today's Hradec Králové is a modern prosperous town and was declared a Historic Town Reserve thanks to its numerous monuments.

The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in Hradec Králové was founded on the 14th of June 1920. Preaching stations of the Augsburg as well as the Helvetian confession of the congregation in Černilov had already been there before. The Luther's Institute (later Hus House) on Kavčí plácek built in 1883 was owned by the Augsburg congregation and it was a home for the Protestant students. After 1948 the church lost the building, in the 1990s they got it back during the restitution and for a few years it was a seat of the Biblical Missionary School. The members of the Reformed preaching station in Hradec Králové decided to build a church according to architect Oldřich Liska's plan.

On the 7th of July 1912 the Art Nouveau church with an asymmetrical placed tower was solemnly inaugurated. There is a big room for prayer with Art Nouveau decorative elements and another rooms for daily activities of the congregation. In 1942 the congregation purchased a new organ. A flat for the preacher is also a part of the building. The entire building except for minor repairs and modifications of the interior has been serving the congregation since the time of its origin up to the present. A garden with nice grown up trees surrounds the church. The whole complex is a protected site.



ČERNILOV



VZDĚLANÍ NA ZAKLAD APOSTOL
SKÝ A PROROCKÝ KDEŽ JEST BRUNTOV
UHE NÝ LAMEN M JEŽKŮST

K The municipality of Černilov which formerly belonged to the royal chamber lies near Hradec Králové. It is mentioned as a large village with a small church already in the 13th centry. It lies on the Černilov brook at an altitude of 253 metres and about 2,300 inhabitants live here. Further it was mentioned that “the soil here is heavy but fertile”. Already during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy a special Water team was founded here to take care of drainage of wet lands.

Černilov can be proud of three churches: the Roman Catholic Finding of St. Stephen's Church with a slender tower was built in the middle of the 18th century. There are St. Stephen's and St. Peter's and St. Paul's statues on the main altar. A sandstone font is from 1895. The church has colourfully decorated windows.

We will mention in more details about a life of the local congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and its two churches. After the declaration of the Toleration Patent part of the Protestants joined the Augsburg confession, they created a congregation and built a Neo-Classical church in 1889 on the place of the original wooden house of prayer. This so called “lower church” stopped being used and after the establishing of the

ECCB it declined. There is a ceremonial funeral hall today.

The reformed congregation in Černilov has its origin in 1784. A barn was the first sanctuary for worship but already two years later a wooden house of prayer was built. It served still in 1830; a brick building was built in those days but it was without a tower. It had only a small turret with a bell. The church got its final Neo-Renaissance appearance by adding entry portal and a tower. (Josef Blecha's company from Prague performed the building in 1882). The walls inside are decorated by verses from Psalms and from Luke's Gospel. Memorial tablets commemorate the 500th anniversary of Jan Hus's birth and a date of beginning a construction of the church.

In the middle of the 19th century a new rectory was built near the church. After some repairs it still serves. Recently the municipality bought an old Protestant school that is near the church. This school should be changed into cultural and club house. An original shape of building was kept; an original chalice and Bible above the entrance were restored, too. The Protestants of Černilov gather here in winter.



HRONOV • Tis

K Broumov tip in the northeast Bohemia is surrounded by Poland from almost all the sides. Not by chance, it is a protected landscape area Broumovsko. Not far from Náchod, a town Hronov lies on the river Metuje. It is forever linked with a name of the famous native Alois Jirásek.

Hronov was known as a peasant village already in the 2nd half of the 13th century. The water fortification was built here during colonization; later it was mentioned as a small town which belonged to the Náchod domain. In the Hussite time the Utraquist believers prevailed. The area was Protestant until the events culminating by the Battle of the White Mountain on the 8th of November 1620. The Thirty Years' War blew over Hronov, too. The Swedes burnt it out in 1639. After a long time, in the 19th century Hronov slowly began to develop especially thanks to home weaving and agricultural production in the surroundings. The textile production began to develop with the introduction of railway and cultural development of the town also accelerated.

All Saints' Church, formerly Gothic, rebuilt in a Baroque style at the beginning of the 17th century belongs among the important historical buildings. A bell tower with wooden boarding from 1610 is a typical building for Hronov. Jirásek's theatre built in 1930 according to architect Jindřich Freiwald's plan dominates Hronov. A year later a theatre festival called Jirásek's Hronov held here for the first time.

It is worth noticing a native house of Alois Jirásek. It is a timbered small cottage from the end of the 18th century. It is a rare monument of folk architecture as well as so called "free yard" on the place of a medieval fortress. In addition to Jirásek, Josef Čapek and his sister Helena, Egon Hostovský and also a famous cameraman and director Jan Špáta belong among other significant natives of Hronov.

The river Metuje creates romantic valleys on its upper and middle stream, the most famous of which is so called "Hell" Valley. Near Hronov

we can also visit a national cultural monument Dobrošov.

Before World War II an artillery fortification with underground corridors formed a part of the defensive fortification of Czechoslovakia and it had to be given without fight to the Germans after the Munich Agreement in 1938. Nowadays, it is a seat of a museum. In the 1920^s the tourist cottage in Dobrošov was rebuilt according to architect Dušan Jurkovič's plans.

The Evangelical congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in Hronov has its origins in 1869 when it became a preaching station of the Klášter nad Dědinou congregation. The date of its origin as a congregation is the 27th of August 1885. Originally the Protestants gathered in various rent houses; many donors supported building of a house of prayer. It is interesting that the plans of a church in Růžová near Děčín were used for the construction of this house of prayer. The church in Růžová is however, for unclear reasons in a very bad condition until now.

The house of prayer in Hronov was built in 1876, later so called winter house of prayer was added. The hall for worship is on the 1st floor; a new organ according to prof. Jiří Reinberger's plan was installed in 1955.

The congregation has its preaching station in Tis. It is a building from the end of the 19th century which was repaired in rather high costs in 1939 and it serves for popular recreation of children and youth.



POŤŠTEJN



KIn the valley of the river Divoká Orlice where ruins of the castle Potštejn juts out highly in the rocks is a small town of the same name – Potštejn. The surrounding countryside is a part of the Podorlická hilly country and a small town with a population of approximately 1,000 inhabitants lies at an altitude of 315 metres. These favourable natural conditions invite to romantic walks along the river through the age-old linden tree lane near Ann's Valley – thanks to it Potštejn became one of the first summer resorts in Bohemia and a place of rest for many famous people in the past and in the present.

The castle Potštejn which is dilapidated today is a scene of Jirásek's short-story "Treasure". In 1731 Potštejn was a small town as it is proved by an accidental finding of a sealing-stick with its crest and coat of arms. The original Gothic St. Lawrence's Church was rebuilt in an Empire style in the years 1815–1821. Inside of the church you will be impressed by the altar painting of St. Lawrence by Antonín Machek from 1819. We will certainly notice a statue of St. Florian and a nice fountain in front of the church. In the middle of the 18th century a Baroque castle was built near the church; later this castle was sensitively restored by its current owners.

In the past the persecuted members of the Unity of Brethren were hiding in the surroundings of Potštejn. The name of a deep valley "Praying Pit" where the Czech Brothers used to gather for the secret worship confirms this fact.



"The Brethren District" is a name of the part of Potštejn where a Brethren house of prayer and a parish can be found. Potštejn was the first congregation in Bohemia where so called Renewed Unity of Brethren worked. The first wave of non-Catholic exiles left Bohemia after 1620. Later in the 18th century the members of the Unity of Brethren found their refuge in Herrnhut (Ochranov) at the domain of count Zinzendorf. Thus the Renewed Unity of Brethren was formed and later became famous under the name "Moravian Brothers". Despite many problems (this Renewed Unity of Brethren was not recognized in Bohemia immediately after the declaration of the Protestant Patent in 1861) congregations were being established also in Bohemia and Potštejn was chosen as the first one. It happened on the 16th of October 1870. The first Brethren house of prayer was consecrated in Potštejn after more than 200 years on the 6th of August 1871. The current one comes from the year 1899.

The members of so called Seniorate of Ochranov are a part of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) but they remain affiliated to the World Unity of Brethren. Today there is a modernized rectory with a winter house of prayer next to the Brethren church. There is a possibility of nice accommodation especially during the summer months, too.





KIn a flat countryside on the confluence of the rivers Orlice nad Dědina, 13 kilometres east of Hradec Králové, we can find a town of Christmas cribs, Třebechovice pod Orebem. It lies at an altitude of 243 metres and it is a home of 5,800 people. The original settlement was established along the trade trail in the 1st half of the 14th century. Its owners were the lords of Dubá and the Trčeks from Lípa.

In the Hradec Králové Region there was a strong Hussite tradition. In 1419 representatives of the Hussite movement met in the Vinice Hill. They renamed the 260 metres high hill to Oreb and hence for they were called the Orebites. Later in the 16th century under the family of the Trčeks of Lípa a small wooden church was built here.

After the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 the family of the Colloredos gained the domain. During their reign the counter-Reformation was particularly hard. In the 19th century the town began to recover from the war suffering, fires and oppression. Since 1849 Třebechovice has been a free town. The twentieth century brought a cultural and technological development. Nowadays, Třebechovice is a famous tourist attraction.

There is a Baroque column commemorating a plague, St. Trinity's statue and a fountain from the year 1675 on the square. There is also a Roman Catholic St. Andrew's Baroque Church. The old small church in Oreb was demolished and since 1835 the Church of Christ's Body has been standing on its place.

The pride of the town is the Museum of Christmas cribs of Třebechovice. The national cultural monument Probošt's mechanical Christmas crib of Třebechovice was built at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century and belongs among the most valuable treasures. The carved little figures can move and entire Christmas crib consists of 2,000 pieces. The museum also looks after collections and prints including rare hand written and illuminated "Writer's Graduale" from 1559.

Jan Theobald Held, doctor and rector of Charles University and Jan Blahoslav Čapek,

Protestant literary scientist, philosopher and writer belong among the significant natives.

After the Toleration Patent was declared, the Protestants from Třebechovice and its surroundings joined the Reformed confession and at the beginning they belonged to the Klášter nad Dědinou congregation. A separate congregation in Třebechovice was founded on the 5th of May 1871.

A Neo-Romanesque Protestant church, a pride of the square in Třebechovice, was built by builder A. Nový from Rychnov nad Kněžnou in 1876–1880. The spacious church has two galleries, between two high windows in the apse there is a pulpit and the Lord's table in front of it. The Lord's table was made by a Třebechovice woodcarver J. Podstata. A room for prayer is nicely decorated, too. The rectory with the minister's flat has reconstructed rooms for winter house of prayer and other rooms needed for the congregation activities. All these rooms can be found on the ground floor. Běleč nad Orlicí is a preaching station of the Třebechovice congregation.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has a recreational centre here, it was founded in the 1920^s at the bank of the Mlýnský pond by Hradec Králové minister Adolf Novotný and his wife. A Summer camp of Komenský was very popular among children and youth. They lived in country cottages, they could use small boats on the pond and nearby pine forests were goal for walks and games. Children spent here not only pleasant summer vacation but they also met for lectures which developed their spiritual live.

In 1951 the camp was closed by the communist authorities; and it was turned into a pioneer camp eleven years later. After November 1989 the complex was given back to the ECCB. There had been a lot of building alterations, a brick building and a dining room were built but country cottages remained. Today's centre is used not only by children and young people including the handicapped people but also by individual families. Various courses and summer meetings of seniors are also held here.



TRUTNOV • JANSKÉ LÁZNĚ



K On the map we will find Trutnov at the foothills of the Krkonoše Mountains. The river Úpa flows through this ancient town which has a dragon in its coat of arms. It lies at an altitude of 404 metres and 34,000 inhabitants live here. A historical part of the town is a Historic Town Zone.

Since the 14th century Trutnov was a royal town and a dowry town of the Czech queens. Canvas was the main article coming from Trutnov to the royal court; the local linen industry had a great reputation already at that time. In 1421 during the Hussite wars Trutnov was conquered by the Hussites. Later in the year 1642 the town was conquered and burned down by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War. In 1647 the Swedes seized Trutnov again and they also devastated its castle.

In the Renaissance period the houses with arcades were built on its historic square. There are also buildings from the Baroque and Empire period. The square is decorated with the Krakonoš Fountain. The original Renaissance town hall was rebuilt in a Pseudo-Gothic style. There is a museum in a late Empire style on the place of the former castle.

The Nativity of the Virgin Mary's Church from 1755–1769, a late Baroque building with Classicist elements, was built on a place of a church from the 13th century. There is a valuable equipment inside. The tower is 63 metres high. In the 18th century Trutnov witnessed a great peasant rebellion and later the Austrian and Prussian troops clashed here in 1866. The other disasters affected the town, too: a big fire in 1861 and devastating floods in 1897.

Trutnov was predominantly a German town. In the year 1900 a National (Czech) House was opened which was a big event. The 19th and the 20th centuries brought cultural and industrial development. The town became an important railway junction and a centre of the textile industry. In 1938 the Nazis burned down the synagogue, the border lands were occupied and Trutnov became a part of the German Empire.

After the liberation and after the Germans left, new people settled in Trutnov. After the

year 1948 the old monuments fell into disrepair. New housing estates were being built. Only after 1989 Trutnov began to live again.

After the Second World War the Czechoslovak Hussite Church took over the German Lutheran Neo-Gothic church from the year 1900 with an octagonal, 43 metres high tower. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) gained an Art Nouveau rectory. A new ECCB congregation was established on the 1st of August 1947.

Both churches held services here, however, later the church fell into disrepair and it was even planned to demolish it. But luckily, in the 1980^s it was converted into a nice concert hall. It is named after Bohuslav Martinů and it is decorated with sculptor Olbram Zoubek's statues. Sometimes a worship of the Trutnov Protestant congregation (it has its own worship room in a rectory) is held here.

Janské Lázně (The Janské Spa) is a preaching station of the Trutnov congregation. Janské Lázně is a famous spa and a recreation centre under Černá Hora (the Black Mountain) in the Krkonoše Mountains. The healing springs were discovered here already in the 16th century. Their biggest development came after the First World War. In the year 1935 the first institute in Europe to treat the children affected by poliomyelitis was established here.

After 1945 the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) gained a small church from the German Augsburg congregation. It was built in 1879 in a Neo-Gothic style with a polygonal tower. In 1950 the ECCB bought a former rectory building near the small church; soon, this building became a popular recreational centre for the Protestants. It was known under the name Sola Fide. Later this popular building underwent a reconstruction and a modern mountain house was built. The new house of Sola Fide was solemnly reopened on the 26th of May 1991 and it belongs among the most favourite recreational centres of the ECCB members and their guests.



CHURCH IN TRUTNOV



CONGREGATION HOUSE IN TRUTNOV

JANSKÉ LÁZNĚ





Kvrchlabí lies at the foothills of the Krkonoše Mountains under the slope Přední Žalý and the Jankův Hill at an altitude of 477 metres. The river Elbe flows through the town. In this important tourist centre and the surrounding villages where the road to Špindlerův Mlýn leads along the Elbe valley, there live about 13,500 inhabitants.

The foundation of Vrchlabí is being mentioned in the 13th century in connection with mostly German colonization. In the 16th century the royal mining hetman Kryštof of Gendorf bought the town. In that period (1533) Vrchlabí was promoted to the mining town with its coat of arms and mining laws. Silver, gold and also iron ores were mined and processed here. In 1624 Albrecht of Wallenstein who during the Thirty Years' War from here supplied the army by weapons and also by pitch and sulphur wreaths, bought the domain. Luther's teaching penetrated to Vrchlabí thanks to the German inhabitants and a bigger religious freedom was here. However, during the reign of the Morzins family hard counter-Reformation prevailed so, many families left abroad. In the 19th century the textile industry and small crafts began to spread in Vrchlabí. The Second World War interrupted a positive development of the town. A mostly German town of Vrchlabí became part of the Great German Empire. After the end of the war German inhabitants left and new people began to arrive into the town. After years of the totalitarian regime a new life came also here.

The most valuable historical monument in Vrchlabí is the Renaissance castle built by Christopher Gendorf in the middle of the 16th century. Inside we will find rare tiled stove with biblical scenes and a year 1545 is written on it. The former town hall also dates back to the Renaissance period; it was rebuilt in a Baroque style in the years 1733–1737. There is a Neo-Gothic deanery St. Lawrence's Church on the place of the original Gothic later Renaissance church which was demolished in 1886. A cooper font from 1556 was moved from the original church to the new church which has a valuable inner decoration. The former Baroque Augustinian monastery is the seat of the Museum of the Krkonoše Mountains. Historical houses from the 17th century which are pre-

served in their original condition are very valuable. The House with seven gables – the oldest one in Vrchlabí – is also a remarkable example of the urban architecture of that time.

A history of the German Lutheran congregation in Vrchlabí is connected with the life of the secret Protestants in Rudník where meetings were held also during the counter-Reformation time. Already in 1784 a congregation was founded here and it became a centre of the German Protestants in the area. The church from the 2nd half of the 19th century is a ruin nowadays.

In Vrchlabí there were not many Protestants left. However, gradually their number began to increase so in the year 1900 a branch congregation was founded and an independent congregation was founded 10 years later. A remarkable Art Nouveau congregation house was built in today's Street of Czech Brethren according to a plan of Dresden architects Rudolf Schilling and Julius Willi Grabner. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) obtained this house after the Second World War as well as on the 1st of March 1948 a newly formed Vrchlabí congregation. The room for worship has a coffered ceiling, decorative Art Nouveau elements and stained-glass windows. Later alterations were good for the prayer room.

The congregation has its own preaching station in Herlíkovice (today part of the village Strážné). You will certainly be impressed by a visit of this beautiful area. In the picturesque countryside of the Krkonoše Mountains which is dominated by Žalý Mountain, a small white Art Nouveau church from the year 1904 shines far and wide. The church was designed by the same architects who designed the Art Nouveau rectory in Vrchlabí. At that time they also designed an Art Nouveau church in Lánov near Vrchlabí but it was demolished in 1982. According to some sources this church in Herlíkovice is the highest located Protestant church in our country. The ECCB got it after the German Protestant Church together with some houses. Later these houses were rebuilt and today they serve as the Mountain Home for summer and winter recreation, for meetings of young people and spiritual as well as lay workers.



CHURCH IN HERLÍKOVICE-STRÁŽNÉ

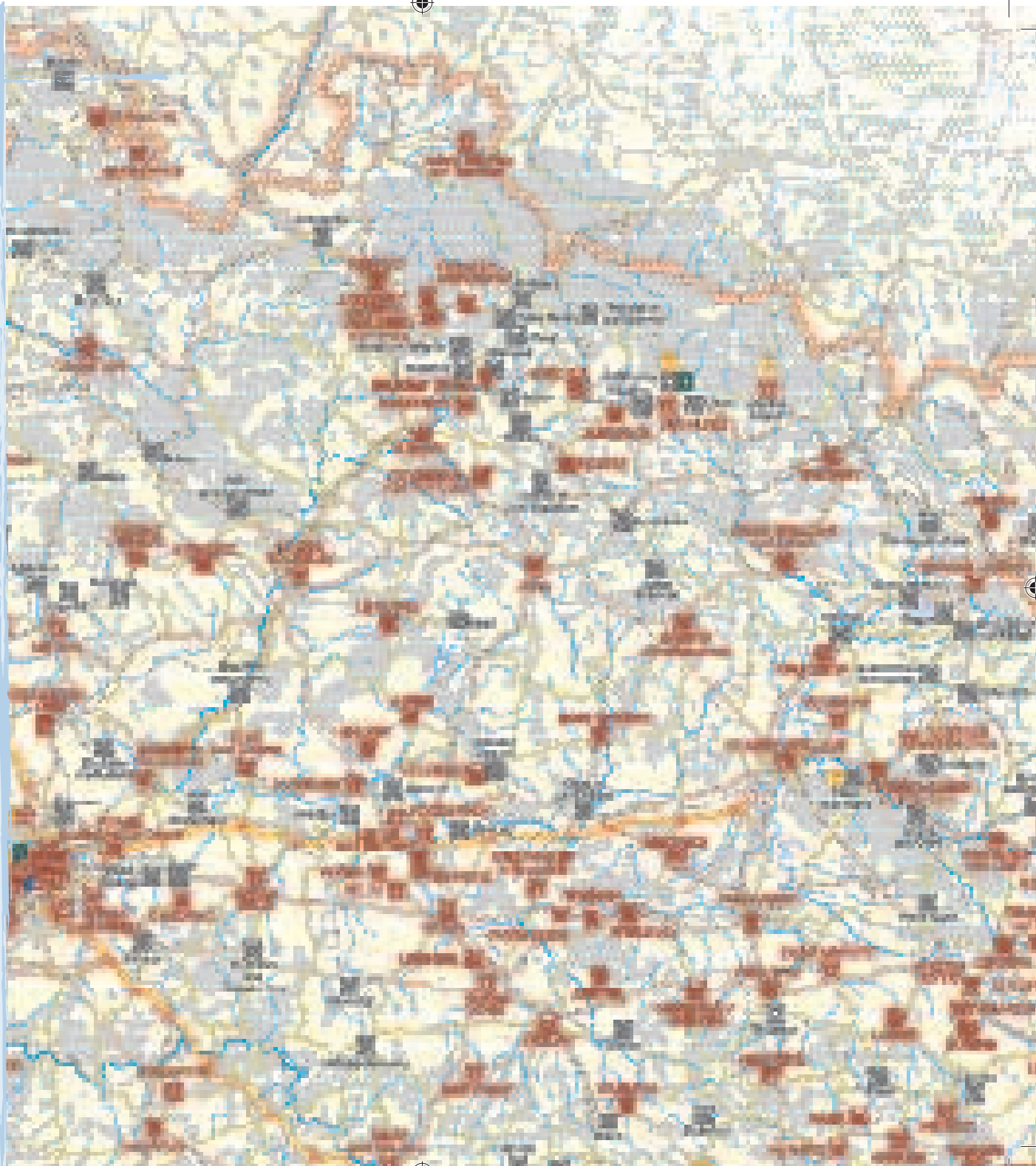


MOUNTAIN HOME IN HERLÍKOVICE-STRÁŽNÉ

CONGREGATION HOUSE IN VRCHLABÍ



THE LIBEREC REGION





L The Liberec Region, the second smallest in size but certainly not by importance is located in the north and partly northeast of Bohemia. For brief information we will give you some data: The area is 3,163 square kilometres (three percent of the territory of the Czech Republic), number of inhabitants is: 428,291.

It is a border region: In the north it borders on the Federal Republic of Germany and in the northeast on Poland. A look at the map shows us a diversity of its natural beauties. In the territory of the Liberec Region we find the Krkonoše Mountains, the Jizerské and Lužické Mountains, but also Český Ráj (the Czech Paradise), Kokořínský region and the Bohemian Central Highlands (České Středohoří). In each of the four districts (Liberec, Česká Lípa, Jablonec nad Nisou, Semily) there are many natural, cultural and architectural monuments.

The natural center of the region is Liberec with almost one hundred thousand inhabitants. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in the Liberec Region has its congregations in Česká Lípa, Jablonec nad Nisou, Jilemnice, Křížlice, Liberec, Libštát and in Nové Město pod Smrkem. We will show you three of them: the congregation in Křížlice, in Libštát and in Nové Město pod Smrkem. It might seem strange for someone that the congregation in Liberec does not have its own church. It had it and it was a beautiful one from the year 1868 which they got from the German Protestant Church in Bohemia after 1945. In the period of normalization in 1973 it had to be transferred to the property of the town, free of charge and on the 29th of May 1976 it was shot down and razed to the ground...

In the Liberec Region we will also find congregations of so called Seniority of Ochranov which follow the Unity of Brethren. Except Jablonec nad Nisou, Koberov, Rovensko pod Troskami, Turnov and Železný Brod it is also a remarkable small church in Tanvald – Smržovka, which we find in Kořenov.



KOŘENOV



LI still have the countryside in front of my eyes. Behind Tanvald and Desná a twisting road climbs up to Příchovice; on both sides there are forests and hills – and suddenly on the left side of the road, on a long hill there appears a stockade building of unusual shape, dominating its surroundings.

At the beginning of the 20th century a preaching station of the German Protestant Church of the Augsburg Confession in Jablonec nad Nisou was established in Kořenov. In 1908 a desire to build their own church led the local Protestants to the young German architect Otto Bartning who was only 26 years old at that time. We already mentioned him when we spoke about “Luther’s Castle” in Nové Město pod Smrkem. An ambitious young architect designed a simple octagonal stockade building which became a local dominant. The foundation stone was laid on the 20th of May 1909 and already on the 20th of October in the same year the small church was solemnly consecrated.

Post war history was repeated in the whole Czech and Moravian border region. The German inhabitants left the republic, new



inhabitants came to the mountains and members of the Tanvald’s congregation of the Unity of Brethren faithfully took care of their small church. The Seniority of Ochranov acquired the property in February 2009 and uses it especially during important church festivals. The village of Kořenov as well contributes to its maintenance.

On the 19th of September 2009 a big celebration of the 100th anniversary from its foundation was held here under the open sky, in front of the reconstructed shiny white small church. Besides other guests at this celebration there were also representatives of the Protestant congregation from the Austrian city of Dornbirn. And why just them? Since 1931 in this town there stands an identical small church, maybe just slightly bigger – thanks to the fact that the Austrian Protestants got the same plans for the construction of their church after the agreement with the inhabitants of Kořenov. Before you leave the top of the hill, make a break at the small church in Kořenov. You will not regret it.



KŘÍŽLICE



L If you go from Jilemnice towards Mísečky, soon turn left. A steep path will lead you to the charming Krkonoše village of Křížlice. You can also take the other road through Poniklá and Jestřábí. However, you will miss a splendid view of picturesque hills and meadows with views of Přední and Zadní Žalý dominated by a Protestant church. Nowadays, Křížlice is a part of the village Jestřábí. The first records of the settlement are from 1492. In the period of the Reformation the village was Protestant. After the Battle of the White Mountain, here as elsewhere in the Czech Lands there was an effort to re-catholicize the inhabitants.

This effort was not however very successful: soon after the proclamation of the Toleration Patent in 1781 the Protestants from all over Křížlice region meet here; as early as in 1782 they founded the congregation, whose members professed the Augsburg (Lutheran) Confession. At that time also the Lutheran Protestants from remote Libštát and Spálov belonged to the Lutheran congregation of Křížlice.

A toleration house of prayer similar to many permitted houses of prayer of that time (as we know them from other places) was built in 1786 behind the village, without a tower. It was additionally built in 1878 and the ringing of

the bells has been resounding since that time over the mountain hills and valleys. The inner equipment of the church corresponds with the original house of prayer, with a pulpit over the altar and with a typical Lutheran "fence". Also wooden galleries and pews remind us of the old times. The organ was placed on the choir later. A cemetery which is situated around the church comes also from the toleration period and it has served its purpose until now. Nearby architecturally rich rectory with a mansard roof was built in 1871 and now it is used for a recreation. Old Protestant school belonging to the church is a popular place for summer and winter vacation for the young people.

Since 1918 the congregation is a part of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB). It is worth noticing that in the war years Křížlice was a part of the German Empire – but still the Word of God was preached here in the Czech language and it was a great support to many people. After the Second World War also the Protestants from Křížlice began to move to towns, but they always like to come back to their congregation.



CHURCH

OLD PROTESTANT SCHOOL



LEIBŠTÁT





LA small town of Libštát spreads out on both banks of a tiny river Oleška. It was already mentioned in 1322. Since 1525 it has already been called a small town. Today's population is about 1,013 and it is a part of a microregion of Pojizeří. There has been a very strong Protestant tradition. In the period of persecution the Protestants met secretly in their homes and thus resisted the forced recatholization. After the proclamation of the Patent of Toleration by Joseph II in 1781 the majority of Protestants (117 families) professed the Helvetian (Reformed) Confession, several families chose the Lutheran Confession.

The construction of a house of prayer was not long in coming. It was simple, otherwise it would not have been allowed. It had to stand at the edge of the village, it was not allowed to have a tower or decorative windows. It was built in a Neo-Classical style and is beautiful in its simplicity. It has served since 1787 until now. On the original wooden doors we can read a biblical text: "Behold! Judge Standeth before the Door!" and the year 1786 – when the construction of the church started.

Soon, the congregation house next to the church was built; this was in 1789. The cemetery was founded in 1856; and it is owned by the congregation until now but it is maintained by the municipality. The former local minister Slavomil Daněk, who left in 1921 for Prague to the newly established Hus Theological Faculty, is buried here. He became a distinguished Professor of the Old Testament.

The families of the Augsburg Confession belonged to the closest Lutheran congregation

located in Křížlice. Believers gathered in families, sometimes they also used a house of prayer of the Helvetian Confession. Only in 1838 they were allowed to build their own house of prayer in the hill above a small river Oleška. Their church was consecrated in 1842, later a wooden belfry for three bells (donated from Dresden) was added and a cemetery was founded.

After the establishment of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in 1918, both congregations joined into one and now the Divine service is given only in a house of prayer which was originally built for believers of the Helvetian Confession. The former Lutheran house of prayer slowly dilapidates and the cemetery does not fulfil its purpose, either. There is however effort to keep and preserve it. The house of prayer with a belfry and with the cemetery is now a protected site and in 2001 it was declared a cultural monument.

Preaching station in Spálov, a small village near Železný Brod also belongs to the congregation in Libštát. In 1888 the Protestants of the Augsburg Confession built here a chapel which served to the 80th of the last century; but later it was devastated and it should have been demolished. However after 1989 it was rescued by the local enthusiasts and cottagers (painter Vladimír Veselý founded a music and art festival "Indian Summer of Spálov" which became a famous cultural event over the years and which is also supported by a town of Semily). Since 1995 the Divine service has been given in the chapel again.

Let us also remember a protected tree near Spálov chapel – 200 years old lime.



HOUSE OF PRAYER IN LIBŠTÁT



FORMER
LUTHERAN
HOUSE
OF PRAYER



NOVÉ MĚSTO POD SMRKEM



LIn the eastern part of Frýdlant tip just 4 kilometres from the Polish border there lies Nové Město pod Smrkem at an altitude of 465 metres. It has been a town since 1584 when Melchior of Redern, owner of the domain founded it for new settlers who came to mine tin and other non-ferrous metals. And a word Smrk (Spruce) in a name of the town suggests that we are near the highest mountain of the Jizera Mountains (1,124 m).

The original population here was predominantly German. In the 19th century there was a rapid development of the textile industry, the town was growing, but its fate was negatively influenced by two world wars. Today the town with 4,000 people is developing favourably. This is mostly thanks to the beautiful countryside and the development of tourism.

Local Protestants of the Augsburg Confession did want to become an independent congregation with its own church. It is interesting to know that St. Catherine's Church from 1607 was originally Protestant, only in the year 1652 it was re-consecrated as a Catholic church.

The members of the then preaching station entrusted a young architect Otto Bartning with a construction of their own church. Bartning lat-

er became famous for many important religious and secular buildings.

"Luther's Castle" as the church was called according to Luther's famous song "The Strongest Castle is Our God" started to be built in 1911. The church was not the only issue; according to Bartning's plan a very modern and efficient set of interconnected buildings including a hall and a spacious congregation house was as well built. The building was consecrated on the 11th of August 1912. An independent congregation of the German Protestant Church in Nové Město pod Smrkem was established in 1928.

Both wars mixed fate of many people, especially in the border region. After the end of the Second World War the German population had to leave and the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) took over the church. The repatriates from Volyně and Polish Zelow became the new members of the congregation, but people also came from other places. Newly established congregations in the former German border region created varied communities; many problems appeared, indeed. Some congregations disappeared, others continued. The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Nové Město pod Smrkem belongs to those which have been kept.



THE BRETHREN CHURCH

LIBEREC

CÍRKEV BRATRSKÁ

The congregation of the Brethren Church (originally Unity of Czech Brethren) in Liberec was established in 1945 as a result of the after-war settlement in Czechoslovakia caused by the displacement of German inhabitants living in the border regions. Under the border settlement plan, the Local Council in Prague initiated the move of three families from Písek to Liberec. And it was this small community that the present congregation originated from. Today, it has 263 members, including the stations in Jilemnice, Nové Město pod Smrkem and Jablonec nad Nisou. The congregation station in Nové Město pod Smrkem was established in 1945 when people living in exile in Polish Zelow returned. It was a place where the Czech Protestants were moving to after the Battle of the White Mountain.

Spiritual activities are developing also in Chrastava, Frýdlant, Smržovka a Semily.

Getting much larger in the 1970^s and 1980^s, the congregation tried to build a new house of prayer with appropriate facilities. However, at the time of socialism (except a short period after 1968), it was banned to build new solitary sacral buildings, especially in urban areas. After a lot of difficulties, the Liberec congregation of the Brethren Church bought a villa in the middle of 1989 with the possibility to build a chapel and facilities which the congregation needed. The original house to which a building was annexed in 1980 became the first building on the Keilův Hill where lots of residential villas were put up in the following years. Constructed in the late Neo-Renaissance style on a piece of steep land, it has three floors and a terrace constructed at the same height as the attic and tower.

The architectural design was drawn up by the architect engineer Pavel Vaněček. It was the solid character of the original building with its outstanding tower that inspired the design of the chapel and its facilities. The tower with its 4 x 4 m groundplan became a composition principle of the whole building complex. It is a sort of "talk" of three towers. The low little tower leads to the hall, the Lord's table, pulpit and crucifix are situated in the middle tower while using the symbol of light, and the third tower is designed as a multipurpose meditation place. The space and interior conception of the chapel results from mass of the building object. It is mainly con-

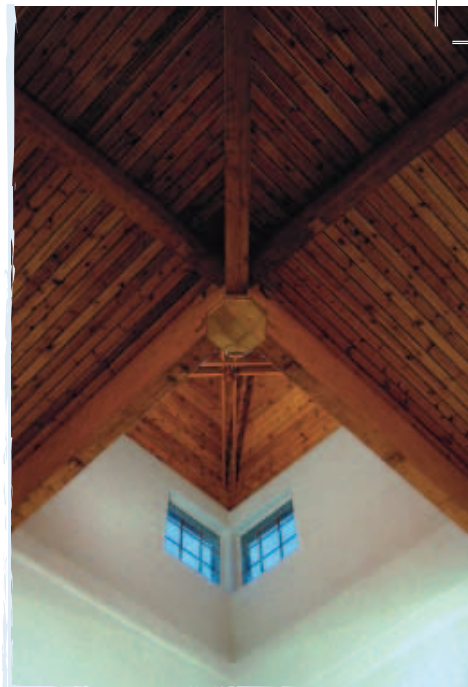
ceived as diagonal, the central space with the Lord's table, pulpit and crucifix being situated under the tower from which it is directly lighted. Its stair-step design also makes it a place to be used by the choir or music groups.

The entrance to the hall with its side dressing room, sanitary and the main door to the chapel is through the low tower. Space of the chapel can be enlarged due to a next-door small hall separated by a movable wall. The levelling staircase gets you to the level of the presbytery and small hall. The non-barrier entrance to the presbytery and other "upper" rooms is also through the outside ramp around the building. Next to the presbytery designed as variable space (a room for mothers and children, with a big parallel window to the chapel), there is a kitchen where food and drinks can be served, a children's clubroom for Sunday school, an archive and a library. The new congregation premises are connected with the original building by a corridor between both stair feet.

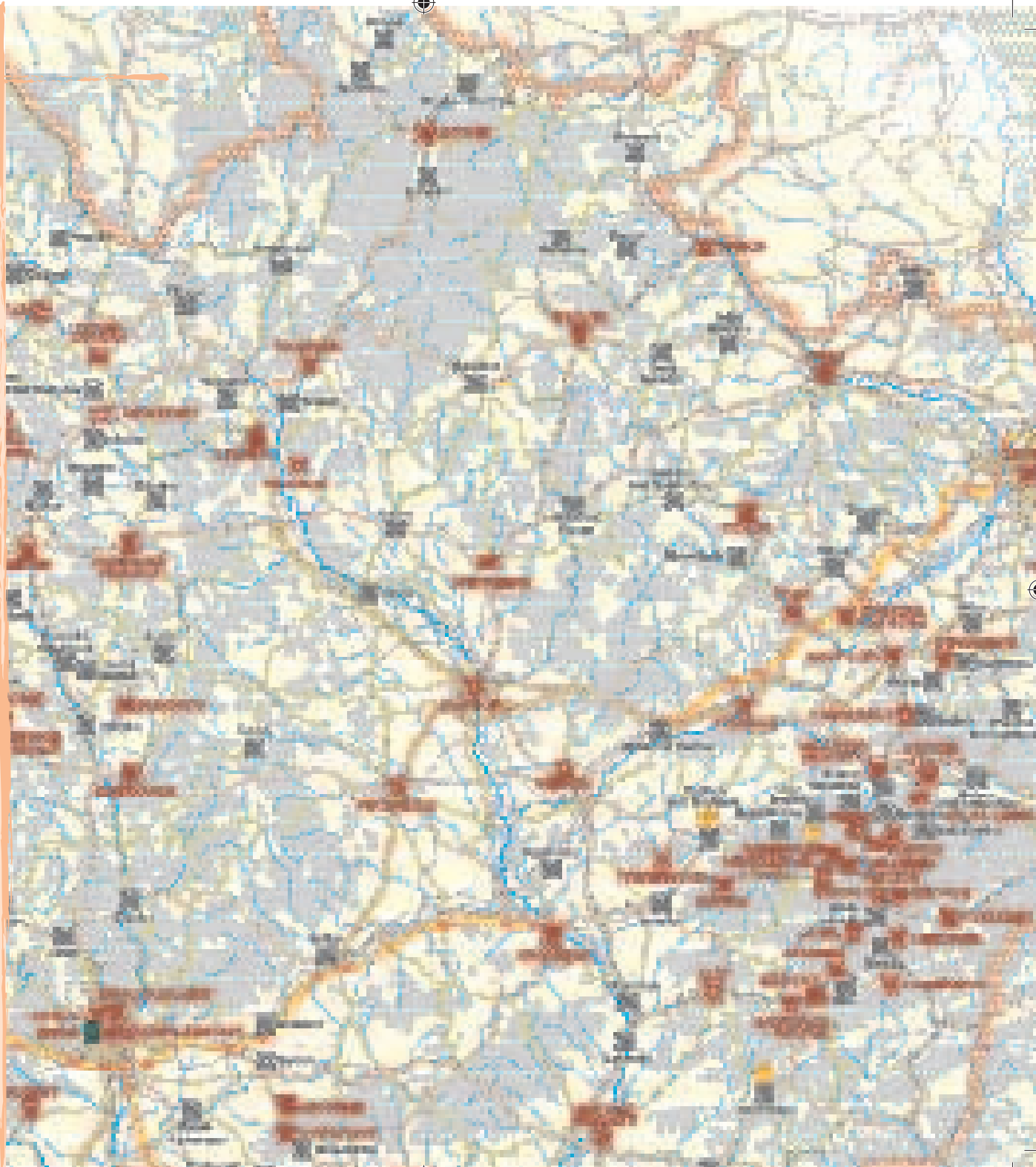
The electric organ with "church" sound is supposed to be replaced by a costly classical one in future. When the choir sings, physical acoustics are used, but with spoken word electro-acoustics are preferred to make voice intelligible and clear, and to let the elderly and hard of hearing use the remote control system of earphones.

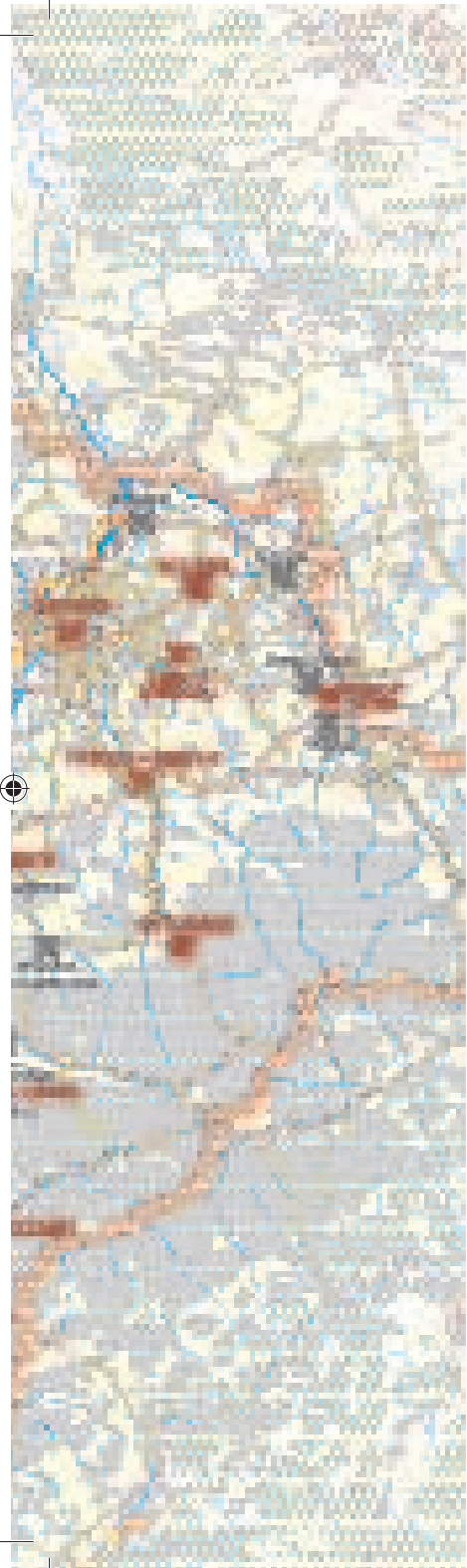
The Lord's table created by the sculptor Jiří Seifert is made of solid oak with natural mat surface. The pulpit is carved out of solid oak, too, and has a processed, smooth surface. And the same sort of wood was used to make a crucifix with a structural surface. The built-in pews with their sides from Italian terazzo have upholstered seats and backs. On the electric organ placed on the diagonal opposite the Lord's table, there is a tapestry with the old Christian motif of two fish and five pieces of bread, created by the artist Zdena Šafka.

The orientation design was made by the artist Jaroslava Antošová, and the architect Pavel Vaněček. In the small entry tower, on the heads of its columns, there are signs with Christian symbols written on the corners from two sides. The Reformation symbol – the chalice, symbol of the Brethren Church, cryptogram, A, Ω and the Testament tables. Over the entrance to the hall, there are sacramental symbols of baptism and Lord's Supper.



THE MORAVIAN-SILESIAN REGION





The easternmost region of the Czech Republic covers the area of 5,427 square kilometres and there live 1,247,370 inhabitants. It is the second highest number of inhabitants of all the regions. In the north, the Moravian-Silesian Region borders on two Polish Voivodeships Opole and Silesia, in the northeast it borders on the Žilina Region in the Slovak Republic, in the south it borders on the Zlín Region and in the west on the Olomouc Region. It is divided into six districts: Bruntál, Opava, Nový Jičín, Ostrava-Town, Karviná and Frýdek-Místek. There are four Euro-Regions in the region: the Beskydy Mountains, Praděd, Silesia and Těšín Silesia.

It is a hilly region; the Hrubý Jeseník Mountain with the highest point Praděd (1,492 metres) extends to the west. Praděd is the highest mountain of both regions, the Moravian-Silesian Region as well as the Olomouc Region. There are the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy with the Lysá Mountain (1,323 metres) and Radhošť in the east; we will find the Low Jeseník and Oderské Hills in the southwest. Forests cover 35 percent of the territory of the region. The southernmost part of the Silesian Lowlands – the Opava-Ostrava Basin touches the area around Ostrava.

The river Odra is the most well-known of the local rivers. It springs in the Oderské Hills, on its way it takes up the river Opava and Ostravice and it leaves our country at the mouth of the river Olše. There are three protected landscape areas in the region: the Beskydy Mountains, the Jeseníky Mountains, Poodří (area along the Odra river). The Moravian-Silesian Region is not only rich in the natural beauties; we can find here a lot of interesting and historically valuable castles and chateaux – Sovinec, Hukvaldy, Starý Jičín, Fulnek and others. The towns such as Nový Jičín or Opava or Štramberk are also worth mentioning.

However, there is also the Region of Ostrava – the biggest industrial centre of the Czech Republic with a regional capital of the Moravian-Silesian Region – Ostrava. We should not forget the famous natives: Sigmund Freud, František Palacký, Petr Bezruč, Johann Georg Mendel and also Emil Zátpek.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has also its congregations in this region. We will visit Český Těšín, Hodslavice, Krnov, Ostrava and Suchdol nad Odrou. Each of them has its own story...



ČESKÝ TĚŠÍN



Since the year 1920 Český Těšín has been sharing a fate of a town divided by the state borders. It used to be a bilingual but it is still one city. It lies on the left bank of the river Olše at the edge of the Ostrava Basin at an altitude of 270 metres and 25, 573 inhabitants live there. It is surrounded by several dams and the nearest town is a Polish town Cieszyn. It has several superlatives: the biggest and the busiest border crossing with Poland, the most important centre of the Polish minority in the Czech Republic and the smallest number of historical monuments in a divided town. Although, the Museum of the Těšín Region remained here as well as the Museum Library Silesia and the railway station of Košice-Bohumín track from the middle of the 19th century, most of the historical monuments can be found in the Polish side. Český Těšín had to face and deal with all these factors during the years; the ethnic relations between Czech, Poles and Germans were not negligible, either. Finally, in the year 1938 a Czech part of Těšín was connected to Poland and the town was formally united. But on the 1st of September 1939 the town was invaded by the German army and it became a part of the Great German Empire. This disastrous situation affected hardestly the Jewish community in both parts of Těšín: synagogues were burned and the Jewish inhabitants were deported to the extermination camps.

After the war, life in such a difficult nationality and political situation was returning back to normal only slowly. In recent years we can note a mutual approachement of both parts of the town as well as a developing cooperation across the borders which is also supported by common membership in the European Union.

A division of Těšín in 1920 caused difficulties also to the churches. In the Czech part of the town the Roman Catholic Church had one church from 1894, it was consecrated to the Heart of Jesus. The Protestants lost their church. In 1922 the Czech Protestant congregation was permitted and it joined the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) but they wished to remain at the Augsburg confession.

After the Second World War the renewed Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren congregation obtained a church after the German Evangelical Church. This functionalist building was built in a style of basilica in the year 1927 according to architects Koziel's and Schöne's plan. A nice rectory was built next to it. The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren congregation in Český Těšín has been using the whole complex until now. In the recent years rooms for lecture activities and accommodation of the young people were also built.



HODSLAVICE



In the Podbeskydské Hills at the southern edge of the Natural park Kojetín along the brook Zrzávka the municipality Hodslavice is stretching. A road connecting Nový Jičín and Valašské Meziříčí is crossing the village. There is a nice hilly countryside with plenty of forests, fields and meadows. The village is at an altitude of 337 metres and over 1,700 inhabitants live here.

The first records about Hodslavice come from the year 1411 from a time of Lacek's of Kravaře reign. The traditions in the region were Hussite and Protestant. A memorial small wooden church in Hodslavice is one of the oldest in Moravia. It was built either by the Hussites or by the Unity of Brethren (1551 is usually mentioned as a year of origin). Only later it became a Roman Catholic Church. Post-White-Mountain period brought a hard oppression particularly from the Olomouc Jesuits. Secret Protestants gathered in a small forest Domorac or in Mořkov at the miller's. In Štramberk they hid the Bible in an apiary.

After a declaration of the Toleration Patent the Protestants joined the Augsburg Confession. The congregation was established in the year 1782 and at the beginning the worship took place in a barn. A small wooden Toleration house of prayer was built already in 1783; this unstable building however did not stand long. In the year 1813 a construction of a new stone house of prayer started. At that time a foundation stone of a

church was laid in a small hill above the village. It was solemnly consecrated in the year 1819. In 1851 a quadrilateral tower with a bulbous turret was built above an entrance door. The windows in an apse were broadened. A choir above the entrance dates back to the 19th century. There is an old Protestant school near the former house of prayer. Jiří Palacký directed this school (at the beginning in his own house) from the year 1786. J. Palacký was our famous historian František Palacký's father.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Protestant school was rebuilt in a congregation house; from outside it was however preserved in its original form. Josef Hromádka was a long-time curator of the congregation in Hodslavice. He was a father of a later significant theologian and professor of the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Prague Josef L. Hromádka. A hall in a congregation house is arranged as its memorial hall. The inhabitants of Hodslavice built a modern rectory in the garden of the congregation in the 1920^s.

František Palacký's native house is nowadays a national cultural monument. Nearby a wooden small church on the small village green there is a monument of Palacký from the year 1948. This monument was made by professor Vladimír Navrátil. In the opposite hill we can see the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus built in a Neo-Romanesque style in 1907.



CHURCH WITH RECTORY

KRNOV



Krnov lies in the northeastern part of the Czech Republic and it is actually behind the mountains as if separated from the rest of the country by Hrubý and Nízký Jeseník. On the confluence of the rivers Opava and Opavice, a few kilometres from the Polish border this town lies at an altitude of 316 metres and has 25,000 inhabitants.

Krnov has an old and rich history. The town is already mentioned in the 13th century. It is an important crossroad of trade routes, it got a privilege of having the town walls, the torso of which we can see until now. In the year 1377 the then Principality of Opava was divided and the Principality of Krnov was established. This was the time when a colonization, mostly German began. At the beginning of the 16th century during the reign of the Hohenzollern of Ansbach dynasty a late Gothic prince residence with the Renaissance elements was built in Krnov. A chateau became a significant building dominating the town. Later Jan Jiří Krnovský took a governance over the principality. He participated in the revolt of the Estates and therefore his property was confiscated after the Battle of the White Mountain. In the year 1631 Karel of Lichtenštejn who was already an owner of the Principality of Opava bought also the Principality of Krnov. The dynasty of Lichtenštejn hold this area until 1945 when it was taken away by the Czechoslovak state.

The 19th century was a positive period for Krnov. A textile industry was developed and since the 1870^s Riegr brothers' organ production became known and later even world-wide famous. Many nice public buildings and also factory villas arose here. They were built by significant architects from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and also from Germany. In the period of the Munich Treaty in 1938 a majority of the inhabitants reported to the German nationality and during the Second World War Krnov belonged to the Great German Empire with all post-war consequences. In the year 1945 the town was bombed.

Unfortunately the 1970^s and the 1980^s as well as the period of the communist regime

deprived Krnov of many valuable historical monuments. We mention a parish Church of St. Martin. Originally it was Gothic, in the 1780^s it was rebuilt in a Baroque style. There are valuable Renaissance tombstones. St. Benedict's Church is the oldest preserved building of this type in the Moravian-Silesian Region. Its foundations come from the 1st half of the 13th century, the archaeological research revealed valuable wall paintings. The church belongs among cultural monuments. In a church at the Minorite monastery we find beautiful frescoes by Joseph Stern from the year 1765. Above Krnov in the hill Cvilín there is an old pilgrimage place with Our Lady of Sorrows' Church and with the Way of the Cross. On the top of the hill there is also a look-out tower with beautiful views of surroundings.

The Protestant Church on today's Hus Square is a three-nave Neo-Gothic building from the beginning of the 20th century. A plan according to the architect Franz Blasch was realized by builder Ernst Latzel; an organ comes from the local organ company Rieger and Klos. The church served the German Protestant church till 1945. After a departure of the German inhabitants it was used for some time by the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC). The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren congregation that took over the church was founded on the 1st of January 1949. In the 1970^s the church could be reconstructed thanks to a big help and it was solemnly reopened on the 9th of July 1978. The Protestant church with its 52 metres high tower dominates Krnov and it is a spiritual home for a small but live congregation.

It is worth noticing that between the years 2008–2009 Krnov was declared "The Town of the Trees" for its excellent way of taking care of the urban greenery.



OSTRAVA





The town of Ostrava is the regional capital and the statutory town of the Moravian-Silesian Region. It lies in the Ostrava Basin, south of the Opava Hills at an altitude of 208–334 metres. In the whole huge industrial agglomeration there live about 312,000 inhabitants. It is a specific area by its size, big concentration of industry and by its entire history.

Once a small settlement grew here on the amber trail over the river Ostrá (Ostravice); according to which the town got its name. For long years it belonged to the Hukvaldy domain of the bishops of Olomouc. Later the growing village was also spreading along the confluence of the rivers Opava and Odra and was divided into the Moravian and Silesian Ostrava. During the Middle Ages the town was developing well; a decline occurred later during the Thirty Years' War.

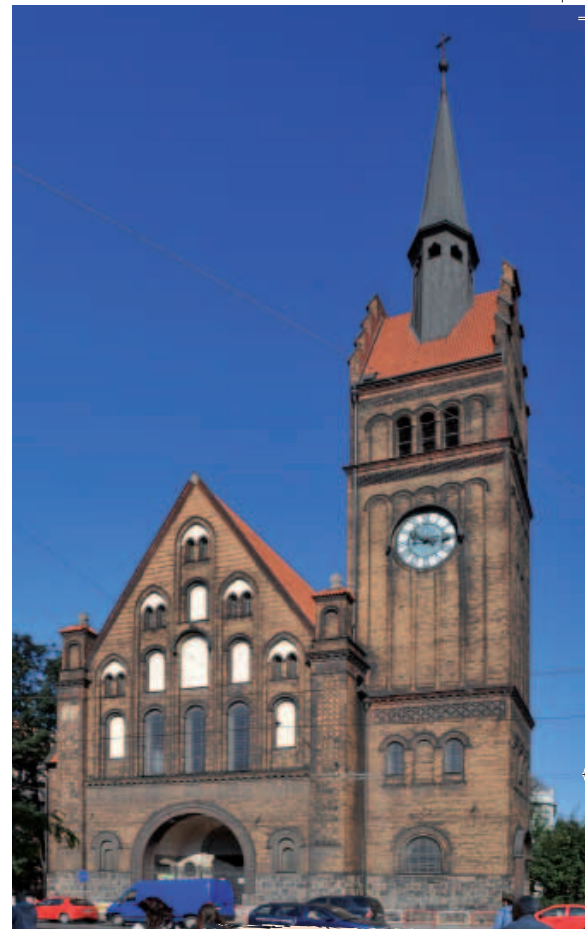
In 1763 miller Jan Augustin of Klimkovice discovered stone coal in Burňa Valley in Silesian Ostrava. However, coal mining began later, in the 1780s. The names of the Wilczek family (the owners of the Silesian-Ostrava domain), the Rothschilds and the Habsburg Těšín archdukes appeared in this connection. In 1828 the archbishop of Olomouc Rudolf Jan founded steelworks in Vítkovice. A rapid industrial development of the town followed, surrounding villages merged with Ostrava, humps appeared. In 1924 a big Ostrava arose. The important dominant sight of the town is the New Town Hall with its 85 metres high tower from 1930. It is a work of architect Karel Kotas. Another significant monuments is St. Wenceslas' Roman Catholic Church which is considered to be the oldest preserved building monument in Ostrava. The Divine Saviour's Cathedral from 1889 is the second biggest church in Moravia. We can also visit the Silesian-Ostrava castle. Some parts of Ostrava were under Polish or German occupation during the Second World War.

Today we can find recultivated areas and nice parks in Ostrava. The town, however, suffers by air pollution. The Polanský Forest and the

Polanská Meadow are protected natural areas. Four permanent theatres, Janáček's Conservatory, Janáček's Philharmonic Orchestra and also the University of Ostrava are here.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has one congregation in Ostrava. From the German Protestant church the Protestants gained a monumental Christ's Church from a ficelle masonry and with asymmetrically built tower. They share this church with the Silesian Church of the Augsburg Confession. The church was built in the early 20th century and it is a unique work of architects Ludwig Faigl and Karel Troll from Vienna. In Ostrava the ECCB congregation was established in 1919. Few years later near the German Christ's Church a congregation house with a big Třanovský's hall and with relevant additional rooms, with a flat for a preacher and with a few tenants flats was built. The building was done by builder Emil Ženatý.

The second congregation of the ECCB was in Ostrava – Vítkovice. In 1999 both congregations were connected together.



ŠUCHDOL NAD ODROU





Suchdol nad Odrou is a township, it lies in the district of Nový Jičín near the Moravian Gate and the Protected landscape area of Poodří and has around 2,500 inhabitants. The Kletenský brook flows through the village and pours into the river Odra. Although Suchdol is at an altitude of 272 metres there is quite a rough climate there because the country is opened towards the north. It lies on the once important amber route between Danube and Visla which led along the left bank of the Odra river. The Slavonic settlement from the 13th century was destroyed by the Tatars. Mostly German colonists began to arrive here in the 14th century. The lords of Kravaře owned the domain but the owners were frequently changed. The inhabitants of Suchdol and its surroundings underwent the biggest agony during the Thirty Years' War. The imperial army, the Swedes and the Danish army were changing here. In 1624 a plague killed most of inhabitants. In 1653–1828 the Serenys family were the rulers of the domain. Another disasters came during the Napoleonic Wars. The soldiers were changing here again. After the unfortunate Battle of Slavkov (Austerlitz) they brought the typhoid into the region.

The post-White-Mountain period meant a religious persecution for the secret Protestants. Under the influence of Kristián David of Ženkláva the members of the Unity of Brethren in Suchdol and its surroundings decided to leave their homes and find a better place for living. They found such a place at Mikuláš Zinzendorf's domain in the Upper Lusatia. He was a convinced Lutheran and he took care of these refugees. At his domain a town Ochránov (Herrnhut) was founded and a renewed Unity of Brethren was formed here on the 13th of August 1727. Thanks to their missionary activity they soon began to be widely known as the Moravian Brethren.

After the declaration of the Toleration Patent the secret Protestants who did not leave Suchdol confessed to their confession. In 1782 a congregation was established and a house of prayer was built soon.

In the later years the situation in the region calmed down slowly. Suchdol became an important railway station and a municipality was formed. After the foundation of Czechoslovakia there was a strong tendency to establish its own

"Sudetenland" here. In the 1920^s families of railwaymen and a few families from Zelow came here. After the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia came into being, Suchdol became a part of the Great German Empire. Trains taking the prisoners to the concentration camps, were passing this railway station and after the war some of them were coming back in the same way. A memorial plaque at the railway station in Suchdol commemorates their suffering.

After the year 1945 new inhabitants began to come to the region, especially from the Wallachia region. The Germans had to leave the Republic. The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren was confirmed on the 20th of December 1946. The beginnings were hard. The later period connected with the collectivization of villages did not bring peace, either. The Protestants of Suchdol gathered in the rectory, in a congregation room. A big church which belonged to the German Lutheran Church before, was only lent to the congregation. There are two churches in Suchdol. The Lutheran church was built in the 1850^s in a Neo-Classical style by a significant Austrian architect Ludwig Förster. Only recently it was repossessed by the congregation. Today's Roman Catholic St. Catherine's Church from the 16th century was originally Protestant. There is even a memorial plaque saying that J. A. Komenský preached here between 1618–1621. Both churches as well as today's Catholic parish from 1739 are rated among cultural monuments. The parish is however falling into disrepair. The railway station building belongs among the protected monuments, too. There are two museums in the town – Museum of Suchdol nad Odrou Municipality and Museum of the Moravian Brethren. This museum is managed carefully. The fate of the Unity of Brethren and its members is reflected here.

In 2008 the Protestants of Suchdol celebrated the 150th anniversary of their church. Thanks to the common effort from home and from abroad, today their church is a dignified place showing that "the time of churches is not over, yet."



THE SILESIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

BOHUMÍN



The town is located in the South Silesia (the Těšín Principedom in the past), on the right embankment of the river Odra. After the Těšín area split up, it became a part of Czechoslovakia, in 1938–1939 it was Polish and later, till the end of World War II, it was a part of Germany. In fact, there is a two town: (Old) Bohumín and Šunychl (Schönichl) developing wildly after Ferdinand's North Railway was opened in 1847. In 1924, Šunychl and its neighbouring villages got the town status and changed the name to New Bohumín. Later, in 1973, it united with (Old) Bohumín, the name of which it kept. A third of the population in both the places was German, displaced after World War II. Nowadays, Bohumín has the population of about 22,700 people.

The Protestant congregation of Bohumín originated from the movement of the Silesian German and Polish people in the late 19th century. The Augsburg congregation started being active in Orlová in 1887 and a year later a branch Lutheran congregation was established there. In 1888, the local Protestants founded a preaching station of the Orlová congregation which had 181 participants at that time. To serve their worship, they borrowed a room at the local school from the management of the Northern Railway. However, the railway school was moved to another place soon and they had to look for another meeting room.

Since the town council refused their demand for using a school room for their religious purposes, they rented a part of Moritz Saffier's pub but soon started to consider building their own church. Their worship took place first Sundays of the month and also on Good Friday, i.e. thirteen times a year.

With an intervention of Dr. Theodor Haas, a Moravian-Silesian Protestant superintendent and rector, and supported by associations as well as individuals, a Protestant church started to be built. After the plot was provided by Count Heinrich Larisch-Mönnich, the foundation stone of the new church (nowadays Štefánikova Str.) was laid on the 12th of August, 1900. It was a one nave, Neo-Gothic, red-brick church with a tower, built on the Latin cross shaped plan, constructed by the local builder Josef Berg who constructed it according to the Brno architect Julius Leischnig's project. The total cost amounted to about 60,000 crowns. A part of money was donated by the municipal board, local entrepreneurs and believers as well as by the faithful ones from the Netherlands and Germany, most money was given by Gustav

Adolf's Association. The church was consecrated in 1901 and supplied with bells on the 15th of October, 1913. This ceremony was attended by the Old Catholics from Bohumín who also started using the church for their services.

After Czechoslovakia was founded, the branch congregation and their mother congregation joined the Silesian Evangelical Church. In 1922 it became independent and built a rectory next to the church (nowadays Masarykova Str.) four years later. As written in the memorial book of Bohumín from 1925, the Protestant parish office in New Bohumín looked after approximately 1,000 parishioners at that time, two thirds of them being German and almost one third Polish.

During World War II, the congregation nearly disappeared. The church was given to the German Evangelical Church and confiscated after the war. The Silesian Evangelical Church did not get it back until the beginning of the 1970^s when, in 1974, it was reconstructed to get its today's look. The rectory, though, was repaired a long time after it, in 1991.

Czech Protestants within the Orlová congregation gained independence after Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, and in 1924 their congregation was established and joined the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

Already from 1923, Czech Protestant worship was taking place in Bohumín once a month, in the art room of the Czech school. In 1933, the preaching station of the congregation in Orlová was founded. Except for the war period during which the Orlová congregation was actually dissolved, the preaching station has worked up to now, having their meetings in the church belonging to the Silesian Evangelical Church which they borrowed from them. No worship is served in these days.

The first Old Catholic worship was served in 1904 by the rector Erhart from Mährisch Schönberg / Šumperk. 72 people, mostly of German nationality, converted. Later, the branch congregation of the Old Catholic congregation in Friedland an der Mohra / Frýdlant nad Moravicí (nowadays Břidličná) was founded. The congregation was sometimes called Olmütz – Friedland – Oderberg / Olomouc – Břidličná – Bohumín. Service in Bohumín was given 6–8 times a year in the Protestant church. The Old Catholic branch congregation was dissolved in connection with the displacement of the Germans after World War II.



THE SILESIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

NÁVSI

M Taking a train from Český Těšín or Trinec to Žilina, the last Protestant toleration church to be found is the one in Návsí u Jablunkova (386 metres above sea level; 3,789 inhabitants), right before the Slovak border. The local congregation was established in 1791 although the people in the Těšín principality started professing an Augsburg faith as early as in the 16th century and all churches were Protestant.

In time of the counter-Reformation, the Protestants in the Jablunkovsko region met in woods of the Beskydy mountains, holding their secret worship in Dolní Lomná in the place called Kostelky where you can find a modest memorial now.

Apart from a wooden church, a wooden building of a Protestant school was built and a bricked rectory started to be constructed, too. In 1808, the original school building was replaced by a bricked one which became public in 1869. Since the 1990^s, it has been used as a training and recreational centre for the general public. This cultural monument is called The congregation House of Emaus nowadays, offering 20 beds in 5 rooms and two common rooms.

The wooden church was replaced by the present one in 1820 and its tower annexed to it in 1849. The one nave Empire church has a capacity of 600 people (including those on the galleries), its speciality is the restored mechanical tower clock from 1891, as well as three bells, already the fourth set of bells in this church, the former ones were being confiscated for military purpose in the past. The original ground floor rectory was rebuilt into two-storey one on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the congregation's foundation. In the 1990^s, it was

reconstructed thoroughly and a new part built up to provide another flat for a pastor.

In 1841, the congregation set up a Protestant cemetery where some eminent pastors are buried, for example Jan Winkler, a revivalist and writer, or Senior František Michejda who was a founder and co-founder of several associations and organizations dedicated to improving social conditions, and an editor of a number of ecclesiastical and professional magazines which he issued in the Návsí rectory. An evidence of his importance is a fact that he was visited by President T. G. Masaryk.

In the beginning, the church in Návsí was used by the Protestants from fifteen villages situated in the Jablunkovsko region. Eventually, however, the congregation established three other Protestant communities that became independent. Owing to a new Czech-Polish border set after World War I, three villages behind the Jablunkovský Pass became Polish, and in 1930 the local Protestants founded their own congregation and built their new church in Istebná.

In 1950, the Hrádek congregation gained independence. In 2009 the congregation in Písek u Jablunkova was established and the following year, their new church, an architecturally very interesting building, was finished. The Návsí congregation is a part of the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession and works with people of all ages, offering leisure activities for children and young people.



EMAUS CONGREGATION HOUSE

THE SILESIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

ORLOVÁ



The origins of the Protestants from Orlová date back to the Reformation time when Martin Luther's teaching started to spread in Silesia. At first, they gathered in a confiscated Benedictine church. Situation changed during the counter-Reformation when they had their church confiscated and were made to hold their secret meetings in the woods of Holotovec in Lazy. The pressure was released in 1707 and one of the "mercy churches" could be built in Cieszynia. Finally, the freedom came in 1781 when the Toleration Patent was issued, followed by the Protestant Patent in 1861.

The Orlová Protestants decided to build their own church. Its foundation stone was laid on the 24th of June, 1861 and a year later, on the 15th of October, 1862 the building was finished and consecrated.

Between 1861–1886, the growing congregation was unified, Protestant cemetery set up, bells were bought and Protestant school founded. The number of believers was increasing steadily.

The following period was badly affected by World War I. The congregation lost some of its members and in 1916, the bells were confiscated which made the local Protestants very sad. The confiscated bells were not substituted by new ones until the end of the war. In 1921, a new organ was bought, the church was electrified and a new altar placed in it in 1929. The Protestant cemetery, though, had to be closed due to increased mining activities in 1930. A new congregation house was put up and opened on the 25 of October, 1932.

During World War II, lots of ministers were persecuted and arrested. After the war, the congregation's life quieted down again. In 1950, the church had to be repaired when damaged by mining. The bad effect the mining had on Orlová got worse and the village started to change. A part of the congregation's member had to move away. The congregation was going through very difficult times.

Revival of congregation life came in the 1960^s. An increasing number of children was attending religion and confirmation lessons, and more repairs were done on the church in 1970. Due to lack of money, the congregation got into debt. Also, the bad effect that the mining had on the church building was more and more visible. The church needed a complete overhaul. It started

in May 1980 and on the 26th of June, 1983, the building was consecrated.

In the early 1980^s, the decision to build a new rectory was taken. The building was finished and started to be used in 1987. The old congregation house was demolished and a farm building put up.

Since 1989, the congregation has been placing emphasis on working with children and young people. The Christian Association Benjamin was founded in the 1990^s, and holiday and weekend camps, as well as other activities are organized regularly.

In 2004, the church had already been destroyed by mining that much that from safety reasons, the congregation was forced to stop using it. The problem was discussed thoroughly, even demolition of the building was considered, a year later, however, the church was decided to be overhauled again.

Nowadays, the local congregation is a living part of the Church, worship is held regularly and various meetings and activities organized to attract children and youth. The church has become a cultural centre of Orlová.

The Protestant church in Orlová is one nave, late Classicist building from 1862, constructed by builder Josef Gros from Těšín. It is an interesting example of a religious architecture of the second part of the 19th century which had a significant influence on urbanism of Orlová and on the architecture of the whole North Moravian region. It is a brick, plastered, one nave building with a front tower and a polygonal closed presbytery with an altar made in the late Neo-Renaissance style by the woodcarver Nitra from Horní Bludovice. In its centre, there is a picture of Christ the Victor. On both sides of the altar, two wooden statues are placed – Apostle Peter on the left and Apostle Paul on the right. The altar is decorated with several figural reliefs of angels. Below the top crucifix, there is a circular coloured stained-window with a symbolic motif of a dove. The space in front of the altar is occupied by a baptismery from the late 19th century. The pulpit is set in the left wall of the presbytery with a baldaquin. The organ is placed on the choir. In the tower, there are three bells made by Wenle company from Bockeren near Leipzig in 1918.

The church was restored in 2005 and worship is held here regularly.



THE SILESIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

STONAVA



M On the way to the village, take a route from Český Těšín to Karviná and turn left just before you get to the town. Occupying the area of about 14 km², Stonava has the population of nearly 2,000 people. The first records about it date back to 1415.

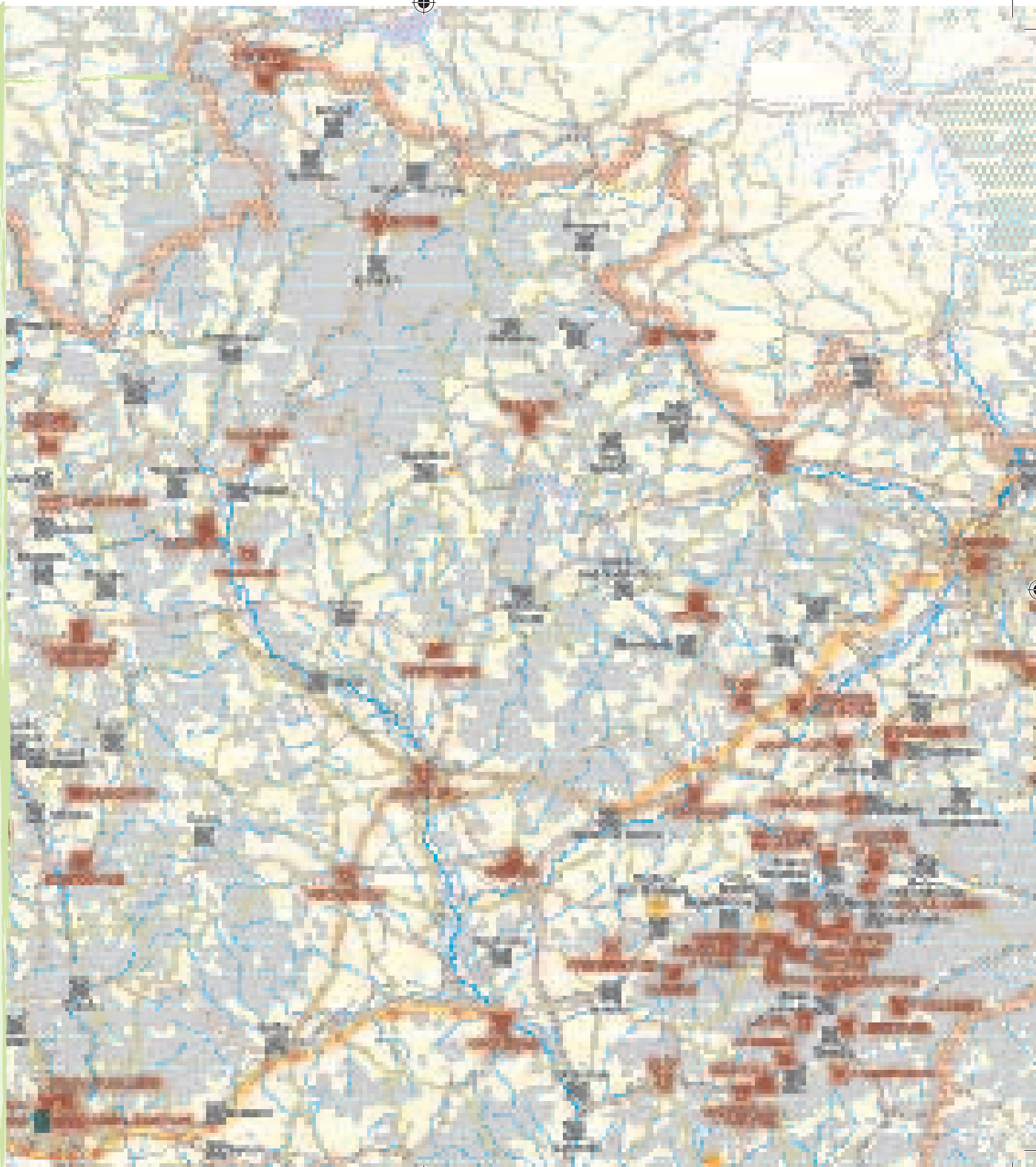
After the Toleration Patent was issued, the Protestants in Stonava belonged to the Bludovice congregation, burying their dead in a Catholic grave-yard. Their own cemetery founded on the donated piece of land was consecrated in 1858 and a chapel with a bell a year later. The church was built and consecrated in 1938. It is 18 metres long and 10.5 metres wide. The congregation was established in 1950.

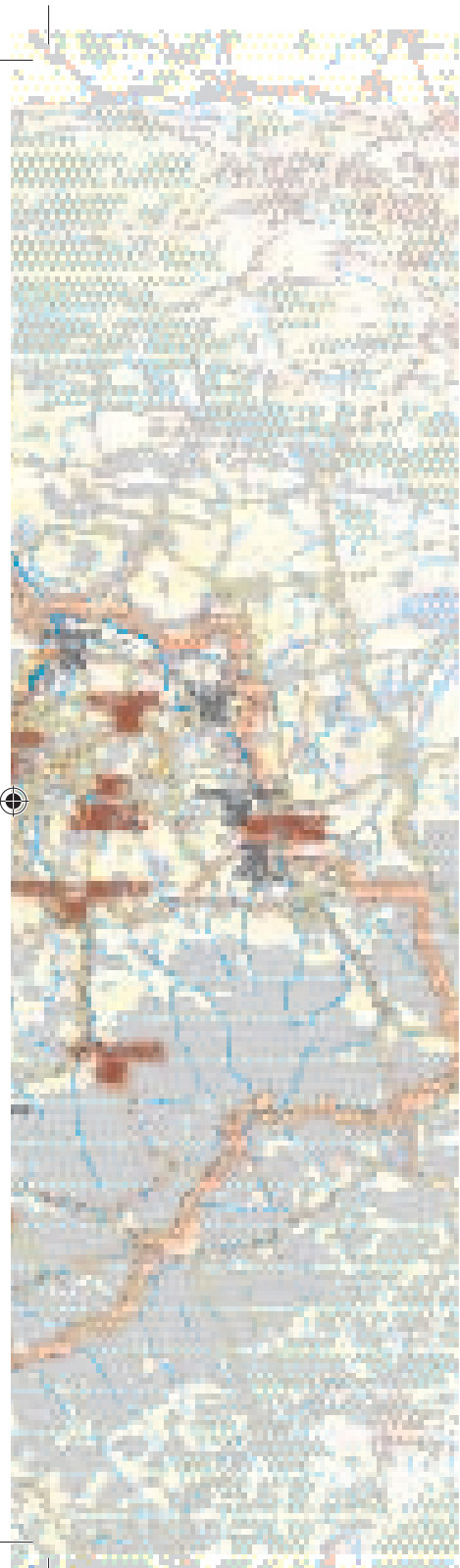
Modern history of Stonava is closely connected with coal mining which gradually changed the village and its inhabitants' lives. Due to the

mines, lots of them had to leave their homes and the original number of 5,500 people living here after World War II was falling rapidly, there was a threat the village would completely disappear. The change came in 1989. Since then, Stonava has been experiencing its economic, cultural and spiritual development and it has become a place which is definitely worth visiting.



THE OLMOUC REGION





The Olomouc Region is situated in the northeastern part of the Czech Republic. It covers an area of 5,267 square kilometres. Almost 650,000 inhabitants live in its five districts (Olomouc, Prostějov, Přerov, Šumperk and Jeseník). The northwestern part of the district of Jeseník belongs to Czech Silesia. The boundaries of the Olomouc Region are formed by its northern state border with the Principality of the Lower Silesia and the Principality of Opole in Poland; in the east lies the Moravian-Silesian Region, in the southeast the Zlín Region, in the southwest the South-

Moravian Region and in the west we can find the Pardubice Region.

The Olomouc Region is a land of natural beauties. In its northern part there is the Hrubý and Nízký Jeseník mountain range with a large protected landscape area of the Jeseník Mountains which are shared by the Olomouc Region and the Moravian-Silesian Region. Along its ridge there used to be an old historical border between Moravia and Silesia. We will also find here the highest mountain of both regions Praděd (1,492 metres). The Rychleby Mountains in the very northern part are charming, not yet visited by many tourists. In Javorník there is a beautiful chateau Jánský vrch and a nearby village of Travná used to be a place of meeting for young people. The spa of Jeseník and Dolní Lipová are also much sought by tourists. From the east the Dražanská Highland protects a fertile area of Haná in the region of the Central Moravia.

The river Morava flows through the Olomouc Region from north to south. The protected landscape area where the river creates interesting meanders is called Litovelské Pomoraví. Near Troubky known from devastating floods in the recent years, the river Bečva flows into the river Morava and then the river already leaves the Olomouc Region. A small part of the region in the northeast belongs to a river basin of the river Odra.

Besides agricultural area of Haná there are various industrial centres in the particular towns of the Olomouc Region. The regional capital Olomouc is an important industrial centre. It is not necessary to say that in the Olomouc Region we can find many interesting towns, castles and chateaux with a rich history besides valuable natural monuments. Bouzov, Helfštýn, Plumlov or Velké Losiny and many others, important spas, well-preserved folklore areas such as Historical Village Reserve of

Příkazy or Kojetín with a celebration of the Ride of the Kings.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) has ten congregations in the Olomouc Region – we will visit Olomouc, Přerov, Šumperk and Hrabová. Each of these places has its own interesting story connected to a history of the particular town in which it is located.



HABOVÁ





Between Šumperk and Mohelnice the river Morava flows through the Mohelnice Furrow. Approximately in the middle of this distance we will find Zábřeh na Moravě and from here it is not far to Hrabová any more. It is a small village with about 500 inhabitants; it lies at an altitude of 290 metres but we can also find higher hills in the surroundings: Bílý kámen (588 metres) and Malá Polanka (450 metres). Near Hrabová in Vitošov a big limestone quarry with a limekiln is visible from afar.

We do not know a lot about a history of Hrabová, even though the first written record dates back to the year 1334. We can get more information about local life from the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) when cultural societies (reading clubs) started to appear and the activity of gymnastic organization Sokol came into being. It is necessary to remember an untiring activity of the Protestant vicar Rudolf Šedý who travelled to Hrabová from far away Svěbohov. He supported the interest of the local people in education and he was inviting interesting guests from home and abroad. In Hrabová a number of Protestants gradually increased. So called “conversion movement” after the establishing of Czechoslovakia played an important role in this connection. A congregation of the Evangelical

Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was founded in 1923. At the beginning the worship was held in a Sokol hall or at a school. A foundation stone of a church in Hrabová was laid on the 17th of May 1925. The building was designed by architect Oldřich Liska. The church was built in a modern purist style emphasizing a worship part of the building as well as rooms for congregation activity including a flat for the minister. A room for worship is hidden in a lengthwise building with interesting windows. Before a construction of the church was finished (in the year 1933) the worship took place in a small hall. A side staircase with a niche for a sculpture of a chalice and a tower with three bells are attached to the main building.

A unique building – probably the only one in the Czech Republic – got an astronomical cupola with a real astronomical telescope. Children who visited the church in Hrabová were especially fascinated by observing the surrounding landscape through the pieces of colour glass placed in the cupola of the astronomical observatory. Since the year 2003 the Protestant church in Hrabová has been listed as a cultural monument.



OLOMOUČ



In the southern part of the Olomouc Region, in the centre of Haná lies its capital Olomouc. It was built on the confluence of the rivers Morava and Bystřice at an altitude of 219 metres. The sixth largest town of the Czech Republic is a home for more than 100,000 inhabitants. It is an important railway junction and it is surrounded by a highway network. Olomouc is a seat of the Archbishops of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church but also the University of Palacký, Oldřich Stibor's Theatre and the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Olomouc was probably founded during the reign of Václav I but already in 1063 Vratislav II founded a bishopric here. After Prague, Olomouc is the second oldest and the second largest historic town reserve. Here we can find buildings which are national cultural monuments: a Romanesque castle from the reign of the Přemyslid dynasty with a cylindrical tower and with the rests of a palace belonging among the most valuable monuments and representing one of the most important Romanesque architectural monuments in our country.

Near the tower in a later residence of the capitular deanery, Václav III was murdered on the 4th of August 1306. By his death the Přemyslid dynasty died out by the sword. A part of the castle is St. Wenceslas' Cathedral which was founded in the year 1109. Also the Hradisko Monastery, St. Moritz's Church with a unique organ and a set of Baroque fountains are national cultural monuments. There is the Holy Trinity's Column from the 18th century on the Upper Square which has been listed as UNESCO cultural heritage since the year 2000. From a tower of the Renaissance town hall from the year 1530 you can get a beautiful view of a town and its surroundings – Svatý kopeček with the Premonstrate monastery and with the Visitation of Our Lady's pilgrimage basilica from the 2nd half of the 17th century.

The Protestants in Olomouc have their history, too. Eventhough, such a strongly Catholic town had refused Jan Hus' teaching long time ago, the situation was however changing during the years. Many German inhabitants lived in Olomouc and they began to support Martin

Luther's teaching. Hus' thoughts and memories of the Unity of Brethren did not fully disappeared in the town, either. After the Battle of the White Mountain the local Protestants began to be harshly punished for their participation in the revolt of the Estates in the year 1618.

No Protestants were found in Olomouc after the declaration of the Toleration Patent by Joseph II; so thorough the recatholization had been. The first Protestant worship took place on the 20th of January 1811. Even the soldiers from a local garrison participated in it. The biggest problem similarly as in other beginning congregations was to get a place for gathering. The Body of Christ's Chapel was temporarily lent to the Protestants but only until the German Protestants built their own "red" church in 1902. It was not however allowed to serve the Czech worship there – it was from nationalist rather than confessional reasons.

The congregation of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren was founded in Olomouc in 1906. They built their house of prayer in today's Hus Street. Soon the building was not sufficient and therefore in 1913 architect Otto Kuhlmann from Charlottenburg was asked to design an extension. The preparations were interrupted by the First World War but on the 4th of July 1920 a new church with a tower was solemnly consecrated. The spacious building is very suitable, both of its original parts are ingeniously linked. A room for worship is located on the 1st floor. Big windows bring light into it, new chandeliers and pews were installed. The last adaptations of the interior were made after the big flood in 1997. A bell was moved from the "red" church. It initially belonged to the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren after the Second World War. However, in the 1960^s the church had to be given for the needs of the University Library in Olomouc.

The Conservatory of the Evangelic Academy of the ECCB has its seat near the Archbishop's palace. This school was moved here from Kroměříž. In Olomouc the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC) has also its own church. The Orthodox St. Gorazd's Church stands near the Protestant church on the other side of the river Morava.



DŘEROV





Near the Upper Moravian Vale in the Moravian Gate near the confluence of the river Bečva with the river Morava lies a town Přerov (210 metres above sea level; 47,000 inhabitants) which is an important railway junction.

The bishop of Olomouc Jindřich Zdík founded the town in the 1st half of the 12th century and from 1256 it became a royal town thanks to Přemysl Otakar II. In the place of the original citadel a Gothic castle was built, later it was rebuilt in the Renaissance style. Today there is a seat of Jan Amos Komenský's Museum. The Upper Town was founded in the 2nd half of the 15th century. The oldest building is the main St. George's Parish Church mentioned already in 1131. There are several preserved late Gothic and Renaissance houses on the Upper Square. For many years Přerov was in the hands of the Pernštejns and the Žerotíns dynasties. In this period the town developed well. Members of the Unity of Brethren settled here from the end of the 15th century. Church synods took place here and the Brethren School was of a great importance. Komenský was studying and later (between the years 1614–1618) was teaching at this school. In Přerov Jan Blahoslav was born on the 20th of February 1523. He was one of the prominent representatives of the Unity of Brethren. Sculptor František Bílek made his statue in the town.

A strong Jewish community was in Přerov, too. Today a synagogue belongs to the Orthodox church. The agony of the Thirty Years' War affected Přerov, too. The construction of a railway junction from Vienna and from Prague and the industrial development greatly contributed to the modern history of the town.

Today Přerov is a modern town with nice parks (Michalov). It is worth visiting the Neo-Renaissance Town House, the State Natural Park Žebračka is also interesting. In a nearby Předmostí we will find a monument of our ancestors who lived here 25,000 years ago. The instructive trail leads to the Monument of mammoths hunters with archaeological finds. Since 1992 Přerov has been a Historic Town Zone. In the year 1997 the town was severely damaged by a flood.

Although Přerov was characterized by so important Czech Brethren past, after the declaration of the Toleration Patent not even one Protestant was registered here. Only in the 1880s a small church was built for the German railway employees of the Augsburg confession. The Czech Protestants also used to go to this church. The sermons were in the German language so it created language problems. The first Czech Helvetian worship was held in the year 1887. The Czech Protestants gathered here until 1899. Later they had to think about their future especially in a situation when a preaching station was founded in Přerov. (An independent congregation was established on the 10th of January 1922). A temporary gathering place in a former locksmith's workshop was absolutely not suitable. Therefore it was decided to build a church. They got land for the construction in the centre of the town. On the 9th of May 1907 a foundation stone of the church was ceremonially laid. The church was built according to the famous Berlin architect Otto Kuhlmann's plan in a modernist style with historicist elements and with a side quadratic tower. It was interpreted as a congregation house, not only as a separate prayer room. The congregation house was built additionally in the 1930s.

A ceremonial consecration of the church on the 25th of March 1908 was a big event. The Protestants from Přerov were given the church by which (as we read in one of the texts in a memorial book) "the links of the presence with the Czech Brethren past of the town should be clearly indicate ". Further it is written that a "simplicity and a reduction of historical inspiration brought a high evaluation to this building as to the first example of modern church architecture in our country."

The church was seriously damaged during the catastrophic flood in 1997. During the elimination of its consequences, new arrangements of the interior according to architect Josef Barták's plan were done. The church in Přerov was again festively opened on the last October day of 1999.



ŠUMPERK



Not in vain Šumperk is called “the Gate to the Jeseníky Mountains”. The town is located in a nice valley of the river Desná at an altitude of 330 metres and has almost 28,000 inhabitants. In the surroundings of Šumperk there is a nice and varied nature with hills, valleys of the rivers and ponds. The spa Bludov offers a rest and also a possibility of rehabilitation; in Velké Losiny there is a remarkably well-preserved Renaissance castle which belonged to the Žerotín family and a manufactory for hand made paper production. The castle as well as the manufactory which is unique in the whole Europe, rank among national cultural monuments.

Šumperk was founded in the 13th century and soon it started to grow also thanks to the colonization. Precious metals were mined in the surroundings and a production of linen and cloth trade started to develop. Šumperk was a royal town, in the 16th century belonged to the Žerotín family who built a Renaissance family residence from the original castle. But later they transferred their residence to Velké Losiny.

In the history of the town the 17th century stands out as one of the most difficult periods. Because of supporting the revolt of the Estates in 1618 a town property was confiscated, the family of the Lichtenštejns became the lords of the town and its surroundings. A hard counter-Reformation came, the town was plundered by the Swedes and it burned down in 1669. The region of Šumperk was the most horribly affected by so called “witch processes” in the 2nd half of the 17th century. By the Inquisition court the innocent people were accused of black magic, they were tortured and killed. Then 25 people died in this horrible way. The mayor and a local priest Lautner were among the victims, too.

Šumperk began to develop again in the 19th century. Then a textile production started to increase, noticeably local fabric were demanded home and also abroad. The owners of the factories built their houses according to the designs which the important Vienna architects participated in. At that time Šumperk was called

a “Small Vienna”. A former Dominican monastery with the early Baroque the Annunciation of Our Lady’s Church (one of the most popular monuments in the town), a town hall with a look-out tower and with nice Baroque and Empire houses together with other historical monuments- a central part of the town create a Historical Town Zone.

The Art-Nouveau St. Jan Evangelista’s Church from the early 20th century is on the list of the Cultural monuments and it belongs to the Old Catholic Church.

In Šumperk there was mostly German population. After 1945 they had to leave and new settlers came in. The historical part of Šumperk declined, prefabricated houses were built as the industry grew. After the years, the town is slowly returning to its former beauty.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren gained a church and a rectory from the German Protestant Church. A congregation was established in 1946. It consisted of Polish reemigrants and other new inhabitants who came to Šumperk in the postwar years.

The original German Augsburg congregation was founded in Šumperk in 1899. Before it was a part of the Olomouc-Šumperk congregation. A Neo-Gothic church in a shape of a cross was built on today’s Square of Liberty. It was designed by the architect Wenzel Knappek. The construction work was led by a local builder Josef Bayer. The church was consecrated in 1874. Originally it did not have a tower; it was added in 1908. There is a gallery in its wider rectangular part. A nice large rectory house create a complex with the church. It is interconnected by a garden. The church was thoroughly repaired at the end of the last century.



CHURCH AND CONGREGATION HOUSE

