

June 17 to 23

Reutlingen District

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## The Human One came to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10 CEB)

### Against rules and regulations. For life!

The Bible text for this week comes at the close of a well-known encounter. It is a report of how Jesus went on walkabout through Jericho, and came across a man called Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. The situation around the encounter could rightly be described as embarrassing. A man of high position in society climbs up into a tree like a street urchin. Jesus stands under the tree, surrounded by the crowd, whilst the chief collector of taxes, looking ridiculous, sits above in the branches. This is hardly a face-to-face encounter.

The situation becomes defused because Jesus takes the initiative and invites himself to eat with Zacchaeus, something which would appear embarrassing to the others. Jesus, who has a certain spiritual authority here, seeks the company of a tax collector, who lives outside the religious order. Zacchaeus works with the hated occupation forces and defrauds his own countrymen. In the end Zacchaeus,

who is caught between two worlds, finds himself at the table in the company of Jesus.

Those who are watching this scene do not like it. They take the view that the rules must be upheld, also in religious matters. Jesus refutes this on the following grounds: what matters above all is that those who are lost find help and support for their lives; and this through an encounter with the living God.

*Temporary Superintendent Carl Hecker*

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Translation: Chris Woodhead

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### I GIVE THANKS

- for Pastor Tobias Beißwenger. He has taken up the call to be the new superintendent of the Reutlingen District
- for the churches which pass on the invitation of Jesus, and who reach out in friendship to people, including those in difficult situations
- whenever it is possible, through personal relationships, to convey the message of faith
- whenever the love of God can overcome the usual rules and regulations

### I PRAY

- for the new superintendent and his family
- for the St. Georgen circuit, which will need to cover a vacancy through this appointment
- for openness to encounters with people who in surprising ways cross our paths

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### Reutlingen District

The very rural Reutlingen District covers an area which includes South Württemberg and parts of South Baden (Black Forest and Lake Konstanz). The District has 27 circuits with around 65 churches. 42 pastors and four youth-workers care for the various church congregations. There are 43 pastors living in retirement in the Reutlingen District.

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