



EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
IN CENTRAL GERMANY  
EKM

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# The EKM

Central Germany (former GDR)

4.500.000 residents  
about 700.000 Church members  
(average 15 %,  
variation betw. 9% and 40%)



# 691.559 Church Members

37 church districts

3.137 congregations

3.903 church buildings

1.800 church councils

927 ministers

200 parish educators

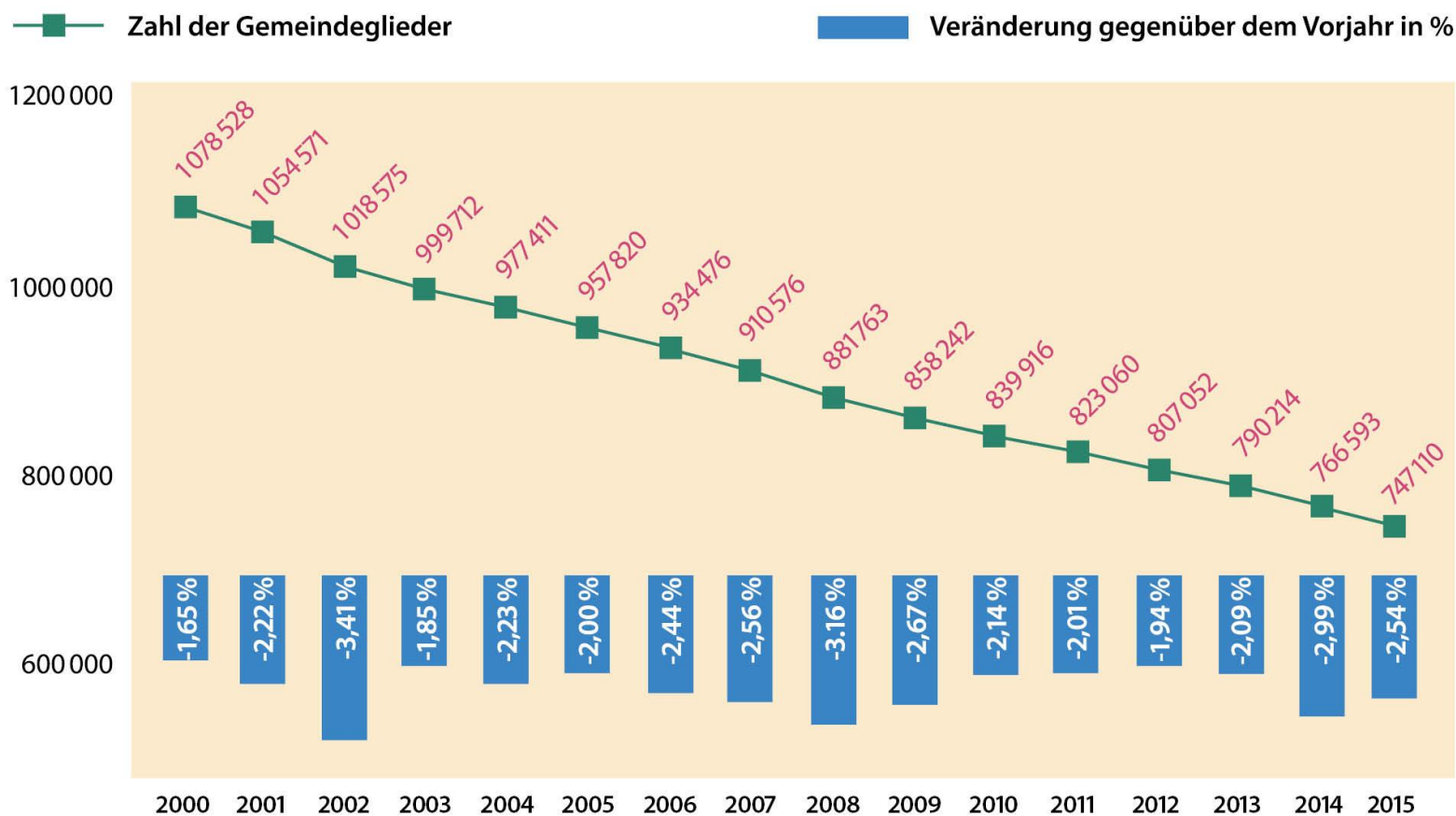
190 church musicians

40.000 volunteers



# Decline in Membership

## Gemeindegliederentwicklung 2000 bis 2015





# Decline in Membership

- 5.000 people leave church per year
- 5.000 deceased church members per year
- About 6.500 people are baptised per year (relation to child birth: 17%)
- Many people, esp. the young and educated, leave the area.

About 22.000 church members lost per year since 1992

# Rich in Buildings

Church members  
per building:

In Germany 1.190

In the EKM 204

Very old!

A whole lot of history.

Especially worth visiting!



# Open Churches

**In 2015:** Of the 3.927 churches only 140 are open for visitors on a regular basis.

**Now:** more than 1000.

Church buildings preach the gospel and tell about the faith of the local people.

Church buildings as opportunity to get in contact with the people. → **Open Summer Church 2020!**



# Small Congregations

10 % of congregations have less than 50 members.

Two-thirds of the congregations have less than 300 church members.

- One pastor serves 3-4, sometimes 8-10 congregations.
- Other paid staff covers 3-4 “pastoral areas”.
- Congregations have more than 1, 2 or more church buildings.



# Our Constitution

- Congregational life in “temporary congregations”, in special situations of life and job.
- People, who are not baptised, are invited to take part in church life
- Looking after people who left the church



# Laboratory Space



- **People** who like to **think outside the box** and want to **reform their local church** with fresh and frank ideas.
- The **Laboratory Space** wants to connect people and give them room for ideas and projects that help to grow a new kind of church.
- Mentoring, money, legal advice and: trust!

# Laboratory Space



1. **New** ways of being church.
2. **Transcending** the inherited church structure at least in one aspect: parish structure, paid ministry, church building
3. **Sharing** the Gospel with people who had no contact with the church
4. **Contextual** – answering local needs.
5. **Volunteers** play an important role.
6. **Funding** has to tap into new sources.
7. **Spiritually** grounded.

# Laboratory Space - Examples

Giving time – visits with music

Sharing life – neighbourhood project

At your heart - youth church

You are special - creativity centre for kids

Church for the people – regional development

Room for projects – house for founders

*[www.erprobungsraeume-ekm.de](http://www.erprobungsraeume-ekm.de)*



# Laboratory Space - Four Years of Learning Communities...

- Networking, advice and consultation are important!
- Trust and appreciation are crucial!
- New ideas grow if there is time and space for them – let old things go.
- Some of the new ideas are traditional – but done in a new way, in new places.
- Be relevant to people's lives before you start “communicating the Gospel”

# Laboratory Space - Four Years of Learning Communities...

To be relevant you need

- Presence rather than programmes,
- Relationships rather than events,
- Reliability rather than activity
- Stories rather than concepts
- Insecurities rather than planning.

# Laboratory Space - Four Years of Learning Communities...

- Challenging: Worshipping, praying and talking about God in an authentic way that gets across to the indifferent.
- Outposts of the church - the relationship between congregations and laboratory spaces has to be negotiated.

# Laboratory Space



- [www.erprobungsraeume-ekm.de](http://www.erprobungsraeume-ekm.de)
- Thank you for your attention!