

We sincerely hope that your visit to Bethel has been a rewarding one. No doubt it has helped you to become acquainted with the work that Jehovah's Witnesses are doing to aid people in their quest for a better future through God's Kingdom. May your visit with us be an encouragement to you in your efforts to learn more about our loving Creator and to live by his righteous standards.

Visiting Hours: Visitors are welcome to take a guided tour of our facilities. The regular visiting hours are

Monday Through Friday:

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

We request that larger groups inform us in advance of their planned visit.

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Welcome

to the Central Europe Branch Office of Jehovah's Witnesses



Welcome

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Central Europe branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses. We hope that your visit will be a pleasant one. Our branch complex is called Bethel, which means "House of God." This Biblical name is fitting because all those who serve here are ordained ministers, dedicated to Jehovah God. They devote themselves full-time to supporting the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. —Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

To organize this work, there are about 90 branch offices worldwide—all working under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Central Europe branch supports the preaching work of Jehovah's Witnesses in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.



In addition, it supplies Jehovah's Witnesses in many parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa with Bibles and Bible literature.

In 1902 a branch office was opened in Elberfeld (Wuppertal), Germany. In 1920 a Central European office was established in Switzerland. That office supervised the work in many European countries until the second world war. In 1923, the Germany branch was moved to Magdeburg. After the second world war, branch offices were opened in several central European countries, including Germany, where the office was eventually moved from Magdeburg to Wiesbaden.

In 1984 a larger complex with offices, printery, and residence buildings was completed at Selters (Taunus), Germany. However, within ten years the complex had to be expanded to more than double its original size to keep up with the growth of the preaching and teaching work. By 2014, the branch offices in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland had been consolidated to form the Central Europe branch.



The Bethel Family

Bible Instruction

Although the members of this Bethel family come from about 30 nations, they can truly be called a family because of their unity in serving their heavenly Father, Jehovah. In addition, Bethel family members have a personal share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. They attend nearby congregations, where a number of brothers serve as elders and ministerial servants.



Each workday morning, the Bethel family comes together to consider a Bible text, using the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily*. After a prayer, a chairman presides over this 15-minute discussion, and family members are assigned to comment on the text. Following the discussion, breakfast is served.



On Monday evenings the entire Bethel family gathers to study the Bible with the help of *The Watchtower*. At times, there are special programs after the *Watchtower* Study. These Bible discussions each workday morning and on Monday evenings are an important part of Bethel life.

New arrivals attend the Bethel Entrants' School and are expected to read the entire Bible during their first year at Bethel. Members of the Bethel family also make time for personal Bible study. A well-furnished library containing publications of Jehovah's Witnesses as well as other reference works is available to the family.





The Bethel Home

Bethel family members are provided with room and board and a small monthly allowance to assist with their personal expenses. Nine residence buildings provide comfortable rooms.

A number of essential tasks are performed in the Bethel Home. For example, some members serve in the kitchen, where they prepare nutritious meals that are served in our spacious dining room. The family thus benefits from a well-balanced diet in a wholesome environment. Other members do cleaning and housekeeping.

Some family members are assigned to look after the grounds, and various maintenance crews care for buildings, machines, and vehicles. The laundry



washes and irons over seven tons of clothing for the family every week. The laundered items are delivered to each residential building.



Offices

Branch Committee

Closely following the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, the Branch Committee takes the lead in organizing the preaching and teaching work in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

Service Department

Brothers in this department handle correspondence from circuit overseers, elders, pioneers, and others. In addition, the Service Department keeps records of congregation territories and compiles field service reports. This department also schedules various theocratic schools, conventions, and assemblies.



Public Information Desk

This desk provides news agencies and others with accurate information about Jehovah's Witnesses, clearing up any misunderstandings regarding their beliefs and ministry. Additionally, the Public Information Desk supplies material for the "Newsroom" section on our Web site, jw.org.

Computer Department

This department maintains the computer systems that are used in the branch. Some of such systems include those used to update congregation records in the Service Department, process literature requests in the printery, handle purchasing orders, and keep schedules for the Bethel Home. The Computer Department also maintains the systems for e-mail, word processing, and file storage. This department also cares for the Multilanguage Electronic Publishing System (MEPS), the *Watchtower Library*, and our Web site, jw.org.

Hospital Information Desk

This desk provides Hospital Liaison Committees in the countries under the Central Europe branch with the latest information on bloodless medical procedures. In turn, the congregation elders serving on

these committees make this information available to doctors who are willing to treat their Witness patients without the use of blood.

Writing Desk

The Central Europe branch is one of the branches that has a Writing Desk, which submits written material for our publications. Its work includes doing research for the Writing Department, which is located at the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. It also handles correspondence about Bible questions and provides photographs and images for our publications. The Writing Desk includes a section called History Archives, which preserves and catalogues documents and objects relating to our theocratic history and heritage in the branch territory. History Archives also organizes exhibitions.

Translation Department

The English text of our publications is received from world headquarters, translated into German, and checked for conformity to the English source text. Then the text is proofread to ensure that it adheres to the standards of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. In addition, the Translation Department oversees the transcription of the text into Braille and the video production of Bible publications in German Sign Language.





Audio/Video

This department prepares audio recordings of the Bible, *The Watchtower*, *Awake!*, convention dramas, and sound tracks for videos. Audio/Video also records the vocal renditions of *Sing to Jehovah* in German and produces synchronized audio recordings for our videos.

Graphics

The Graphics Department combines artwork, photographs, and composed text, using the Multilanguage Electronic Publishing System (MEPS). Translating branches send us composed pages, which are checked and arranged into the configuration in which they should appear on the printing plate. Finally, the pages are sent electronically to the printery, where plates are made using the computer-to-plate method.





Printery

Pressroom

Magazines, booklets, book signatures (book parts), and tracts are printed in four colors on our rotary offset press. In one hour, 200,000 16-page magazines can be printed, folded, glued, trimmed, counted, and shrink-wrapped in one continuous process. Forms, assembly programs, book covers, and the like are printed on smaller presses.



Bindery

Our bindery produces about 100,000 softcover books a day. For durability, the glue used to attach the cover to the book is able to withstand wide fluctuations in temperature, thus making the books suitable for climates from Africa to Siberia.



Shipping

This department maintains a stock of over 8,000 different items in more than 220 languages. Our branch receives literature requests from more than 16,000 congregations in about 50 countries. An operator collects and packs publications onto a picking trolley, using a wireless computer terminal on his arm. The computer terminal indicates the quantity of the items requested.



Export

Requested literature is sent to the congregations throughout the branch territory and other countries by truck, rail, ship, air, or mail. In addition, about 10,000 tons of literature is sent to other countries each year.

