

## Service held in Leipzig landmark

by Natalie K. Watson

FORTY-ONE years after the destruction of St Paul's University Church, Leipzig, in East Germany and two days after the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the founding of the university, the first official service took place in the reconstructed building last month.

"If someone had said in 1968 . . . that one day there would be another church in this place, people would have said that he was mad. Thus it was impossible to wait any longer, until the completion of the building. Our act of worship today shall be a foretaste of what is to come," the university chaplain, Dr Peter Zimmerling, said in his sermon.

Hundreds queued in the rain on 6 December to be admitted to the building site. For health and safety reasons, only 700 were permitted in the building itself, while a further 300 watched the service on a big screen outside.

There is debate about whether the new building should be a multi-purpose assembly hall or a church, and only days before the service it had been unclear whether the university would grant access to the site.

In a solemn procession, the cross, salvaged days before the church's destruction, was carried through the congregation and placed on the altar. The university choir, under the direction of the university's musical director, David Timm, performed Bach's cantata "*Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*".

URL: <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=87240>