

Menno Simons Sermon Prize 2021 goes to Daniel Kaiser (Hamburg)

The Center of Peace Church Theology (University of Hamburg) awards this year's Menno Simons Sermon Prize to the head of the cultural section of the north-German radio station NDR 90.3, Daniel Kaiser. The award-winning sermon was delivered a year ago on Palm Sunday (Sunday before Easter, April 5th, 2020) in the service of the Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona, during the time of the first lock-down, live broadcasted, and can be viewed here:

<https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/hamburg/NDR-903-Redakteur-Daniel-Kaiser-erhaelt-Predigtpreis-der-Uni-Hamburg-,onlinegottesdienst108.html>.

The award ceremony will be held later in the year, as soon as infection figures permit.

The award-winning sermon on "The Anointing in Bethany" (Mk 14:3-9) captivates with its clear, unambiguous language without any flattening of content. Daniel Kaiser entertainingly retells the incident in which a woman enters the "men's circle" of the disciples and anoints Jesus with expensive oil. Scandalous, because the proceeds from the sale of this oil could have helped many poor people. Kaiser does an excellent job of placing this story in the context of the Corona Pandemic. Moralizing considerations recede into the background when questions of immediate needs are allowed to arise: What is needed here? Who needs what? – Compassion, attention, tenderness. Here, Jesus becomes the "Christ" (i.e., the anointed one).



Daniel Kaiser, born in 1972, studied Protestant theology in Neuendettelsau, Heidelberg and Hamburg after graduating from the Katharineum in Lübeck, but eventually switched to

journalism. After stations at Radio Hamburg, NDR 2 and NDR Info, he is now head of the culture section at Hamburg radio station NDR 90.3 and one of the hosts of the popular book podcast "eat.READ.sleep." Kaiser is a congregational elder at Hamburg's main church, St. Petri. He preaches regularly on a voluntary basis in various north German parishes. He always carries his flute along and occasionally plays the organ as well.

The Menno Simons Sermon Prize is intended to encourage and honor sermons that "bring the biblical witness into the light of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition". In the horizon of lived ecumenism, they should promote peace church orientation and convince through credibility in order to offer spiritual strengthening. Furthermore, the sermons are intended to stimulate substantive discussion of current issues in public life – beyond one's own denomination.

The award was presented by Dr. h.c. Annelie Kümpers-Greve (1946-2017), member of the Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona. It is endowed with Euro 2,000, half of which goes to the prize winner, the other half to his/her congregation, in order to "promote scientifically reflected Bible studies in the preachers' field of activity."

The jury consists of Mennonite theologians, chaired by Prof. Dr. Fernando Enns (Endowed Chair Peace Church Theology), Prof. em. Hans-Martin Gutmann (Practical Theology, University of Hamburg) serves as external reviewer. Other members are: Lukas Amstutz (Switzerland), Pastor Christina Duhoux (Netherlands), Pastor Birgit Foth (Ludwigshafen), Pastor Dr. Christiane Karrer (Netherlands) and Heinrich Wiens (Detmold).

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