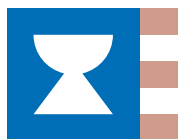




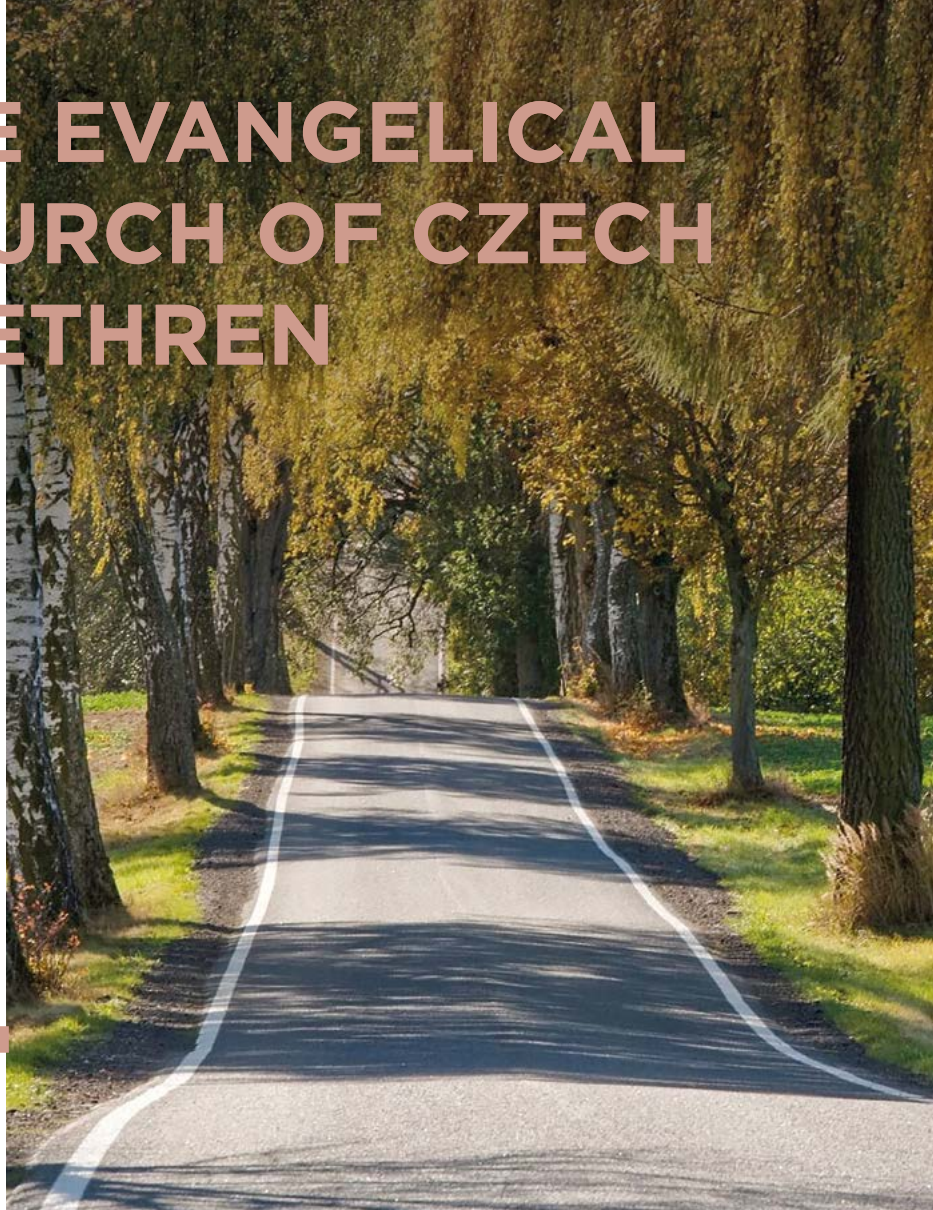
THE EVANGELICAL
CHURCH
OF CZECH BRETHREN



THE EVANGELICAL
CHURCH
OF CZECH BRETHREN

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CZECH BRETHREN

GOD
BIBLE
REFORMATION
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



...or simply the Protestant Church.

THE EVANGELICAL
CHURCH OF CZECH
BRETHREN

We confess our faith in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which unites us with Christians of all creeds and all times. We express our hope that together with them we are part of the one universal Church of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit.

As a church that has emerged from the Reformation, we recognize the Word of God, as witnessed in the Bible, to be the norm of faith and life. We are convinced that it is our mission to glorify God in word and in life, especially to proclaim the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, to form a community of faith, love and hope, and to take responsibility for public affairs by serving and helping those in need.



WHAT DO WE LIVE BY?



SERVICE

COMMUNITY

PRAYER

WORSHIP SERVICE

HELPING THE VULNERABLE

BEING CLOSE

CARING FOR THE WORLD

CREATING RELATIONSHIPS

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

SCHOOLS

DIACONIA

CHAPLAINS

Protestants form communities that emphasize relationships between people, with God and with the world.

Above all, we meet for worship on Sundays and feast days, read the Bible, sing to honour the Lord, pray, baptize, celebrate the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist) and conduct marriages and funerals. We rejoice in the presence of Christ and ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Protestant congregations have a diverse church life. This includes many meetings, which usually address the needs of various age groups.

Everyone is invited. We are happy to welcome people from outside the church. Our congregations offer opportunities to meet, ask questions, inspire each other, share joys and be close to those who find themselves in difficult life situations.

The ministers of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren also work as chaplains in the army, prisons, schools, hospitals and other healthcare facilities and hospices.



WHY THE CHURCH OF “CZECH BRETHREN”?

TRADITION

ROOTS

HISTORY

REFORMATION

BIBLE OF KRALICE

RESPONSIBILITY



WHY THE CHURCH OF “CZECH BRETHREN”?

The origins of Czech Protestantism date back long into the past.

The term “Czech Brethren” refers to the roots of our church in the Bohemian Reformation, especially the Unity of Brethren, a church community that was founded in 1457 in Kunvald. The history of the Reformation links us to many churches around the world.

The precious heritage that our church still cherishes today includes an emphasis on an honest interpretation of the Scripture, education and lay Bible scholarship, the rational and intellectual aspect of faith and religiousness and the richness of old Czech Brethren hymns forming the basis of Protestant hymnology, which has gained great acclaim in our country and around the world.



The Unity of Brethren also produced a truly remarkable printed masterpiece, which included a unique translation that would shape the future Czech language and culture – the Czech Bible of Kralice.

On a societal level, the Reformation history of our church is manifested as an appeal for individual freedom and responsibility, for cooperation with civic society and our co-responsibility for its activities, but also perhaps as an invitation to maintain general sobriety, a detached view, a sense of humour and a critical distance from one's own institution and formal authorities.



WHY THE CHURCH OF “CZECH BRETHREN”?



CHURCH STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALITY
RATIONALITY AND REFLECTION
DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES
MUTUAL EQUALITY

WOMEN

MEN

MINISTERS

LAITY



We are a church with a democratic decision-making system at all levels.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) is active in the Czech Republic and also cares for Czech Protestant congregations in Ukraine, Poland, Serbia, Croatia and Romania.

The structure of the ECCB has three levels: the local congregation, i.e., the local community in a village or town, which constitutes the foundation. A group of congregations in one area then forms a presbytery and the third level is the church-wide level.

The administration of the church is based on democratic principles and is not hierarchical. All three of the aforementioned levels have a large degree of autonomy and the ministers, as well as other members, participate equally in their governance. The representatives at all levels are elected, and the governing bodies always make decisions collectively.

All positions in the church may be held by men as well as women. Our church recognized the ministry of women in 1953, which was one of the first in Europe. We do not see celibacy as a condition of ministry; the ECCB's male and female ministers are free to marry and have families.



VARIOUS PATHS, COMMON GOAL

ECUMENE
COOPERATION
INTERNATIONAL
RESPECT AND LISTENING
OPENNESS



We have good relationships with churches around the world.

The ECCB is ecumenically open and supports efforts to deepen the unity of Christian churches and Christians, both in our own country and around the world.

We invite Christians from other churches to celebrate the Lord's Supper with us around Christ's table. They, too, can become members of the ECCB, while retaining membership in their original churches.

We have very good relationships with many Reformed, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches in Europe, the USA and South Korea.

The ECCB is an active member church of the leading Czech and international ecumenical institutions.



OUR ROOTS



REFORMATION
UNDER BOTH KINDS
COMPREHENSIBILITY

AGAINST THE DOMINANCE OF THE CHURCH

PROTESTANTS

OPPRESSION

SECRET CHURCH

The unceasing effort to live according to the Gospel in the Czech lands.

The ECCB draws on the rich heritage of the Bohemian and European Reformation.

From the beginning, the Reformation program for the renewal of Christianity in the spirit of the Gospel emphasized the immediate relationship of every person to God, focused on the preaching of God's Word in an understandable language, and opposed to the pomp, wealth and political power of the church. By demanding that the Lord's Supper be administered under both kinds, i.e., in the form of bread and wine to all the baptized without distinction, it also blurred the boundaries between clergy and laity.



After the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, a period of severe recatholization began. Non-Catholic ministers and the faithful were either forced into exile (e.g., John Amos Comenius) or to submit to the authority of the Roman Church. Many of those who did not leave their homeland had to hide the faith of their ancestors. They met in secret until the Patent of Toleration was issued in 1781, which tolerated Lutherans, Reformed and Orthodox Christians in our territory.

This allowed the secret Protestants to subscribe to one of the two movements of the worldwide Reformation, the Augsburg (Lutheran) or the Helvetic (Reformed) confessions, without having to continue to deny their religious convictions.



Timeline

-
- 863 This year marked a symbolic milestone in the gradual spread of Christianity in our territory with the arrival of the missionaries, Cyril and Methodius. However, instead of their Slavonic liturgy, the Latin practice of the church eventually took firm root.
 - 1348 The founding of the university made Prague an important theological centre, where ideas for partial reforms of the life of the Western church were developed.
 - 1415 The execution of Jan Hus, a popular preacher and academic, did not stop the reform movement in Prague. On the contrary, it radicalized it and eventually plunged the country into long wars.
 - 1436 The negotiated peace enabled the existence of the Bohemian Church under both kinds, the symbol of which became the chalice, alongside the Roman Church.
 - 1457 Under the influence of the teachings of Petr Chelčický, a group of brothers and sisters, the nucleus of the future Unity of Brethren, went to Kunvald, which separated itself from the majority Hussites and was, therefore, a frequent target of persecution.
 - 1609 Emperor Rudolf's Letter of Majesty guaranteed religious freedom to the Czech Brethren in Bohemia for the first time, as well as to, e.g., Lutherans.
 - 1620 The recatholization after the Battle of White Mountain completely suppressed the activity of the Reformation churches in the Czech lands and drove non-Catholic Christians into exile or illegality.
 - 1781 Thanks to the Patent of Toleration of Emperor Joseph II, Protestants could join one of the two tolerated Reformation confessions, Augsburg or Helvetic, without threat of persecution.
 - 1861 The continued discrimination against Protestants only came to an end with the Protestant Patent, issued by Emperor Francis Joseph I.
 - 1918 After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the ECCB was formed by the union of the Czech-speaking congregations of both Reformation movements.

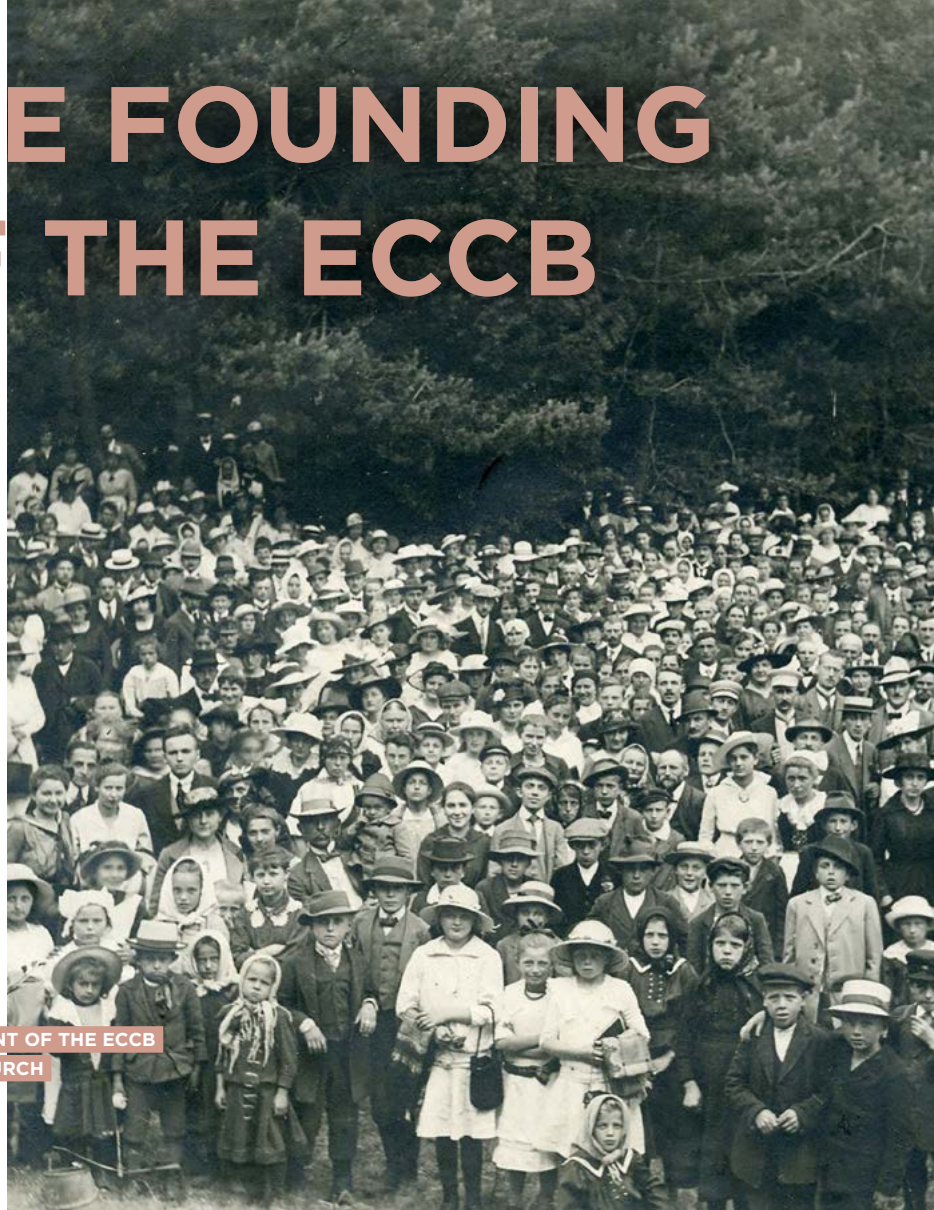
THE FOUNDING OF THE ECCB

HISTORY

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ECCB

MINORITY CHURCH

THEOLOGY



One church united two Reformation movements.

After the issue of the Protestant Patent (1861), one large Protestant Church was established on our territory, providing space for both the Lutheran and Reformed congregations. Following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, however, it was split into several smaller denominations. In 1918, the ECCB was established on the territory of today's Czech Republic, preserving the unity of both of the Reformation's movements in one Protestant community.

Despite its minority status, the church has managed to influence events in society from the beginning. It developed charitable and social activities, nurtured innovative theology and published journals and books that influenced professionals and laypeople for generations. The church-affiliated publishing house and bookshop, Kalich, has become a recognized name in this country and in a wider European context.



THE ERA OF LOST FREEDOM



TOTALITARISM

DISSENT

RESISTANCE

CHARTER 77

FAILURE

BRAVERY

CONTROL OF CHURCHES

The turbulent history of the 20th century was also reflected in the life of the ECCB.

During World War II, many Christians, both ministers and laity of all denominations, participated in the resistance. Some members of the church died or were imprisoned in concentration camps for their active stance against the Nazis.

After 1948, the communist regime controlled the activities of the church through the authorities and the secret services. Many ministers were forbidden to practice their profession, and many children, who were being brought up as Christians, were not allowed to study.

Members of our church included, for example, Milada Horáková, who was executed in 1950 for her brave resistance against the communist dictatorship, and Jan Palach, who burned himself to death in early 1969, protesting against the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact.

Among the ministers and other members of the ECCB, we can also find dissidents, political prisoners, signatories and spokespersons of Charter 77. They include, among others, Svatopluk Karásek, Ladislav Hejdránek, Jan Šimsa, Božena Komárková and Miloš Rejchrt.

However, the ranks of our church also included ministers and laypeople, who could not withstand the pressure of the state authorities and became collaborators in various sections of the communist regime.



THE POST-1989 ERA

FUTURE
FREEDOM
RESPONSIBILITY
CHANGES
SERVICE



Freedom as a responsibility and a challenge.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the life of the church changed. The joy of newly gained freedom was amplified by the joy of the abolition of state control over the churches, and space for new work opened up. Even today, we are still learning about what the existence of the church and its congregations should look like in a free and democratic society. These new aspects include searching for personal responsibility in our lives and learning to be sensitive to the social inequalities and injustices that a market-driven, globalized society brings. Developing a dialogue with people of other religious traditions and cultures also presents a new challenge.

After long decades of state regulation, which the regime implemented through economic control and the direct financing of churches, Czech churches also gained freedom in this respect. Some of the state-confiscated property was returned to them so that they could function independently and autonomously, and an agreement has been reached to gradually reduce the state funding of churches.

For the ECCB, the transition to self-financing in a highly secularized society brings many new challenges. Among other things, it needs to rethink its own mission, deal with the transformation of the organization and the functioning of congregations and presbyteries, strengthen natural centres, support peripheries and involve the laity in the ministry of the church.



DIACONIA ECCB

HELP
SOLIDARITY
CARE
SERVICE
COMMUNITY



Help has many faces.

Diaconia ECCB is a Christian, non-profit organization established by our church. It is one of the most important providers of social services in the Czech Republic and helps thousands of clients in direct care on a daily basis: children, adults, the elderly and people experiencing various life crises.

Diaconia cares for those who, given their age, disability, illness, loneliness or life situation, cannot manage without the help of others. It is also one of the best in special education. It provides assistance in times of crises or disasters in the Czech Republic and abroad.



Diaconia's mission is based on the Gospel message of God's love and the example of Jesus Christ's ministry. This also implies diaconal values, such as mercy, fortitude, community, hope and respect in relation to the dignity and uniqueness of every person.

The less visible diaconal work that happens spontaneously, with no institutional cover, is based on similar foundations. This type of small-scale, but very important help for the needy is often directly linked to the ECCB's congregations and the local communities around them. This includes, for example, assistance for the homeless and support for refugees, but also the operation of maternity and community centres, low-threshold clubs for children and the youth, food banks and local charities.





PROTESTANT ACADEMY



SCHOOLS
EDUCATION
RESPECT
COOPERATION
DEVELOPMENT
TALENTS

The tradition of good Protestant education dates back to the time of J. A. Comenius.

The ECCB is the founder of several kindergartens, as well as primary, secondary and higher vocational schools throughout the Czech Republic. It provides its students with professional education, mainly in the field of health and social care.

These schools under the Protestant Academy brand are in great demand, among others. They function as exceptional places for modern education, connected to the local communities and traditions, to the landscape and nature.

The aim is to create a kind environment that respects the individual nature of pupils and students, an environment where people are not afraid to communicate or cooperate, and where they are given space to develop their unique talents.

Protestant education has a long tradition in the Czech lands; we see it as a commitment and a service to society.



PROTESTANT THEOLOGICAL FACULTY

THEOLOGY
ACADEMIC WORK
EXPERTISE
EDUCATION
MINISTERS
REPUTATION
BIBLICAL STUDIES
HISTORY



Everyone can get a prestigious education at one of the oldest universities in the heart of Europe.

The Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University, one of five theological faculties in the Czech Republic, is the successor of the Hus Protestant Theological Faculty (1919–1950) and the Comenius Protestant Theological Faculty (1950–1990); in 1990 it was incorporated into Charles University.

Although it was established on the initiative of the ECCB, which recognizes this education as a prerequisite for the ordained service of ministers, it not only served its members. The teaching staff is not homogeneous in terms of denomination either. Today, the faculty has hundreds of students enrolled in bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes, as well as lifelong learning programmes, including Protestant theology, pastoral and social work, and the theology of Christian traditions.

The faculty has also gained recognition and international acclaim for its scientific work, focused mainly on church history, hermeneutics, biblical studies and archaeology. The Centre for Biblical Studies is also an important part of the faculty.



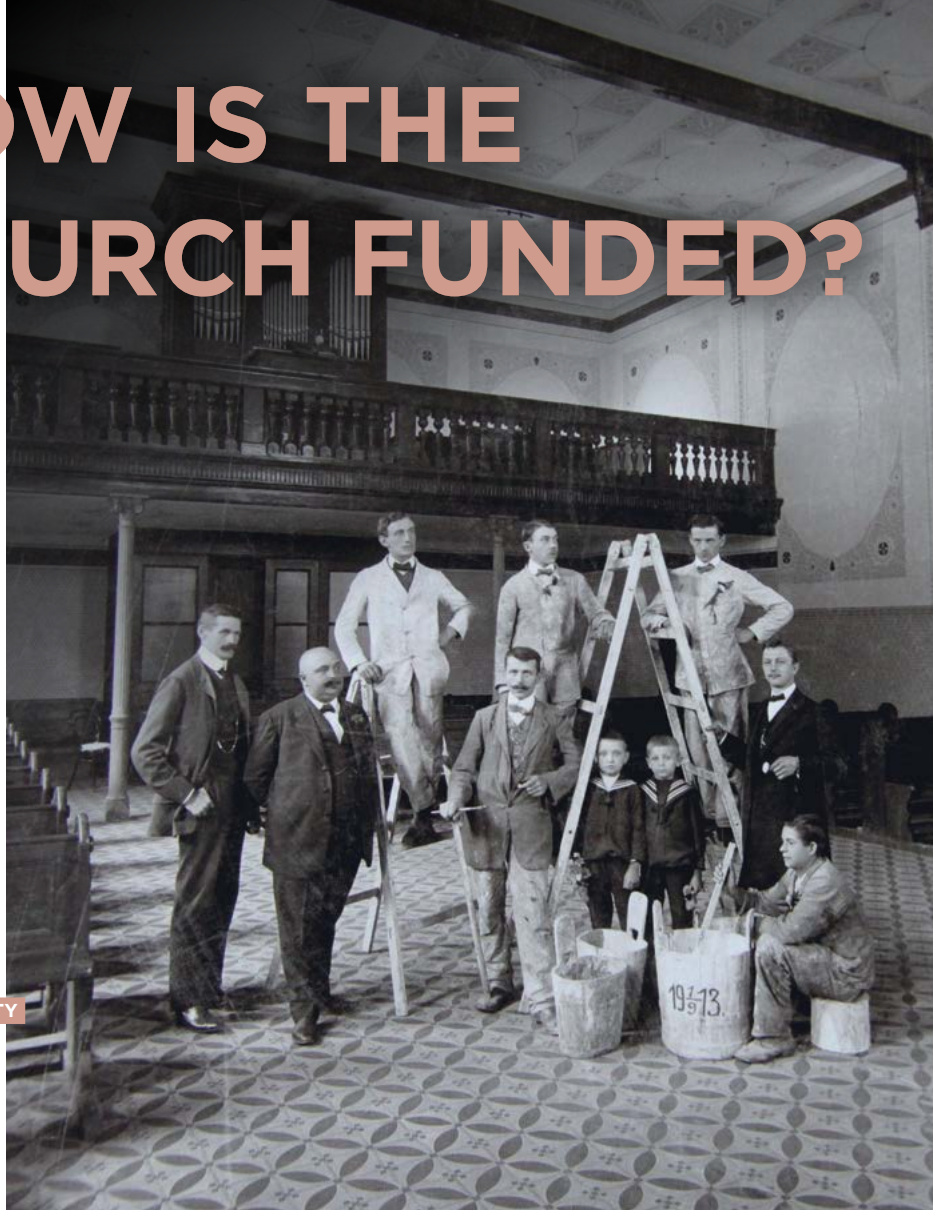
HOW IS THE CHURCH FUNDED?

RESPONSIBILITY

HELP

SERVICE

VALUES





HOW IS THE CHURCH FUNDED?

We care for what has been entrusted to us.

The church is financed primarily by donations and contributions from church members and from its own resources. Sources also include donations from the state and other institutions, such as foundations and endowment funds.

Since 1993, we have been working towards full self-financing. This effort was recognized by the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2012, with the adoption of the Act on Property Settlement with Churches and Religious Societies.

In 2019, the church voluntarily committed to a more sustainable investment strategy, divesting from funds that cause environmental damage or support the exploitation of natural resources. Investments in fossil fuels, minerals and construction on fertile agricultural land are being phased out, while investments in the circular economy, energy savings, renewable energy, innovative technologies and developing economies are being encouraged.

The ECCB regularly donates a significant percentage of its funds to diaconal, social, development, humanitarian or environmentally beneficial projects.

ACCEPT OUR INVITATION

INVITATION
COMMUNITY
SERVICE
COMMUNITY LIFE
FAITH
MEETINGS
PRAYER
CONGREGATION



You are invited to join the diverse community of the ECCB.

The best way to get to know more about the life of the ECCB is to experience it personally. Find the congregation that is closest to you, both in terms of distance and character.

Some congregations are larger, some are smaller in number; in some places, you will come across a more private environment and, in others, you will find a richer community life. Some places are vibrant, offering many activities, events and meetings, and the congregation is a mosaic of different generations that you can join. In other places, the situation calls more for service and a personal experience of religiousness.

Sunday services are the common emphasis and the focal point of all congregations. The services are public, and everyone is invited. Participation in the activities of a congregation and worshipping is not contingent upon being a member of the ECCB or being baptized.

In fact, a significant number of those who attend the various meetings are not members of congregations, but they care about living as a community or raising their children in an environment that embraces Christian values.

You are welcome to attend freely, with no commitments, whether you come with questions and doubts or, on the contrary, with joyful anticipation. May the Lord accompany you on the path you choose and support you through all your hardships. May your journey be joyful and adventurous with countless discoveries.

ACCEPT OUR
INVITATION

List of the ECCB's
congregations:



The ECCB's Facebook
profile regularly publishes
snippets from the life of the
church:



Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
Central Church Office

Jungmannova 9
110 00 Praha 1
Czech Republic
Phone: +420 224 999 211
e-cirkev@e-cirkev.cz
Identification number (IČO): 00445223
Account number:
IBAN: CZ93 0300 0000 0001 7952 1067
SWIFT: CEKOCZPP



This brochure has been published
with the kind support of the
Věra Třebická-Řivnáčová Foundation.



Official church website



Independent Protestant
portal, Evangnet



Website of the church
journal, Český bratr



Website of
Diaconia ECCB



Facebook



Instagram



X



SoundCloud
– Audio archive –



SmugMug
– Photo gallery –



YouTube
– Video archive –



