

**"Menno Simons Preaching Award" 2024
to Riki Neufeld, MuttENZ (Switzerland)**

On Sunday, September 1, 2024, the Center for Peace Church Theology (University of Hamburg, Germany) together with the Mennonite Congregation in Hamburg-Altona will award the international Menno Simons Preaching Award to Riki Neufeld, pastor in the Evangelical Mennonite Congregation Schänzli in MuttENZ (Switzerland).

The public award ceremony will take place following the service at the Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona (10:00 AM), where the award-winning sermon will be heard. All interested parties are warmly invited. There will also be a live broadcast:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/MennonitengemeindeZuHamburgUndAltona>.

The awarded sermon was originally delivered on Sunday, February 26, 2023, one year after the Russian invasion of all Ukraine, at the Mennonite Congregation Schänzli. The basis of the sermon is the "Victory Song" of a woman from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament): The Song of Deborah (Judges 5). It is probably one of the oldest texts in the Bible, and is rarely preached upon. Understandably so, because this war song deals with murder and slaughter, rape, and oppression. The sermon relates this war scenario to the current situation in Ukraine. Does God also need the help of courageous warriors and weapons here to bring about justice? "It is one of those texts that one prefers not to read in a peace church," admits the preacher. Yet, the sermon honestly confronts the ambivalent feelings towards the ongoing arms deliveries by Western governments to Ukraine to defend against an unjustified military attack. In the Song of Deborah, the tyrant is ultimately killed – by a woman. Liberation is the result. Jubilation. Surprisingly, the sermon then offers a "second look," considering the "Temptations of Jesus" (Luke 4) and questioning current experiences of Pavlo in Ukraine.



Riki (Bernd Fredrik) Neufeld, born in 1984 in Asunción/Paraguay, has been a pastor for two years – with a focus on young adults – in the Evangelical Mennonite Congregation Schänzli in MuttENZ/Switzerland. Gifted in multiple languages, he has taken on various educational tasks with the Mennonites in Switzerland since 2011, in addition to his international

voluntary activities for Mennonite World Conference. Growing up in Paraguay and partly in Switzerland, Riki Neufeld completed his bachelor's degree in "Theology" in Canada (Steinbach Bible College). Since 2020, he has also been pursuing a part-time master's degree at the YMCA University in Kassel (focus on "Transformation Studies: Public Theology and Social Work"). He began his professional career as a school pastor and religious teacher at the German Concordia School in Asunción. Riki is married to Mirjam Neufeld-Rich, and the young family has two children.

The international Menno Simons Preaching Award aims to encourage and honor sermons that express the biblical testimony in the light of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Within the horizon of lived ecumenism, they should promote peace church orientation and convince through credibility to provide spiritual strength. Furthermore, the sermons should encourage engagement with current public issues – beyond their own denominational boundaries. The prize was endowed by Dr. h.c. Annelie Kümpers-Greve (1946–2017), a member of the Mennonite Congregation Hamburg-Altona. It is endowed with 2,000 euros, half of which goes to the prize winner and the other half to his/her home congregation. The jury consists of Mennonite theologians from various countries, chaired by Prof. Dr. Fernando Enns (Endowed Chair of 'Theology of Peace Churches' at the University of Hamburg), Prof. em. Dr. Hans-Martin Gutmann (Practical Theology, University of Hamburg) acting as an external reviewer. Other members of the jury include: Lukas Amstutz (Switzerland), Pastor Birgit Foth (Ludwigshafen), Pastor Dr. Christiane Karrer (Netherlands), Dr. Andrés Pacheco Lozano (Colombia/Netherlands), and Heinrich Wiens (Detmold).

For inquiries: Center for Peace Church Theology / Department of Protestant Theology / University of Hamburg Tel.: +49-40-428 38 1789, friedenskirchen@uni-hamburg.de, <https://www.theologie.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsstellen/friedenskirche.html>