

# The Window

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THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 112

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And Much More

## DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting this year is on **Saturday 25th February from 10am to 4.15pm**. It will take place in two historic churches in London. The meeting will be in **St Boniface German Roman Catholic Church, 47 Adler Street, Tower Hamlets, London E1 1EE**. The closing Eucharist will be celebrated just around the corner in St George's Lutheran Church, 55 Alie Street, London E1 8EB. The cost of the day will be **£20** which includes refreshments and lunch.

In 1809 the German Catholic Mission was established to offer pastoral care to German and German-speaking immigrants living in London. There was a large German community in the East End and many of them were employed in the local sugar industry. In 1862 the Mission took over a building that was originally a theatre and then a Methodist Chapel. This building collapsed in 1873 and a new St Boniface's Church was completed in 1875, consecrated in 1925 and destroyed in the "Blitz" during the Second World War. It took until 1958 before a new church could be built. It was consecrated in 1960 and is a striking modern church, with a huge tower containing the original bells salvaged from the old building. It will be a very suitable venue for our meeting because our chosen topic is:

### 'Dispersing the Clouds of Unknowing: Ecumenical Agreements between Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans'

Following the Annual Meeting itself **Bishop Jurgen Johannesdotter** will offer some reflections on '*The Outworking of the Meissen Agreement from a German and Lutheran point of view*' and will then invite general discussion.

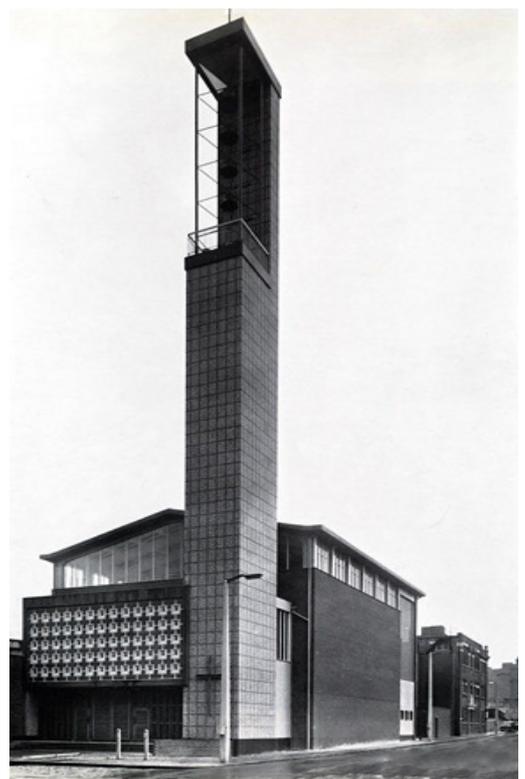
After lunch **Dame Mary Tanner** discusses '*Porvoo and Other Agreements between Christians : Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and Roman Catholic*'.

We shall then walk to St George's Lutheran

Church for a Eucharist conducted by the Rev Dr Roy Long assisted by the Rev Susanne Freddin Skovhus at which the preacher will be the **Very Rev Dr John Arnold**.

If you can come please let Helen Harding know. You can phone her on 0044 (0)1626 852677 or email [harding232@gmail.com](mailto:harding232@gmail.com).

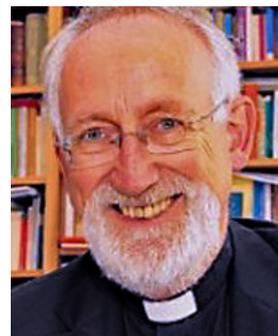
When the Eucharist is ended there will be time to go and visit the European Reformation Roadmap organized by the Evangelical Church in Germany. Their "**Storymobile**" will be in central London on that day only, featuring an exhibition, musical performances, interactive storytelling and story-gathering. Their day will end with Evensong in St Martin-in-the-Fields. The "Storymobile" is visiting 68 European cities in 19 countries until 20th May when all the exhibits that have been collected will be presented at the World Reformation Exhibition in Wittenberg. More information at [www.reformation500.uk](http://www.reformation500.uk)



St Boniface German Roman Catholic Church

## SPEAKERS AND PREACHER AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

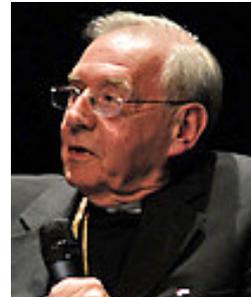
**Bishop Jürgen Johannesdotter** is our Society's Lutheran President and is well placed to speak about the outworking of the Meissen Agreement from a German and Lutheran point of view because he is a former Chairman of the Meissen Commission. From 2001 until his retirement in 2009 he was Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe with its headquarters in Bückeberg. He studied both Sociology and Theology and was then ordained Pastor of the parish of Bingum in Ostfriesland and later became Director of Studies at Loccum monastery, Germany's oldest Protestant seminary. From 1992 until his election as bishop in 2001 he was Landessuperintendent of Sprengel Stade, one of the six churches of the Hanoverian Landeskirche with more than 600,000 members. Today he continues to provide oversight and care for many kinds of religious communities in Germany, a task he began when he was Bishop of Schaumburg-Lippe. He is also very fully involved in the life of our Society.



**Dame Mary Tanner** read Theology at Birmingham University and went on to teach Hebrew and the Old Testament at the Universities of Hull and then Bristol before joining the staff at Westcott House, Cambridge, a theological college preparing candidates for ordination. In 1982 she joined the Church of England's General Synod Board for Mission and Unity as its Theological Secretary and was appointed the first General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity. She has been visiting professor at the General Seminary, New York, the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Israel, and the Angelicum in Rome. Dame Mary served on the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and a number of European theological conversations, was a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since the 1970s and served as its Moderator from 1991 to 1998. She has also been a member of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, and a President for Europe of the World Council of Churches.

Dame Mary will be discussing 'The Porvoo Agreement and Other Agreements between Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and Roman Catholics'.

The preacher at our closing Eucharist will be the **Very Rev Dr John Arnold**. He has had a long and distinguished career both as a priest in the Church of England and as an ecumenist. He was ordained in 1960 and served as assistant curate at Holy Trinity, Millhouses, Sheffield. He then moved to be chaplain and lecturer at Southampton University until, in 1972, he was appointed Secretary of the Board for Mission and Unity for the General Synod of the Church of England. He served there until 1978 when he became Dean of Rochester. In 1989 he moved to become Dean of Durham, a position he held until his retirement in 2002. Among the many roles he has filled in ecumenical engagement he served as Vice-President of the Conference of European Churches until 1992 and then as its President until 1997. For a number of years he has served alongside Bishop Johannesdotter as the Anglican President of our Society.



### CAN YOU HELP REPLACE MISSING DOCUMENTS?

Our Society has been going strong for more than 30 years. Committee meetings have been carefully minuted, and records kept of our Annual General Meetings and international conferences. All this material was filed and stored so that future generations can access it. Unhappily, during a recent move from one office location to another the early part of our archive was lost.

We are hoping that among some of our more long-standing members there might be some hoarders, people who never throw anything away on the basis that it might one day be useful. If you are such a person, and have stored away somewhere in your home records of the first 20 years or so of the Society's activities, please contact our secretary, Canon Dick Lewis, email [dick@ccwatford.u-net.com](mailto:dick@ccwatford.u-net.com) or by post at Rectory Farm, Rectory Road, Retford, DN22 7AY, UK.

### CONGREGATIONS WITH ECUMENICAL LINKS

Our Society is occasionally asked for advice by churches and congregations wishing to establish a link with a congregation of another denomination, sometimes within their own country but more often abroad. Ideally, we would like to be able to put them in touch with congregations already enjoying such partnerships. However, it is quite hard to find out where these congregations are.

It seems a good idea to set up a database of our own so that we can access the information quickly and easily. To assist us with this will you please let our secretary know if your congregation has such a link, clearly stating the name of your congregation and giving details of the church or congregation you are in contact with. If you know of other neighbouring churches that have made links please tell us about them too. Dick's address is in the left hand column and his email is [dick@ccwatford.u-net.com](mailto:dick@ccwatford.u-net.com)

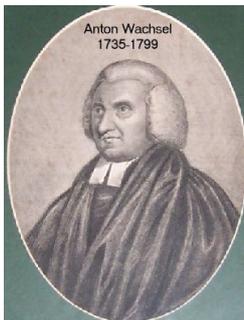
# ST GEORGE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH IN LONDON

*The Rev Dr Roy Long, a member of the planning group for this year's Annual General Meeting, recounts the story of the building in which our closing worship will be held.*

Although it is no longer used as a place of worship, St George's is the oldest Lutheran church building in Great Britain but it is by no means the oldest congregation. When it was founded in 1762 there were already three German-speaking Lutheran congregations in London, as well as a Danish church and a Swedish church, and there was also a Lutheran congregation in Dublin.

St George's was built to serve a flourishing German-speaking community in the East End of London. The man largely responsible for its establishment, Dietrich Bachmann, was a successful sugar-refiner who wanted to provide a place of worship for his workers, and he provided half the money to secure the site and build the church. The congregation grew rapidly, not only among Bachmann's employees, but also among other German-speaking residents who did not fancy the long trek through the city to the Hamburg Church, which was near St Paul's cathedral, or to St Mary-le-Savoy, which was even further away to the west of the City.

St George's had its problems during the first decades of its existence. Within months of arriving in London, the first pastor, Gustav Anton Wachsel, who came from East Friesland, found himself having to cope with a human crisis of significant proportions. Some would-be emigrants, hoping to find a new life in the West Indies, were tricked out of their money by their supposed leader, and they were left stranded in an area of London called Spitalfields. Eventually Wachsel was able to find them tents as well as other necessary supplies, and he successfully petitioned King George III to intervene, and with his help these would-be emigrants eventually ended up in the Carolinas.



St George's Lutheran Church in Alie Street

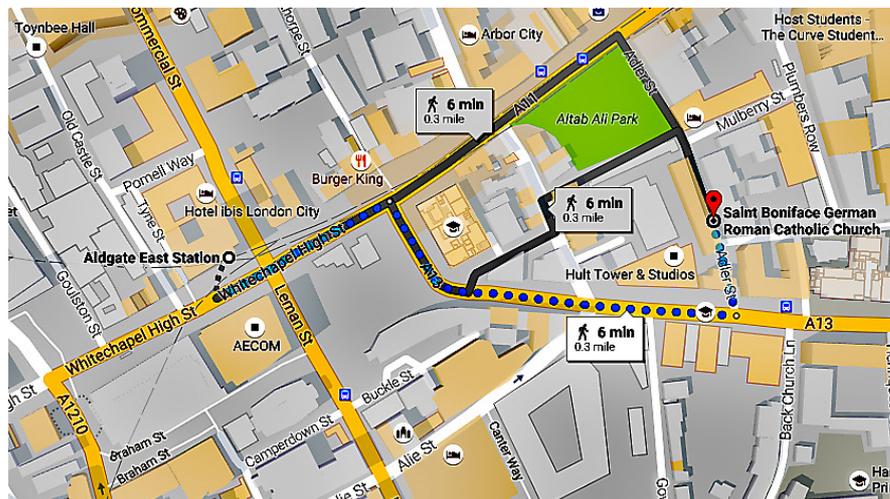
Other problems facing the fledgling congregation involved a question of church order. Who was ultimately responsible for the governance of the congregation – should it be the pastor, or a more democratic body representative of the members? It took eight years to sort out that particular problem, but over thirty years to sort out another serious problem – the question of language. Wachsel was a realist and realised that the German-speaking population was in danger of being assimilated into the surrounding community. Of particular concern were the needs of mixed marriages and their children, whom he feared would lose their distinctive Lutheran faith. His solution to this challenge was to try to introduce some English into the life of the congregation, but there was fierce opposition to this from some members. The dispute was

eventually taken to a local court where, in 1795, a magistrate ruled that the language of the congregation had to be German. It is interesting how Pastor Wachsel survived all these problems and remained in post throughout.

The congregation flourished for two centuries, but then dwindling numbers meant that, in 1995, it was eventually amalgamated with St Mary's, London's second oldest German-speaking Lutheran congregation worshipping in the chapel in the International Lutheran Student Centre near St Pancras Station.

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Following the Annual General Meeting in St Boniface Church, participants will walk the short distance to St George's for a time of worship which will take the form of a celebration of the Lord's Supper according to an 18th century Lutheran liturgy. Susanne Freddin Skovhus and I will lead the service, and Dean John Arnold will preach. It has proved rather difficult to discover what would have been the exact form of worship used at St George's at the time of its foundation, but we do have a good idea as to how worship was conducted in St Mary-le-Savoy, because an English translation of its liturgy was used after 1742 by one of the very first Lutheran bodies in America, namely the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. With slight modification, it is this liturgy that we shall use.



## EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITIES DISCUSS THEOLOGY OF DISABILITY

*Twenty church leaders from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania met in Arusha, Tanzania from 7th-11th November to discuss how people with disabilities could be included, participate and become more actively involved in the spiritual, social, economic and structural life of both Church and Society (WCC News).*

The gathering was arranged by the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) and hosted by the Council of Churches in Tanzania (CCT). Everyone was in agreement that much has been done in recent years to deepen the understanding, acceptance and integration of people with disabilities but it remains clear that more needs to be done if churches in East Africa are to view these people as full participants not only in the spiritual life of the church but also in its development and its power structures.

Bishop Dr Fredrick Onael Shoo, the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), sent an opening statement that was read by Bishop Solomon Jacob Massangwa, the ELCT's Bishop in the North Arusha diocese. 'The question of an inclusive society, though well presented and spelled out by international bodies in the 2016-2030 Sustainable Development Goals, remains for most of us, and particularly the traditional church, a new phenomenon. Church leaders, believers and traditionalists have understood disability as a curse from a vengeful God. Therefore, taking



on board people with disabilities has been seen as an abomination.'

Sensitivity and continuing dialogue are needed if the separation of sin and disability is to be better understood. Churches need to view persons with disabilities not simply as people who only receive what other people give but rather as full participants in the life of the church. So the church leaders studied and reflected on the WCC materials on disability, and discussed how healing can be understood with respect to people with disabilities, as well as how to make persons with disabilities feel valued.

The Venerable Benson Maina Thungururu from the Anglican Church of Kenya, Kirinyaga Diocese, reported that, because EDAN had introduced disability discourse into theological

institutions, most of the priests in his diocese who have undergone initial or post-ordination training at St Paul's University in Limuru, will have undertaken disability studies as one of the modules. The diocese has a policy that all churches must have a ramp and at least one minister in the parish with knowledge of sign language interpretation.

Canon Nason Baluku from the Church of Uganda noted how churches in Uganda were interested in starting schools for children with disabilities but did not follow up the spiritual lives of people with disabilities once they had left these schools. The church leaders agreed that, even though some steps have been taken to include persons with disabilities, this inclusion is limited only to certain aspects of church life.

As a way forward, the participants agreed that if the church is to be a truly inclusive community it should develop structures to include persons with disabilities, allow persons with disabilities to make their own decisions and nurture their talents, and promote understanding and work with persons with disabilities in society.

## CAN YOU HELP ON OUR STALL IN BERLIN?

The 36th Kirchentag will be held in Berlin from 24th to 28th May 2017. The theme, "You see me" (Genesis 16.13), combines the knowledge that God looks at us and the challenge to remain clear-sighted in our dealings with others.

A Kirchentag is an experience! Well-known speakers explore the theme,

there are panels, lectures and workshops, concerts and theatrical performances. In Berlin there will be more than 2500 single events – a truly glorious Christian festival!

Our Society will have a stall in the 'Market of Possibilities' and we would be grateful if any member planning to



be there would offer an hour or two to staff the stall and hand out publicity material. Please contact Dick Lewis, dick@ccwatford,u-net.com if you are willing to help. It should be great fun!

## DANISH QUEEN MARKS CLOSE LINK WITH WITTENBERG

*Last October Wittenberg welcomed a prominent visitor, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, who is head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.*

Relations between the Danish royal house and Wittenberg go back a long way. Denmark joined the Reformation in 1536, when the Danish Church became Lutheran. The Reformer, Johannes Bugenhagen, helped to spread Lutheran teaching during his stay in Copenhagen from 1537 to 1539 at the invitation of King Christian III.

On 2nd October the day on which many German churches celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving, Queen Margrethe II planted a flowering ash tree in The Luther Garden in Wittenberg. This garden is a project of the Lutheran World Federation, the idea being to create a "living monument" marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by planting 500 trees there. The Queen's tree bore the words, "If we are faithful, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2.13)



*Queen Margrethe with Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany*



Before planting the tree, Queen Margarethe took part in the reopening of Wittenberg's Castle Church. Originally consecrated in 1503, the church has undergone a thorough refurbishment over four years in order to prepare for the Reformation celebrations. The story goes that Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of that church in 1517. Luther lies buried inside the church.

During the reopening ceremony Queen Margarethe, who is a skilled embroiderer, presented an ornate altar cloth she had designed and embroidered. It is red, the liturgical colour used at Pentecost and on Reformation Day, and its central motif is the Luther rose.

## CONSULTATION ON CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH BUDDHISTS

*As this edition of The Window is being printed a Consultation on Christian-Buddhist Relations is taking place at Yangon in Myanmar, hosted by the Anglican Province of Myanmar and its Primate, Archbishop Stephen. Among the people taking part are our Anglican Moderator, Bishop Michael Ipgrave, and one of our Patrons, Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin.*

The Consultation is the brainchild of NIFCON (the Network for Inter Faith Concerns in the Anglican Communion (now known as AIFN/The Anglican Inter Faith Network) together with the Anglican United Society of Partners in the Gospel, The Lutheran World Federation, The World Council of Churches and individual Lutheran Churches in The Porvoo Communion of Churches.

NIFCON has been engaged for a number of years in building dialogue and understanding between Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists. Myanmar will be a significant place in which to continue the process. There

are roughly 60,000 Anglicans there in six dioceses with one archbishop. The Lutheran World Federation has four member churches in Myanmar, with a combined membership of around 26,000.

Buddhism is the majority religion in many Asian countries, including Myanmar, China, Vietnam, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tibet. Anglicans, Lutherans and other Christian communities work closely with Buddhist religious leaders and local community members to bring about economic and social development, and to reconstruct dignity and infrastructure after conflicts and natural disasters.

Christians, as minority religious communities, are sometimes seriously affected by the attitude and views of a Buddhist majority.

During the Consultation delegates will listen to positive stories of engagement by Anglicans, Lutherans and other Christians with Buddhists, and to Buddhist Scholars sharing their expectations and perspectives for an enhanced relationship between Anglicans, Lutherans and Buddhists around the world. Please pray for all who will be taking part. We hope that Bishop Michael may be able to tell us something of what happens in a future edition of The Window.

## LUTHERANS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS TAKE ANOTHER STEP ALONG THE ROAD TO UNITY

On a gloomy wet Reformation Day, 31st October 2016, a great congregation gathered in Lund Cathedral to witness an historic occasion. The Swedish King and Queen were there, the Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, and members of the government had all gathered in Lund to greet Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation. In the town square, thousands of people watched on big screens in reverent silence.

During their ecumenical prayer service Pope Francis and Bishop Munib signed a Joint Statement pledging Catholics and Lutherans to pursue their dialogue so as to remove the remaining obstacles that hinder them from reaching full unity. After the service 10,000 people entered the Malmö Arena and shouts of joy were to be heard everywhere as the Pope and Bishop Munib arrived for a festival filled with young people.

The Joint Statement stresses a commitment to common witness on behalf of the poor, the needy and the victims of injustice.



### With thankful hearts

It begins with the assertion that fifty years of sustained and fruitful ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans have helped to overcome many differences, and have deepened mutual understanding and trust. In serving people during times of suffering and persecution, Roman Catholics and Lutherans have been drawn closer together.

### Moving from conflict to communion

There is regret on both sides that the Reformation wounded the visible unity of the Church and led to conflict. The past cannot be changed, but what is remembered and how it is remembered can be transformed. Hatred and violence are to be rejected, prayers offered for the healing of wounds and

memories, and God's grace sought so that both the Churches may move towards the communion to which he continually calls them.

### Our commitment to common witness

How Churches relate to one another shapes their witness to the Gospel. So there is a commitment to further growth in a communion rooted in Baptism, and a determination to remove the remaining obstacles to full unity. The fact that it is not possible to share God's redeeming presence at the Eucharistic table is a wound that

that creation will be cared for in loving and responsible ways.

### One in Christ

The Statement expresses gratitude to the representatives of the various Christian World Communions and Fellowships sharing in the service. As Catholics and Lutherans recommit themselves to move from conflict to communion they invite their ecumenical partners to remind them of their commitments, to encourage them, to continue to pray for them, to walk with them and to support them in living out the prayerful commitments being expressed that day.

### Calling upon Catholics and Lutherans worldwide

Lutheran and Catholic parishes and communities are challenged to be bold and creative, joyful and hopeful in their commitment to continue this great ecumenical journey. God's gift of unity should guide cooperation and deepen solidarity. By praying together, by listening to one another, by living Christ's love in their relationship, Catholics and Lutherans open themselves to the power of the

needs healing, and this must be the goal of future ecumenical endeavour.

But while theological dialogue continues the two Churches can proclaim God's redeeming action by working together to uphold human dignity and rights, especially for the poor, by working for justice and by rejecting all forms of violence.

Lutherans and Catholics are also urged to cooperate in welcoming the stranger, in coming to the aid of people forced to flee because of war and persecution, and in defending the rights of refugees and those who seek asylum. They must also acknowledge the right of future generations to enjoy God's world in all its potential and beauty, and work together and pray

Triune God.

The Statement ends, 'Catholics and Lutherans are now a step closer to the unity Christ prayed for.'

No doubt there will be a mixed reception for this Joint Statement. Already in the UK the Catholic Herald has raised the question, how much can a Roman Catholic actually applaud the Reformation? But it concedes that we cannot stay in the past. Catholics and Lutherans must listen and learn, and appreciate each other as gifts.

Perhaps 2017 should not be about 'applauding' the Reformation, but seen as another starting point on the walk to unity recognising that there is still a long and winding road ahead.



## PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT AND PEOPLE MIGHT FORM PRAYER GROUPS

*Helen Harding found this approach to forming small groups both helpful and fun!*

I'm always keen to find new ways of trying to break the ice and helping people of all ages to pray together, especially during all-age worship. In the English churches I have experienced, praying in small groups is not something that comes naturally to some people. I wonder what it is like in the congregations you belong to. You may have experienced or used a variety of different methods for encouraging this to happen, but I want to describe one that appealed to me and really worked.



First, let me sketch in the background. I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and at home we used to play 'Happy Families'. It was a game invented in about 1851 and I have seen versions of it in Finnish (Pekka-Peli), French and Chinese so, wherever you live, you may have come across it.

How you play it isn't important but I will describe it just for fun. There are 40 picture cards featuring illustrations of 10 fictional families most often based on the occupation of the man (yes, it is quite an old fashioned game!). There are four characters in each family – the husband, the wife, the son and the daughter, Mr Toot the Musician, Mrs Toot the Musician's wife, Master

Toot the Musician's son and Miss Toot the Musician's daughter, for example. The cards are mixed up and dealt out to the players and you have to collect complete families. If you hold one or more of a particular family you ask one of the other players if s/he is holding the card depicting a member of the family you are missing. You can play a very similar game using a normal pack of 52 playing cards when you try to collect a set of cards of the same number or the four Aces, Jacks, Queens or Kings, or whatever those cards are called where you live! Here in Britain I know that game as 'Go fish'.



Anyway, none of that helps people to pray in small groups! But once when I went to a church meeting the 40 Happy Family cards were mixed up and given to the congregation. It was essential to ensure that complete families were given out. We were then asked to find the other people in the family. I had Mrs Toot the Musician's Wife and so I had to find my 'husband', 'daughter' and 'son'. Each 'family' was then invited to share a little about themselves and their own families, then they were asked to pray together for each other and for the others' real families or personal situations. Acknowledging that sometimes people find it hard even to pray in small groups like that, the organiser had created a few suggestions to help us focus our prayers: "give thanks for each person in the group"; "ask God to bless another part of the Church's family – the people across the road at the Catholic Church, or our link with Kwa Mkono Hostel in Tanzania"; "give thanks for members of your own family, or pray for the ones who are in particular need", and so on.

the ones who are in particular need", and so on.

It worked. It felt quite a fun way of getting into groups of four, and we were helped to pray together. You don't have to use 'Happy Families' cards – some people might not appreciate the supposedly 'normal' family image it portrays - you could achieve the same result using an ordinary pack of cards and get people with the same number or picture to get together. You still end up with groups of four! And the list of prayer topics you could use is endless!



**Helen also experienced a useful way of enabling people to express doubts.** A simple, reflective way of helping people to pray about things that worry them might be to cut out a large question mark and put it on the floor. Invite them to write down a short question or statement about something that bothers them. It could start, "Why is it that...?", or perhaps, "I don't understand why...".

When they have had time to think, gather them round the question mark and invite each one simply to share their concern. Tell them that no-one should respond to the statement or question, but that there will be a short time of silence for reflection between each person's contribution. After the last person the leader could end by saying something like, "Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved. Lord, stay with us when we do not understand."

I quite like this idea as it gives the opportunity for people to express all sorts of concerns in a safe way, knowing that no-one will comment or pass judgement on what they say. To vocalise a thought or question helps us to consider it in a prayerful way. Listening to other people's concerns opens us up to different ideas for prayer.

## PRAYER AND ITS VIBRATIONS

*The Rev Augusty Gandhi is one of our Society's members in Tamil Nadu, India. Prayer forms an important part of his mission and here he shares some significant moments.*



### How Prayer Broke a Relationship

I was selected as a candidate for ministry and was placed in a village. The congregation of that church comes from the tradition of the Anglican mission agency USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel). When I set out for a house visit I met a family. There was an old lady and her brother. They were unmarried. The old man was 84 years old and had been confined to his bed for many years. Treatments ended in vain. He was cared for by the lady who had sacrificed her whole life to him without being married. Finding it difficult to care for him, the lady pleaded with me to pray for his peaceful death.

I prayed for him and returned home. As the days passed his situation became worse. A doctor checked him and said he could only survive for a few more hours. The family called me and asked me to take him the Holy Communion. I did so and returned home thinking that bad news would soon be heard.

Two days later the news came. There had been a positive change in the man who was now speaking well. I went there to see him. The lady didn't speak a word to me. Prayers and Communion had given him new hope and he lived for another year before he rested in peace. From then on the people of the village stopped calling me to serve Communion to the sick!

### How Prayer Created Wounds

The sermon topic for one fine day was "Prayer". Having prepared the sermon and composed a song related to the text, I got ready for the Sunday service. The prayers, songs and sermon were good and the congregation said the sermon touched the depths of their hearts. Though many prayers had been read during the service a man was still on his knees. I waited for him such a long time, wondering at how long he was praying! He must be in a great trouble, I guessed, and I went nearer to help him. I placed my hand on his shoulder. He started

saying, 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Amen.' In a hurry, he stood up and hit his head and was injured. Then I understood that he had slept during the prayers. Not only was his head injured, but my heart too!

### How Prayer ended a Life

There was a hospital in the place I was working. The doctor belongs to the church congregation and he used to call me to pray before beginning his surgery. I used to go there for prayer, even in the middle of the night. Visiting the hospital to speak to the families and counsel the patients was another of my missions.

One night it was nearly 11.30 pm when my phone rang. I was in deep sleep and I woke to pick up the call. It was the doctor and he asked me to come to the hospital. I went and found a situation I had never before experienced, and I still find it a challenging one.

The doctor took me to a room. I was wearing my cassock. There was a doctor, a nurse, a lady, and a man lying on a bed. He was supplied with oxygen through pipes. The man on the bed and the lady were husband and wife. They had fallen in love and been united in marriage. The man was a Christian but the lady was a non-Christian. They had met with an accident and the man had lost consciousness and his brain was dead. The doctors could not give him any further treatment.

The doctor introduced me to the lady and told her to speak with me. With tears the lady said, 'There is no way my husband can be cured. He has donated his organs. Take his organs as he wished.' She added that she had just one wish and only I could help her with it. I asked her what it was.

She said that her husband was only breathing because of the ventilator and so to give him a peaceful death I should switch off the ventilator with prayers. It made a great impact on me, doing the ministry of the living God who raises people from the dead. I have met many people on their death bed. But this was a very different experience. The lady

said that this would be a great duty she wished me to perform for her husband. She asked me to help her through it.

I prayed alone for a while and then I re-entered the room. I made the symbol of cross on the forehead of the lady and her husband. As I said prayers I switched off the ventilator. The sound of the machine stopped, and the graph showed a straight line.

I have spoken about prayer in conferences and churches, and this has been one of the good experiences in my life.

## DANISH BAPTISMS IN DECLINE

Baptism in Denmark has declined from 80.6% in 1990 to 62.6% in 2014. This may be due to increased individualism, secularization and religious diversity in Danish society.

In an effort to reverse the trend the churches in Gentofte, in the North of Copenhagen, send brochures about baptism to all new parents while in Odense the diocese has set up a new baptism fair which includes, among other things, a free concert, baptism information and party tips. Invitations are sent to all families with new-born infants.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark has started putting baptism commercials on public buses as a way of raising awareness and encouraging families to consider the possibility of having their children baptised.

## LUTHER AND PRAYER

The Rev Jo Jan Vandenheede, a member of the Society's Executive Committee,  
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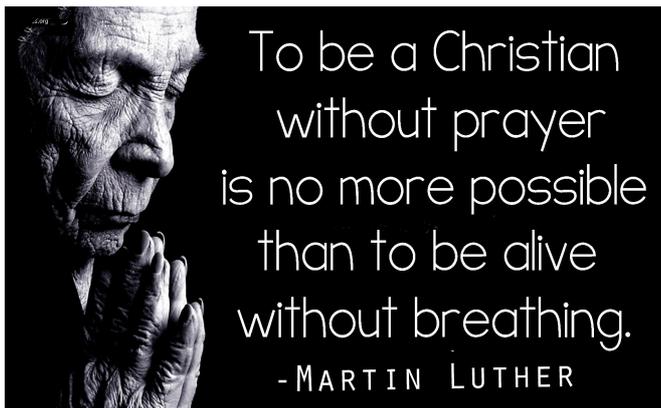


For Martin Luther prayer was not optional. Prayer is the bedrock for Christian living, a life-line not just for a Christian's spiritual life but for life in general, down to ordinary practical every-day things. Prayer opens up our restored relationship with God, and it is one of the marks of the Church (*On the Councils and the Church*, 1539). Next to his commentaries on prayer, Luther wrote suggestions for Morning and Evening Prayers, liturgies for corporate worship, a *Betbuchlein* (1522), and *A Simple Way to Pray* (1535). Prayer was very important to Luther; it was a given and a natural element of life. As a result he called for fervent, frequent and focused prayer (cf. Romans 12.12).

First of all, Luther insisted that God himself has commanded prayer in the Second Commandment and the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer; praying is not something one does when one feels like it or happens to have some spare time; prayer is ordered by God to honour his name and give him glory. This means that if God commands our prayers, he is most certainly interested in them. Secondly, Luther pointed out that God has attached a promise of acceptance to our prayers; our prayers matter and God wants to fulfil our petitions (even if it does not always seem like it). Thirdly, God expects our prayers and that is why he has given us the Lord's Prayer – a text from Scripture to be prayed – the first and foremost prayer. Luther even put it to verse and music (after all, singing is praying twice). In short, to Luther praying is simply nothing other than responding to God.

Prayer also underscores the correct relationship between God and His people, between the Creator and the created. Prayer lets God be God, and lets people be people. Letting God be God is crucial, Luther thought, to a correct understanding of the Commandments, the Creed and Prayer. That is why it comes first in the Catechisms. Everything flows from God being the sole God, being the Creator, and being our Father.

For Luther prayer, as such, is clinging to our God with our whole heart (*oratio cordis*), turning to him for everything and trusting him completely all the time. "All our shelter and protection rests in prayer alone", Luther wrote (*Introduction to the Lord's Prayer, Large Catechism*).



Nothing rejoices God more than when we turn to him. Prayer makes us dependent on the Creator from whom all things flow, upon the 'good' coming from 'God'. And just like our justification, this abundant goodness is not something that we merit or can demand or are entitled to or may take for granted; it is undeserved and it is the same for all. Just like the need for forgiveness, the need for prayer renders all human beings equal.

Prayer makes us aware of these great gifts, prayer makes us aware of who God is and of who we are, and of what our relationship is supposed to be like; in prayer we encounter the Creator and ourselves (*cognitio Dei et sui*). And if we encounter our Creator and ourselves, then we also encounter Creation and our neighbours as ourselves. It is this realisation and reliance on God that leads to true worship. It is prayer that puts God in His rightful place, centre-stage. That is true prayer.

That is why we are – according to Luther – harassed with spiritual trials and worldly struggle (*Anfechtung*). Life is a life of *Anfechtung*; it is the same for all people. For Luther, these *Anfechtungen* are meant to break us, to humble us, to send us onto our knees in prayer. They make us realise we cannot do things by ourselves. They empty us and then we are open to God and God can create us anew. They open up a space, a void for God to fill, for faith to trust.

Prayer chooses God's side and, as such, Creation's side, and, therefore, life's side. It is a continuing creation and it requires a continuing prayer (*oratio continua*). When we think prayer is far away and seems difficult, that is when it is the closest to us (*Not lehrt beten*).

Yet in this struggle, Luther stresses, we have a champion – Christ. He is our great High Priest bringing us into the presence of the Father. He is our Intercessor, our Mediator, not just pleading for us in a judicial way but empathising and sympathising with us as a whole person not just a court case.

He not only taught us how to pray the actual words of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6.9-13), but he also prays and intercedes for us (John 16.26), and we can approach the Father in prayer through Him (*per Christum*). Moreover, we are part of his body, so we pray in and alongside him (*in Christo*). Because all are part of this Body it follows that prayer is not our possession and it cannot be self-centred and self-serving. Prayer is not just worshipping God, it is also an important way of serving our neighbour. And because of Christ, the Father listens to our petitions and grants them for Jesus' sake (*propter Christum*). Our prayers are intertwined, united and incorporated with Christ's own prayers, human and divine together, like Christ's own two natures.

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## MARTIN LUTHER : WARTS AND ALL

Dr Roy Long recommends Lyndal Roper's 'Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet', published in London by The Bodley Head, 2016, ISBN: 9781847920041, as a fascinating and at the same time disturbing portrait.

Over the past sixty years I have read countless books and papers on Martin Luther and his theology, including papers on specialist areas of interest coming from many different cultural backgrounds and languages. But never have I read one as disturbing as Lyndal Roper's *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet*, which was published in the spring of 2016.

Dr Roper, who is described as "an expert on early modern Germany", is Regius Professor of History in the University of Oxford and, as she tells us in the Introduction, she is the child of an Australian Presbyterian manse that was distinctly sympathetic to Martin Luther. Her latest book is an intellectual *tour de force* which deserves to be read by anyone interested in the reformer, so long, let it be said, as he or she has the stamina – and the stomach – to read a book of 577 pages. But, fear not, gentle potential reader, for only 423 pages are text – the remainder are references, notes, an extensive bibliography and an index!

The authoress is clearly an erudite scholar whose book has made extensive use of material which was formerly only available in the now defunct German Democratic Republic.

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Christ also prays the Father for his Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, literally the 'Paraklete', the Comforter (John 14.16), the Promise of the Father (Acts 1.4). This Spirit of prayer is, Luther points out, the same Spirit of Creation, the same Spirit of grace, the same Spirit active in the redemptive work of Christ (Zechariah 12.10). It is a very Trinitarian theology.

People are able to pray and find the strength to pray because of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit teaches us truth, mercy, how to acknowledge our sins (*usus legis spiritualis*), and it explains God's Word. And through that Word – the Word through which the Spirit gives grace – the Spirit is linked to the human spirit. As with Christ, the Spirit lets people, us, share in the action and event of prayer and creation. The work of the Spirit is continual, and therefore prayer is continual, as is Creation. Prayer is a creative act.

In this way our prayers become bigger and richer than we could possibly imagine. This means that even when we are going through temptation or *Anfechtung* our prayer is acceptable to the Spirit; no prayer is wrong or too small, insufficient or incomplete. The sighing of the Spirit becomes our call to the Father, our cry to God (Romans 8.26, Galatians 4.6). Against the roar of the devil (1 Peter 5.8) stands the Abba-call of the Holy Spirit. When we think that we cannot possibly be heard because our prayer is so deep within us or so difficult to express, God hears it loud and clear. God listens much more attentively than we do. We matter to God, our place in his Creation matters and he is paying attention to our prayers, he paying attention to His Creation.

Using this material means that she has been able to redress the imbalance that was inevitable for scholars whose research materials were more limited, and she firmly roots Luther in the paternalistic, princely milieu of Saxony and the other central and eastern German territories. She also paints a portrait of Luther as very much a man of his time, and is realistic about him as a human being, "warts and all".

I found myself fascinated by some of the things Dr Roper reveals. She writes, for example, about Luther's relationship with his early fellow-reformer Andreas Karlstadt, and discloses much about that relationship of which I was unaware. The same is true of his relationships with some other important people such as Phillip Melancthon, Johannes Agricola and, of course, his wife, Katherina von Bora. We learn that Luther was very positive about the enjoyment of sex, but that he clearly felt that the woman's place was in the home. All these things, and much more, I found both illuminating and fascinating, so much so that, after some initial difficulties in getting into it, it became increasingly difficult to put the book down.

So, why did I find it disturbing? Well, I think I can honestly say that I have never idolised Luther, nor thought of him as a saint (except in the proper theological meaning of that word); for me, he is an inspired theologian with whose essential thinking I am in sympathy. This means that I do not consider that his manner of saying things was always appropriate, and I would be among the first to disassociate myself from his hostile writings about the Jews or the peasants. But, to my way of thinking, this book over-emphasises the negative aspects of Luther's personality and pronouncements and I longed for something to redress the balance and emphasise the sweeter side to his personality. If this were the only book about Luther to which I had access I would be left with the picture of man pursued by negative ideas of fatherhood, obsessed with his bowels, far from averse to using scatological language against his opponent, and irascible in the extreme, especially towards the end of his life. All of these things may be true, but there is the other side to Luther as well.

This book most certainly deserves to be read, and I strongly recommend it though, as I implied above, it is not for the faint-hearted. It is a necessary corrective to some of the biographies which have turned Luther into a Protestant idol.

But, at the same time, it cries out for someone to answer it and present his positive sides as well. Space does not allow the reviewing of either title, but readers might find Scott Hendrix's **Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer** (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-300-16669-9), or his **Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction** (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-19-957433-9) to be acceptable antidotes to Dr Roper's book.

## “HANDS TOGETHER, EYES CLOSED”

*The Venerable Christine Allsopp, one of our committee members, shares some thoughts on helping children to pray.*

I have been fortunate throughout my ordained ministry to lead worship in schools, and I continue to do so in retirement. The majority have been Church of England schools, where parents expect clergy to be explicit in sharing the Christian faith. Although parents are free to withdraw their children from acts of worship few do, in my experience, even if they are of another faith.



For me, one of the most important aspects of this ministry is about helping children to pray, and encouraging them to pray in a variety of ways. In our primary schools, whenever I have said that I am going to pray, it is clear that teachers have taught the children by instructing them: “Hands together, eyes closed.” While this is a worthy way to help children to concentrate, I have often subverted this instruction by telling children that we are going to do something different!

Sometimes I tell children that we are going to have an “eyes open” prayer. The visual symbol of a lighted candle or pictures on a screen can aid silent reflection or accompany well chosen words. Blowing bubbles can symbolise prayers rising to God. Children can also respond well to a simple meditation which involves them actively moving a part of their body. I have used a poem written in captivity by Brian Keenan who, in 1986, was kidnapped in

Beirut and held hostage for four and a half years. Children are invited to copy my actions of a closed fist and an open hand and reflect on what makes for peace:

### *The Human Body Has Two Hands*

The human body has two hands –  
With one  
I can make a fist...  
I can hit...  
I can destroy...  
I can make a wasteland about me.



And with the other  
I can create...  
I can paint a picture...  
I can play a piece of music...  
I can make a friend.  
But above all,  
I can contain the first.

So prayer can be eyes open or eyes closed; in stillness or with movement; silent or spoken; using the children’s own words or encouraging them to learn well-known prayers.

I was recently asked to teach children the importance of thankfulness, leading to each child writing their own Grace prayer. These were made into books for each class and used every day to give thanks before school lunch. Learning to say the Lord’s Prayer can (and should!) be accompanied by sessions on the meaning of each phrase.

It was the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who memorably described church schools as ‘a kind of church’. He has also described them as ‘offering the opportunity for a child to live for a while in a particular atmosphere so as to understand some of what shapes some people’s deepest motivation.’

I feel privileged to have been able to contribute to an atmosphere of prayer and worship in schools, encouraging children to explore prayer for themselves.

## O TASTE ... AND SEE USING THE SENSES TO STIMULATE OUR PRAYER

*Helen Harding, a Reader (authorised lay minister) describes an evening arranged for 'Churches Together', an ecumenical gathering of people from a variety of different denominations, in her Anglican church.*

I am a person who finds words really difficult. I am much more of a visual person, finding pictures and practical things to interact with more helpful than listening to lots of words. I feel fairly certain that this is true for quite a few people who come to our church, so Sue, a fellow Reader, and I got together and devised an evening of stimulation of the senses to help people to experience prayer rather than only saying words. So here are some of the thoughts behind the evening and a description of the many displays, activities and prayer stations that we set up.

People often use the analogy of a journey to describe the way we move through life, especially in relation to our Christian Faith. Each of our journeys has taken us to different places and given us different experiences. That evening our journeys brought us together in one place, into an oasis, a place of spiritual refreshment where we could all be ourselves and react as the Spirit prompted.

Because we are all different the refreshment we need varies from person to person. But Jesus, the living water, the bread of life, invites us to open ourselves up to experience through all our five senses whatever it is that God might be trying to share with us. In the title of the evening we only mentioned two senses, taste and sight, but we often talk of God speaking to us and we hear him; we are touched by God in all kinds of ways; we feel his presence with us through a variety of means; and smells are so evocative.

The church building in which we met is very flexible. All the furniture can be moved. So in the open space that we created we set up lots of discrete areas, each devoted to one

display. But these displays were not just to be looked at. People were encouraged to interact with them through touch, smell, taste and hearing as well as sight. Each person could approach the displays in any order and in whatever ways they found helpful.

Something that was important was an absence of talking! Everyone was asked to respect the quiet nature of the evening and to become aware of the silence – and the small sounds they could hear within it – allowing all their senses to tune in to God. If anyone wanted to disengage, there was a refreshment area where they could help themselves to a drink and biscuits. If they felt the need to talk to someone about what they were experiencing or about something that was making them excited or anxious there were five named people any of whom would be happy to listen.

Remembering that prayer is communication *from* God as well as *to* God, everyone was invited to wander round the building to start with, looking at the various 'stations'. After that initial walk round, they were invited to choose their first area, to begin to engage with it and reflect on what triggered their imagination, emotions or thoughts. What might the display and any associated activity be saying to them about God, the world or themselves? They could move round the displays as and when they wanted to.

Here is a brief description of the various stations – in no particular order! It is offered as a resource in case you would like to do something similar, even using one or two of them in a prayer corner of your church for a while.

**FRESHLY BAKED BREAD** – 'Savour the smell, break some off, feel the texture, eat and enjoy the taste.' 'Be gentle when you touch bread – let it not lie uncared for ... unwanted. So often bread is taken for granted. There is so much beauty in bread; beauty of sun and soil, beauty of patient toil, winds and rain have caressed it, Christ so often blessed it. Be gentle when you touch bread.' The bread was baked in a bread machine, timed to be cooked just as the event started so that the aroma would be part of the experience. We also used a large poster showing wheat, grapes and sun.

**FISH** (sardines) - 'Taste - and remember Jesus' stories, miracles and actions.'

**FRUIT OF THE VINE** – 'Taste and, when you have drunk, please wash and dry your glass.' There was a jug of red wine, a bowl of warm soapy water to wash the glass and a tea towel to dry it up! Even that mundane activity provokes prayer. There were also grapes to eat.

**DIRTY STONES** and a bowl of water – and a small nail brush – and a towel to dry your hands on!

**MOVING PICTURES** - a slow sequence of pictures being shown on a screen – anything and everything that might stimulate praise, or thanks, or sorrow – dewdrops on cobwebs, a baby's hands, a Bolivian child brushing her teeth, sailing boats, a rough sea breaking, candles, sunset, butterflies, birds, a donkey – the list is endless!





**WATER** – ‘Taste. Millions of people around the world do not have safe, clean water to drink.’ ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.’

**JESUS** – this was simply a panel with about 20 A4 pictures of Jesus from different cultures and centuries. People were invited to take any of them down to look at Jesus - perhaps in a new way.

**DISABILITY** – an area with crutches, wheelchair, walking frame, hearing aids and papers asking various questions and making comments: ‘Disabled – or differently abled?’ ‘How does someone in a wheelchair make me feel?’ ‘Is the need to use aids, “giving in?”’ ‘Is ageing all negative?’ ‘Give us grace to look below the surface and see God’s purposes being worked out.’



**A PLACE OF COLOUR** – ribbons of all shades, head scarves, a rainbow umbrella and, alongside, a table with colour pencils, pastels, felt tip pens and paper to make your own design or do something else creative (pictured left).

**A TAIZE CROSS** - ‘Light a candle – and if you can think of a phrase or occasion in the Bible that is to do with light or flame, please add it to the list.’

**A BOWL, A JUG OF WATER AND A TOWEL, ICE CUBES** - ‘Pour water, listen to it, touch it. Remember when Christ himself knelt in front of his friends and washed their feet.’ There was also a children’s water play toy (see picture top left).

**FRAGRANT SMELLS** – a scented candle, honey, perfume, fragrant flowers.

**REFRESHMENT** - Tea, coffee, fruit juice, water for you to help yourself to whenever you like.

**A BOWL OF WORDS** - ‘Please take a card and pause for a while to reflect on the words you read. These were small pieces of folded card with a Bible verse or a verse from a hymn or some other very short piece of spiritual writing.

**A WALL OF EMOTION** – this was just individual words printed on white A4 paper and stuck up on a display area: ‘Anger, Tears, Frustration, Happiness, Sadness, Loneliness, Guilt, Joy, Freedom, Tears, Peacefulness, Love, Wonder, Helplessness.’

**PLAYDOUGH** – natural coloured homemade playdough (right) to create shapes, or just to feel and knead, allowing the mind to wander.

**PILGRIMAGE** – walking boots, maps, information about prayer walks.



**THE CARPENTER’S SHOP** – a saw horse with a large piece of wood for people to saw – creating both the sound and the smell of wood being worked.

**THE PASSION** – a display of things associated with Christ’s passion – wooden crosses, palm crosses, purple cloth, sacking, a crown, a hammer and large nails, a chain, dice.

**POVERTY** – an olive wood carving of a couple with a baby, and a cartoon of a child eating food from a bowl with her fingers, and the words ‘Poverty is what happens when people give up caring for one another’ (pictured left).



**THE EVERYDAY** – an ironing board, dustpan and brush, duster, apron, saucepan and tin of food, a computer keyboard and mouse – to remember that God is to be found as much in the everyday as in the special moments.

**AN EMPTY SPACE** – ‘An empty space to feel what you will.’

**A BURNING BUSH** - ‘Whatever your prayer may be tonight, please feel free to write it on one of the flames. Tie it on the branch and help create a burning bush - a sign of God's presence, God listening and speaking to us. If you'd rather not write your prayer simply leave the flame blank but tie it on - God will know what is you want to say.’ (Picture below)



After two hours the evening ended with a short prayerful reflection on Daniel.

Daniel went home. In an upstairs room of his house there were windows which faced towards Jerusalem. There, just as he had always done, he knelt down at the open windows and prayed to God three times a day. (Daniel 6.10)

Daniel was reassured of the presence of God by looking towards Jerusalem, the place where so often in the past he had experienced God's presence.

Gracious God, we pray that tonight you have made your presence known to us, have spoken to us, have listened to us, and we to you. We pray that our own prayer life will be enriched because of this time.

Just as Daniel focused on a place when he prayed, so too in our prayers we often focus on where we live and worship. We ask you to make yourself known to everyone who lives or worships in this neighbourhood.

As we think of our calling to be Christ's Church, his body wherever we are in the world, we pray for each other and the members of our congregations, that we might all be prayerful people sharing your Son's desire that we should be one in him.

God our King, the picture of Daniel looking towards Jerusalem reminds us that we look to your heavenly city, so we pray that when the time is right you will indeed bring each of us into your glorious presence to live with you for ever. Amen

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRAYER BOOK

Madeleine Holmes, a Reader (Accredited Lay Minister) in the Church of England Diocese in Europe, shares two of her experiences of praying.

When I became aware of what being a Christian really meant I was hungry for all forms of worship and prayer and ways of using my love for God. My training to be a Reader meant I could go to St John's College in Nottingham, UK, and spend a week, just a few days, studying, worshipping, listening and learning with people of a like mind. For me, having had no further education or knowledge of what College or University must be like, it was heaven!

Once Christina Baxter, then Principal of the College, led a workshop on prayer. Of the many gems in that workshop one was outstanding. 'When someone asks you to pray for them, don't just add them to a list. As you walk away, pray! Make prayer

immediate, then the job is done and your list does not grow longer and longer.' For me that made sense and I have done it for over 12 years now.

The other thing about prayer I would love to share came originally from Selwyn Hughes. I choose a special notebook, perhaps a gift or something beautiful. I open it at the first double page and on the left-hand page I write a heading, "**Looking at God**" and on the right I write another heading, "**What God wants to reveal**". The next left hand page is headed "**Looking at Others**" and the right "**What God wants to reveal**." I turn the page again and write "**Looking at me**" on the left and "**What God wants to reveal**" on the right.

I use the notebook every day, prayerfully, writing something on each page and over time God does reveal things. Yes, my hand writes, but looking back I can see God's hand in it. Sometimes I write words of comfort or Bible texts, and I feel God in them. Sometimes I add prayers of thankfulness and praise, or pour out my misery.

It works for me. The proof is that, even though we all need to change the style and perhaps our regimes of praying over time, this one has stayed with me down the years. As I look back on my journal I can see the walk I have been on. But I can also see God's love, wisdom and discernment which he shows me and which prayer sometimes draws out of me!



## GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

*When he heard that the focus of this edition of The Window was to be prayer, our Anglican President, Dr John Arnold, offered this sermon. It is based on the Gospel of St Luke, chapter 11, verses 1-13*

The main point of this passage is persistence in prayer; and it is a point which Jesus made frequently both by his teaching and his example. St Paul makes the same point. Don't worry too much about technique or even content and especially about prayer apparently not being answered; just keep going. Prayer is not so much about us getting God to do what we want, as about our learning to see things from his point of view, about our aligning our priorities, our hopes and desires, even our requests, with his. That is why, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to ask the Father only for what he already wants to give us and nothing else. A good example of how not to do it is Joan Baez's singing in that wonderful, whisky-soaked voice, 'O Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz, / My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends./ Worked hard all my life, no help from my friends./ So oh Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz.' Great song, awful warning!

In the little story Jesus tells to illustrate the point about persistence, it is notable that the phrase he takes, even by preference over 'Hallowed be your name' and 'Your kingdom come', is 'Give us today our daily bread', because that is where we actually ask for something, like a neighbour saying, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread.' At least that's better than, 'no help from my friends.' Martin Luther in his Small Catechism comments, 'God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving'; and he answers his own question 'What then does 'daily bread' mean?' as follows: 'Everything included in the necessities and nourishment of our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields,' and he goes on to add 'good and upright spouses, children, rulers, friends, neighbours, peace, health, decency and honour.' The Book of Common Prayer shortens this to 'all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies', which must have been easier for our confirmation candidates to learn by

heart; but it is worth taking to heart Luther's recognition, 500 years ahead of his time, that personal and political relationships are necessary for our wellbeing. As it says in another song, 'That's when good neighbours become good friends.'

We are not taught to say, as a child might, 'give me', but, rather, as grown-ups, 'give us'. This is not a prayer for isolated individuals, but for those who know that they are bound up in the bundle of life with others. So we cannot ask for the necessities of life for ourselves without at the same time asking on behalf of those in need. As Berdyayev said, 'Bread for myself is a practical question; bread for my neighbour is a spiritual one.' So long as any of God's children on earth lack the basic necessities of life, including personal and social relationships, we have to go on praying this prayer - and then do something about it. Often, when we ask God to do something, the answer comes back, 'You do it', as when the disciples tell Jesus to send the crowd away to buy bread in the desert and he says, 'You give them something to eat.' (Luke 9. 12-17) It is easier now than it was then; for Christian Aid and Oxfam and other charities go on giving generously.

So far, so good. That is not difficult to understand; it is only difficult to do. Now comes the difficult bit. Why does it say 'each day' or, as is more familiar, 'this day'? The reason, Luther says, is that when we say this prayer we are reminded of our total dependence on God, the giver of all good things, and of our interdependence with our fellow human beings. We need those reminders daily, because they are so easy to forget.

The disciples and Jesus' first hearers would have thought immediately of the story of God giving manna in the wilderness to the children of Israel on their long journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. One of the key points in that story is that each day just enough bread for that day came down from

heaven, and no more. In fact, if they tried to store it up and keep it, it went bad and gave them tummy-ache. This went on for forty years and, so the story implies, they still didn't learn the lesson. This bears repeating at a time when it is widely assumed that the key to freedom and happiness is to be self-sufficient. This clause in the Lord's Prayer reminds us daily of our dependence on God and on other people. Incidentally, the word 'manna' does not mean 'bread'; it means 'what is it?' It leaves us not only with answers but also with questions.

Such as, why didn't Jesus simply say, 'Give us our bread today'? Why did he add the word 'daily'? And, like manna, what is it? It is a very rare and odd word; it only occurs here, in the Lord's Prayer, so it is difficult to say what it is. Most likely it means 'sufficient' or something like 'enough to save us from anxiety'. Jesus tells us elsewhere not to take anxious thought for the morrow; and Paul, in his Letter to the Philippians, says, 'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.' (4.6f)

But the root meaning of the word for 'daily' is 'substantial'; and it is very like the word used in the Creed for saying that Jesus is of one substance with the Father. He himself said in St John's Gospel (6, 48-51), 'I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died....I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The word 'essential' comes closest to covering both meanings. I like to bear it in mind as we say the Lord's Prayer immediately before receiving, by faith with thanksgiving, consecrated bread, essential bread, the 'true and living bread', as a sign of God's presence with us in this sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## A TOOL TO REVOLUTIONISE SPIRITUAL LIFE

*At the Society's Conference in Visby, Bishop Johan Dalman told us about the 'Pearls of Life' developed in 1995 by Swedish Evangelical Lutheran bishop emeritus Martin Lönnebo\*. Many different ways of using them have been developed and you can read about them online and in books. Bishop Johan simply described how he uses them.*



Something that challenges all our churches is the unhelpful distinction between private and public, and between faith and reason, and the belief going back three hundred years that reason must inform faith and that the religious life has nothing to say to ordinary everyday life. Secularism seems to stand with two feet firmly on the ground while faith sails away like a blue balloon towards the sky! According to this view, whether expressed aggressively or in a more friendly way (albeit with a paternalistic tone), faith is nothing more than a hobby, a private matter, and when it comes to ordinary life its views are seldom asked for. This assumption is based on Thomas Hobbes' idea that we live in a world of conflicting interests where the rights of each individual have to be safeguarded. But is this true? Is this something that we, as Christians, must accept?

I want to question this world-view with the help of a tool which, from humble beginnings, has revolutionised the spiritual life and the worship of the Church of Sweden. It is a tool, made, bought and used by over a million Christians of all denominations today. I am referring to 'The Beads of Christ'.

Many readers may already know this

ecumenical rosary by heart but I offer this explanation as an example and a way of approaching spirituality which challenges some of the current convictions regarding the role of religion in society at large.

There are eighteen beads on a piece of string to remind you and me of some important aspects of life, our ordinary life and our Christian life, both of which we live together with God. The beads are used in an holistic way and, for some people, their use has a kind of 'Celtic' ring to it. It is something that is both familiar and yet new, universal and yet personal.

As I think of my life as a Christian I reach for my beads and touch them. The first one, the golden bead, is the bead of the **Creator**. I am reminded that there is someone who has made everything, someone who holds everything in his hand. As you hold that bead and pray you say to yourself, 'I am not the kind of person I would like to be, I don't say the things I would like to say.' You open your hand and you look at the bead and see yourself mirrored in it. You may not be the person you want to be, but you are made a little bit in the image of God.

The next bead is the bead of **silence**. It reminds me that when I approach God, and when I think of life, I need to be silent. I need to empty myself of my thoughts and listen. Then I can say, 'Here I am, Lord.'

Bead number three is the **Me-bead**. I am a lot of things. I have a lot of different roles. I may be a parent, a son or a daughter, a sibling, a friend, ordained or lay – I carry a whole lot of roles. But underneath them all, who am I? I hold onto the Me-bead and I think about that.

Bead number four is the bead of **Baptism**. It reminds me that, whatever my deepest-held wishes, dreams and fears might be, whatever ambitions I may have, in Baptism I have already become

something. I have been named and called by God to be his beloved child. And when I think of Baptism I also think of children and of how a child gives freely and openly to others and also receives openly and freely from others. And I say to myself, 'What about me? What about the child in me? Do I give freely to others? Do I receive freely and gratefully?' and I hold onto the bead of Baptism and I pray about that.

The fifth bead is another bead of **silence** and then, after keeping quiet for a while, I turn to bead number six, the bead of the **desert**. As I hold this bead I think of the phases in my life where I felt lost or abandoned, as if something within me was about to die. They were moments from which I thought there would be no escape, and yet I survived, and I realise that the experience made me stronger and that the challenges helped me to mature and grow. I pray about that, asking myself how I have grown and what I have learned.

The seventh bead is another bead of **silence**, after which comes the **care-free** bead. I think about those lovely moments when I have felt at one with life, times when I listen to music, when I walk in the woods, when I am together with my family, when I worship and pray in church. I hold onto that bead and recall the memory of those moments and I give thanks and rejoice in them.

Bead nine is for **silence** again, and then ten and eleven are both red. They remind me of blood and of love. The tenth bead is the **bead-of-the-loves-in-my-life**, and I remember those whom I love and those who love me, those who are still with me and those who have gone before. Bead number eleven is also red. It is the bead of **suffering and sacrifice**. Love and suffering go together because love is not always easy and when I love I offer myself and sacrifice something in myself, just as God loves

## SETTING UP A PRAY-GROUND IN YOUR CHURCH

When they read in the last edition of *The Window* that this time there was to be a focus on prayer some USA members suggested we look at the 7th June 2016 issue of *Living Lutheran*. This is what we found.

Pastor Andrea Roske-Metcalf of Grace Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minnesota wanted families with young children to know as soon as went through the door that the church is the place for them. So a "Pray-Ground" was set up in the front of the sanctuary, a place where children can play whilst still observing the worship. There are two rugs, two small tables with child-sized chairs and stools, some colouring sheets, crayons, foam blocks, fabric books, and soft toys, bouncy seats for smaller infants and Bumbo chairs for babies who can hold their heads up but can't yet sit up on their own, and a baby gym. You might think it would be a distraction, but it is not. Pastor Andrea says it is certainly no noisier than it would be if those same kids were sitting in the pews! At weddings and baptisms things do tend to be a little louder, she admits, but if it means that children who are not generally in church are in the church she gives thanks and moves on! 'The "Pray-Ground" is a visual reminder that kids aren't an afterthought. They're a vital part of the congregation,' she says. Perhaps you already have a similar area in your church or sanctuary. If you do not, why not think of giving it a try?



*Continued from previous page*

his creation and sacrifices himself for it – and for me. I hold onto the two beads and think how love and suffering go together.

The next three beads also go together. They represent the **secrets of my life**. These are things that lie deep within me, the things of which I dream, the things that I long for in my life, the things I keep to myself and do not even share with the person I love the most. They are things I pray for, and things that I sometimes do not have the words for. I hold onto those three beads and think of that.

The next bead is black. It is the bead of **death**, the bead of the night. As I hold onto that bead I think of the greatest fears of my life. It is not like the desert bead which reminds me of incidents that were hard at the time but which passed and all was well. This bead is a reminder of the black times that are always with me, the chronic sickness that afflicts me or others. This followed by another bead of **silence**.

The next bead is white. It speaks of life and of **resurrection** and reminds me that, in spite of what I see and experience, there is always hope. If God came

to this earth as a man, and died and rose again, then nothing is impossible. That is what I think and pray about as I hold onto that bead.

The eighteenth bead is another bead of **silence**. As we lead our life, our ordinary life as human beings and Christians, we can only hold onto one thing at a time. And that is what I do as I work with the beads. I just hold onto one thing at a time. So I can say, 'How much I love you!' or 'How dark and hellish my life is!' and I hold onto that one bead and experience the moment, and pray, and then look down into my hand and remember that we always have all the other beads, all the other moments, as well. There is always a "Me" behind everything, always someone who loves me, so there is always hope. Life isn't just one moment, life is the whole lot!

And as I finger the beads I occasionally touch the string. Without that string all the beads would fall apart, lose their meaning and become empty. That string is the string of Grace. It tells me that everything, my life itself, is given by God through grace. It is not ME holding life together; it is not ME providing the strength to carry on; it is God.

That is how I pray my way round the 'Beads of Christ'. They enable me to tell the story of my life, not as it ought to be but as it is. My fingers touch the beads of Baptism and of Eucharist (for that is where love and suffering are found) and of Resurrection. The private and the public are not two different realities; they are one and the same. A secular life and a life of faith are not at odds with each other but are the same experiences viewed in different ways. There is only one life and this rosary holds it together and proclaiming our Christian faith is not about digging trenches but building bridges, for the secular world and the world of faith are one and the same.

\* Bishop Lönnebo was stranded on an island in Greece for several days because of a storm. When he saw the Greek fishermen with their kombologia (which are in fact worry beads that have no religious or spiritual function) he was inspired to create the Wreath of Christ. He first developed the idea on paper, drawing a set of prayer beads and giving all the pearls a specific meaning. On his return home to Sweden he made an actual pearl ribbon, based on his sketches, and started using it in his prayers. The devotion began to spread rapidly in Sweden and into other Lutheran countries. There are other ways of using them - see [www.pearlsoflife.org](http://www.pearlsoflife.org)



## DIFFERENT WAYS OF PRAYING

*Sally Barnes, a member of our Executive Committee, suggests that both adults and children need to find their own ways to pray*

When I was a little girl I was given the distinct impression,

probably inadvertently, that the only way to pray was on your knees with your hands clasped together and eyes tightly shut. This understanding was compounded by endless school assemblies and people taking this posture in church. I possibly thought that if you didn't pray like that your prayer would not, in some way, "take", the outward form being more important than heart and content.

Then I read a query in a journal of my father's asking, 'Is it proper prayer if you inter-twine your fingers together rather than hold your hands out straight?' In other words, 'If I am not holding my hands properly will my prayer be heard?' Why this stuck in my mind at such a young age I have no idea, but it did. Odd really, because I was an only child, often on my own, perfectly happy roaming around the bomb-sites near my London home, amicably talking to God and mulling things over with him. It didn't occur to me that what I was doing was praying. It was more like talking to him about this and that, sorting things out between us.

At that time my mental image of God was very different from now. It was only when I reached my early teens that I began to question the incongruity of picturing God as the old man with white hair and long beard, dressed in a flowing robe. In jettisoning that I almost jettisoned God - but not quite. And I never confused God with Father Christmas like some children did. I was terrified of the old man in a red outfit and had to be carried screaming from a shop if I saw him!

We never really know what is in the mind of a child, or how she or he builds understanding from experiences around them. How they read and what they see is often very different from what we intend, especially if we don't include them in the conversation.

That is so important when talking about prayer. While we need to give support, we also need to provide opportunities for them to be actively engaged, to think and discuss what they feel and understand, and to realise that



that there are many different ways to reach the same end. In other words, to be able to learn that there is never one way that is the right way.

We know as adults that at any age we can find prayer a struggle. For me the deepest prayer takes place when I am walking. I need to be active rather than sedentary. Walking sets off my thoughts for quite long periods of time (so does ironing but that is a different story). I can reflect and ponder when I am sitting down but I am not good at it while others who meditate in that way clearly are. Standing up is fine but walking is best, especially as I found recently that walking a labyrinth really focuses the prayerful mind.

For a long time I use to think maybe I was doing it wrong. Everyone else was in on the secret but me. Then, in the 1980s, I read a book by a Roman Catholic nun, who I subsequently met in my early days campaigning for the ordination of women. She was a turbulent nun who was always in trouble with her Church, but she wrote that her most effective time of prayer was when she was riding her bike. Unintentionally she permitted me to do it my way.

Having pondered on this for some years, especially in relation to young children, I was delighted when the Rev Miranda Threlfall-Holmes (pictured left) told a group of us she was going to write a book with her son Noah on experimenting with different ways of praying.

Miranda had noticed, as had many of us, that there are few practically-based books that take account of the experiences of young people and actively engaged them. There was a distinct gap in the market. So when Miranda and Noah finally published their book it sold like hot cakes and is now in its second edition. Published under the title, "The Teenage Prayer Experiment Notebook" (by Miranda and Noah Threlfall Holmes published by SPCK, 2015) it is one to be enjoyed and shared.

Each section encourages readers to take part in, think about and reflect on activities that Noah and his friends tried out in order to find their most effective ways of praying and reflecting. The beauty of their book is that it does exactly what it says on the cover. It is experimental. It is totally non-didactic, encouraging thought without correcting or directing the reader towards any adult led "right way". It encourages the reader to think and try things out for themselves, unselfconsciously expressing their ideas and feelings. Indeed, the feedback they gave to Miranda showed that there is no one-way for everyone. Each section has an explanation setting the scene for the experiment, followed by the experiment itself with feedback questions to help the experimenter review what s/he feels. I would suggest that the scope of the book goes far beyond teenagers and that it would be helpful for adults who feel they are stuck in one mode of prayer that is unhelpful to them. I wish it had been around when I was young.

Due to demand, Miranda has subsequently published a sequel for adults called "The Little Book of Prayer Experiments" (by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes SPCK, 2016). I recently read it

## BUILDING BRIDGES IN A POST-BREXIT WORLD

The Church of England Diocese of Lichfield values its overseas links with other churches and congregations, but sees their link with the Nordkirche Lutherans in Germany as being of special significance, Pete Bate reported on the diocesan website

Building bridges between churches in the UK and the rest of Europe is more important than ever in the wake of the Brexit vote. That is the view of our Anglican Moderator, Bishop Michael Igrave. Speaking at an event entitled “Anticipating Advent”, celebrating the partnership between his diocese, Lichfield, and the Nordkirche Lutheran Church in Germany, he said, ‘Links such as this one, particularly with continental Europe, become all the more important because Brexit was not a vote to leave Europe; it was specifically about the European Union. We are part of Europe and this is a way of building links even more strongly and making the bridges even firmer that bind us in friendship with other European Christians.’



Bishop Michael speaking during the Conference in Holy Trinity Church

Members of the two Church communities spent three days together in Shrewsbury. On Friday 25th November there was a conference, “Reconciliation: Gift of God and Source of Transformation”, held at Holy Trinity Church in Meole Brace, Shrewsbury. Addressing that conference, Bishop Michael explained that the Church has a key role to play in reconciliation within local communities following the UK referendum. ‘Many [British] people feel disenfranchised or culturally excluded – either their communities are forgotten or are changing so fast that they are disorientated. We need to find ways to be a sign of hope in despairing places, to ensure our churches are places where people do not feel excluded or belittled,’ he said. ‘Love is not just feeling well-disposed to everybody everywhere; rather it is about

making choices to put the needs of specific people first, ahead of our own – not just people like us, but those very different from us; not just people we like, but those we find difficult.’

The next day, an “Anticipating Advent” Service was held at St Alkmund’s Church in Shrewsbury and then, on the Sunday, Nordkirche members visited various parish churches in the morning and went to the Advent Carol Service at Lichfield Cathedral in the evening.

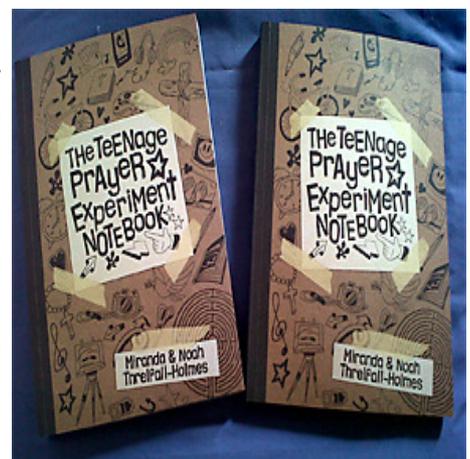
Charlotte Lange, a young participant from Nordkirche, said, ‘For me it’s a very interesting experience because I meet so many new people and have so many important and interesting discussions with them. To talk with people about their religion and their faith is a very good experience. It’s more important than ever when there’s this split in Europe, for Christians to try especially hard to extend relationships together.’

Continued from previous page

and was struck by a comment in the Foreword written by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, ‘I commend this little book to help you to “just do it” [pray]. It matters more *that you do it* than *how you do it*.’ His sentence sums up just what I feel and have been trying to say in this article.

One final story: I particularly like the idea of a prayer tent, one of the experiments Noah and his friends tried out. How many of us, when we were young, made a tent under the table covered by a large cloth, imagining no-one could see us – our secret world? I gave the book to a young and extremely bright young boy in our church, well below the age it was intended for, to see what he and his mother thought about it.

Later I had an amusing message from her saying, ‘Tom loved the book and tried out all the experiments giving his views, but the prayer tent was the winner.’ ‘How often,’ she said, ‘do you hear a mother say to her child,’ will you please stop praying and come out and do your violin practice!’?’



Miranda and Noah’s book offers many approaches to prayer

## NOVEL OFFERS ENCHANTING ACCOUNT OF KATHARINA LUTHER'S EARLY LIFE

*Society member Anne Boileau gave a memorable workshop at our conference in Visby in which she took on the role of Katharina von Bora and engaged in conversation about her early life and her marriage to Martin Luther. Anne has written a novel, 'Katharina Luther: Nun, Rebel, Wife', published September 2016 by Clink Street Publishing, ISBN; 978-1-911110-61-3 paperback; 978-i-911110-62-0 ebook; and available on Kindle. John Arnold found it enchanting and recommends it as a popular introduction to the Reformation's main themes.*

In a generous Foreword Ronald Blythe writes, "It has always struck me as astonishing that the tremendous transition from medievalism to modernism continues in Britain to revolve around the drama of the royal divorce." And even in *Still Reforming: Reformation on London's Doorsteps* (the admirable invitation from British and continental churches to participate in hospitable and imaginative events to mark the anniversary of the Reformation this year) the claim is made that, "it is (probably) true that if Henry's marriage to Catherine had been happy, England would have remained in the Catholic fold." Would it really? It ignores the fact that radical ideas were being spread throughout the land by traders and travellers, scholars, refugees and asylum-seekers and, above all, by William Tyndale's translation into English of the New Testament (1526).

One of many merits of Anne Boileau's enchanting book is the way in which she conveys the exhilaration with which these ideas were greeted by many, the excitement and sense of liberation which accompanied the reading for the first time of Holy Scripture translated afresh from Hebrew and Greek into the vernacular. This would have happened whatever the state of the royal marriage.

Still, it is a marriage, the marriage of the 'aristocratic young nun and the learned early middle-aged monk', which is the subject of this tale, beautifully told and skilfully presented in the form of a framework novel. It begins with Katharina in the last stages of her first pregnancy, provoked by insults in the street into writing her own story in a little calfskin book, a gift from Martin Luther. This is not the only literary device. She makes good use of letters and conversations to convey in flashbacks important earlier events, like Luther's call to become a monk in obedience to a vow made under duress to

St Anne after a dramatic thunderstorm, in which his companion was killed by a thunderbolt, and his later overwhelming apprehension of the grace of God in his study in the tower at Wittenberg. It also shows how family relationships and friendships were put under strain, or strengthened, through the turmoil of change. She writes appreciatively, not bitterly, of her life in the convent, which gave her everything except freedom; and she excels in showing, like Hamlet, what it was like to live with two thought worlds, Catholic and Reformed, overlapping in one mind.

She comes across as a many-sided, three-dimensional character, with a personality of her own, strong enough to match in matrimony an exceptionally gifted but difficult man, whom she helps to humanise and civilise, guiding him through an age of transition in his own life, just as Christendom was going through the birth pangs of its own transition 'from medievalism to modernism.'

The story ends with the birth of baby Johannes; but one of its strengths is that its scope is not confined to the domestic and personal. Anne Boileau writes lovingly about life, not only in the convent, the kitchen and the Black Cloister, but also in the small towns and countryside of Saxony with its flora and fauna, its farmers and peasants, its craftsmen and merchants, its so-called 'common folk', whose crude, racy and vivid speech Luther took, blessed, broke and gave back, transposed to the level of a literary and liturgical language.

Specifically published in time for the 2017 Reformation Anniversary, this makes a good gift and a popular introduction to many of the Reformation's main themes. The acknowledgments include "Dick and Janet Lewis of the Anglican Lutheran Society", so the book offers plenty of free publicity for us, too!



One of Lucas Cranach's portraits of Katharina

### POLISH LUTHERANS HAVE NEW WEBSITE

The Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the Augsburg Confession is the largest evangelical Church in Poland with some 70,000 members, nearly half of whom live in the region of Cieszyn Silesia. There are 133 parishes in six dioceses.

The Church has now launched a new English language version of their website. The new site features news and articles, history, and all kinds of background information about the Church, and provides opportunities for people to connect to their events and social media.

They hope you will visit [en.luteranie.pl](http://en.luteranie.pl) to discover their new digital home, and to share information with them about your own church life.

## LUTHERANS AND PRAYER

*Dr Roy Long offers this as a brief description of Martin Luther and prayer and offers an insight into his own practice of prayer. He says that different Lutherans might look at things in other ways – in which case, he is sure they will put him right!*

### PRELUDE

I am a Lutheran pastor, and I take part in, and often lead, the public prayer of the Church, speaking the words of the prayers that have been ordained for use in the liturgy. But I am also, like every other Lutheran pastor, someone who prays regularly, morning and evening, using the form of prayer that my spiritual ancestors have used since the days of the Reformation and, indeed, for centuries before that. But I do not find it easy to talk to other people about why or how I pray, just in the same way that I would not find it easy or feel the need to talk about why or how I breathe. But I can say three things about prayer.

Firstly, I pray because Jesus prayed (Mark 1.35), and because he taught his disciples how they should pray (Matthew 6.9-13).

Secondly, I pray because it is natural to talk to God, but I do not pray in order to grow into a better person – as it says in Psalm 1, those who delight in the Lord will be like trees planted by rivers of water that bring forth their fruit in due season: it is God who gives growth, not me, and over the years I have grown to understand how little I have that I could give to God, and how much I need his forgiveness from day to day. I am always trying to be a better person, and always failing to become one. This was what Luther called “*the bondage of the will*”. But he also talked of *living each day in the forgiveness of sins*. I speak to God each day as a forgiven sinner.

Thirdly, there are people who talk about the “discipline” of prayer, but this is a word that I always avoid because to me it smacks of compulsion and, as a baptised child of God, I believe, with Luther, that I can *pray to God with complete confidence, just as children speak to their loving father* (From Luther’s *Small Catechism* [SC]).

By the way, I have to confess that I have learned a lot about prayer from my Jewish *Hasidic* friends and find that I can, at one and the same time, know that God is the Almighty, unknowable in his splendour, and yet known as a friend that I can talk to about my needs. As a Lutheran, I express this as knowing that “*I cannot, by my own understanding or effort, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith*” (SC)

### MARTIN LUTHER ON PRAYER

Martin Luther was a child of prayer. As a youngster he would have been taught to say the prayers that were common to all Christians of his day, and in particular the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria*. He would also know the prayers to the saints which, in his case, would include prayers to St Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, who was the patron saint of miners. It was to her that he prayed after almost being killed by a bolt of lightning during a storm near the

village of Stottenheim, and to her that he made the promise to become a monk.

Martin Luther was a monk who prayed. In common with all other monks and nuns he joined in the communal prayers seven times each day, but the many other duties which he had to undertake – for his talents as an administrator were recognised at a very early stage – meant that he got behind in his prayers and drove himself hard to catch up on what he had missed. His devotion to the discipline of monastic prayer almost caused him to burn himself out.

Martin Luther was a reformer who prayed and who taught others to pray. He stressed the value of communal prayer and wrote forms for the Mass – the Lord’s Supper – which enabled ordinary people, most of whom did not understand Latin, to participate in the liturgy. His reforms were very conservative and retained many features which other, more radical, reformers maintained were idolatrous. His reforms stressed the centrality of the Word and of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and focused on what God had done for his people, and not on what they might do for Him.

Martin Luther was a teacher. After discovering the extent of the ignorance of ordinary people regarding the central teachings of the faith, Luther wrote two catechisms in 1529 – one smaller, one larger – which were to be used by the head of the household to instruct members of the family in what they should know. In these catechisms he explained in very simple language the Ten Commandments, The Apostles’ Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. In addition to these things, Luther explained how private confession should be carried out. In the section on the Lord’s Prayer in the *Small Catechism*, Luther stresses that we can pray to God with complete confidence, knowing that He is our Father and we are his children – themes which are repeated in all of the different petitions.

Martin Luther’s barber was Peter Beskendorf, who was also Luther’s surgeon. In 1535 he asked Luther to teach him how to pray. In response the reformer wrote *A Simple Way to Pray, for Master Peter the Barber*. This has been described as a classic, and it tells in simple terms how Christian people should pray to God. Luther also provided simple outlines for individuals to use in their daily worship, including saying the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments and also a psalm “or whatever your devotion may suggest”, and he included in the outlines his beautiful morning and evening prayers.

Martin Luther’s *Small* and *Large Catechisms* remain in use today, and many Lutheran churches use them as the basis for confirmation instruction, and children are still often taught the forms for morning and evening prayer. They are

easily available if you want to read them, and there is an excellent section about prayer in *Luther's Spirituality*, which is one of the volumes in the "Classics of Western Spirituality" series (N J Mahwah, the Paulist Press, 2007, Editor: Philip D.W. Krey. ISBN: 978-0-8091-3949-1). This also contains the full text of Luther's tract to Master Peter.

**PRAYING WITH THE DAILY WATCHWORDS**

Many Lutheran pastors and lay people, myself included, make use of the *Losungen*, or "Daily Watchwords" which are published by the Moravian Church each year. If you are unfamiliar with the Watchwords a few words of explanation might be needed. As they exist today, the Watchwords for each year are published in the form of a small book, and on each page there are two Bible texts – one from the Old Testament and one from the New – together with a hymn verse and a short prayer. 2017 is the 287th year in which the texts have been issued, although their original form was a little different.

The practice of sharing a text together, and using it as the basis for prayer and meditation, goes back to the 1720s and to the original Moravian settlement at Herrnhut. Each evening, the community held a "Song Service" at which the leader, Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, gave the people a verse from Scripture together with a verse from a hymn. The next morning, the Elders of the community took these around from house to house by word of mouth. In 1728, a collection of suitable texts and hymn verses were selected by Zinzendorf and other leaders of the community; the texts were put together in a box, and from these one of each was drawn out each evening. The texts were from the Old Testament and to them were added appropriate New Testament verses. Eight years later, the decision was taken

to produce a book of texts for the whole year containing Old and New Testament verses and this practice has continued right down to the present day. The texts are still chosen in Herrnhut and then distributed to the Provinces that make up the Moravian Church worldwide, and they are now translated into more than fifty languages. The English version can be obtained from the Moravian Book Room in London (for details, see below).

Of course, there are many different Bible reading schemes available for ministers and lay people to use in their daily prayers, and these often include useful meditations on the texts. The great virtue of the "Watchwords" is that the reader is provided with an unadorned Bible text on which to meditate and, of course, conscientious Christians can use commentaries to pursue their study of a particular text. An equally important aspect is that readers who use these texts can know that they are part of a great unseen community of Christian people who are all using the same text each day.

You can obtain the "Daily Watchwords" for 2017 by phoning the Bookroom, Moravian Church House, 5-7 Muswell Hill, London N10 3TJ on 0044 (0) 208-883-3409 or by emailing [office@moravian.org.uk](mailto:office@moravian.org.uk)

'I give thanks unto you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected me through the night from all danger and harm; and I beseech you to preserve and keep me this day also, from all sin and evil; that in all my thoughts, words, and deeds, I may serve and please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let your holy angel have charge concerning me, that the wicked one may have no power over me. Amen.' (*Martin Luther's Morning Prayer*)



**CROSSES BRING HOME THE FATE OF THE REFUGEES**

*Dick Lewis is moved by the compassion shown by an Italian carpenter*

The Gospels give two very different accounts of the birth of Jesus Christ. St Luke offers a comfortable Christmas card image. Mary and Joseph bend over a baby, snug and peacefully asleep in a manger. Shepherds kneel reverently. Angels are singing. All is calm! St Matthew's presentation is harsh! Magi present their gifts to the child and moments later the Holy Family is forced to take to the roads. Herod is determined to kill the child, so they seek refuge in Egypt where they stay until it is safe to return.

This New Year we are conscious of millions of refugees fleeing from war,

oppression, and terror. Like Mary and Joseph they carry very little with them, just a few basic necessities. They leave behind property, family and friends. They are scarred by the terrible things they have witnessed. Most wonder if they will ever return.

These people are desperate, just as Matthew's Mary and Joseph must have been desperate. They are prepared to take all kinds of risks in order to find a little peace and security. We recall the thousands upon thousands climbing aboard flimsy boats and setting sail to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Many have been lost and the wreckage of their boats has been washed ashore on Lampedusa, the Italian island that is the first port of call for many seeking refuge in Europe.

Like Joseph, Francesco Tuccio is a carpenter. He lives on Lampedusa and a while ago he began to pick up pieces of the wood he found on the beaches. He turned them into crosses. They are not pretty, they are all rough, all different, all misshapen. But they have all been made with love – hundreds of them – each representing Francesco's compassion for people who have risked everything in their hope of a better future.

Let us pray for all refugees. Let us try to see in each one the image of Jesus, the refugee. Let us regret that their plight sometimes awakens hostility in people rather than compassion. Let us pray that people across the world will welcome them and invite them to share a new life with them, and that the things that caused their flight might cease.

## REFORMATION IN A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

The Rev Dr Hans-Georg Link, who is active in both groups, reports on a meeting from 30th September to 3rd October of the International Ecumenical Fellowship at Erfurt with members of our Anglican-Lutheran Society

On the first evening we sat together in a large circle getting to know one another, telling one another our names, where we come from and about our membership. It was soon clear that 10 out of the 60 participants came from Britain – England, Scotland and Wales – some members of the IEF, others of the A-LS. There was a female German vicar, currently working in England, and even a vicar from the city of Oslo, Norway. Most non-German participants were able to understand a little German and we solved the remaining problem of translation into English by whispering at the tables in the back of the room.

It was an enriching experience, people from many different countries being able to meet at the Christian Conference Centre (*Bildungshaus der Ursulinen*) in Erfurt to discuss “*The Reformation in a European Perspective: from Prague via Erfurt and Cambridge to Wittenberg*”. It started with a Bible lesson given by Irmgard Weth from Neukirchen, who has become famous for her different Bible translations for children and adults. She talked about “*Der vergessene Schatz: das Deuteronomium und seine reformatorische Botschaft*” (*The forgotten treasure: The book of Deuteronomy and its reformatory message*). Here is found the belief of the Israelites in their only God, who loves his people passionately but expects the same from them (Dt 6.4ff). Exclusive commitment to the God of Israel means exclusive commitment to my neighbour in my everyday life.

Afterwards the Rev Renate Hoepfner from Magdeburg (she is the widow of the former Premier of *Sachsen-Anhalt*) gave us a guided tour through the old town of Erfurt, where Martin Luther lived for seven years when he was a student and a monk. We saw the *Augustiner-Eremiten-Kloster* which Luther joined in 1505, the *Prediger- und Kaufmannskirche* (the church of the preachers and merchants) where Luther later preached his sermons, the *Engelsburg der Humanisten* (a medieval hospital which is now a culture centre), and finally the *Georgenburse* (Luther’s accommodation when he studied law). It became clear during her talk (“*Martin Luther in Erfurt*”) how important Luther’s life-long friendship was with the Prior, Johann Staupitz, and Johannes Lang, his fellow student. In a contract as early as 1529 the “*Altgläubigen*” (the members of the old faith) and the “*Reformatorischen*” (the Lutherans) made peace with one another. This was kept in Erfurt for decades and made the town a pioneer in ecumenical affairs. There has been an Ecumenical Service on the 10th November every year (even in GDR times) when thousands of people gather on Cathedral Square holding lanterns in their hands (pictured right).

The third speaker was the Rt Revd Rupert Hoare, former Bishop of Dudley and Dean of Liverpool Cathedral, who talked about “*Reformer and Reformation in England*”. Rupert spoke up for Henry VIII, who hasn’t got a good reputation in Germany. “*Divorced, beheaded and died; divorced, beheaded and survived*” we learned about his six wives, but we also learned about Henry’s theological efforts to create

an Anglo-Catholic reform. Rupert helped us to understand the sharp contrasts between Edward VI and Mary Tudor (“*Bloody Mary*”) which led to the alternating of “*Rome and Reform*” during the English Reformation period. Rupert underlined the strong links between continental Europe and Britain by alluding to Thomas Cranmer, married in Nuremberg to the daughter of the Lutheran Andreas Osiander, and Martin Bucer, who fled from Strasbourg to Cambridge. Bucer’s drafts, which he had originally outlined for the *Kölnische Reformation* (Reformation in Cologne) in 1543 became part of the first edition of Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer (1549). Rupert’s lecture helped to clarify the links between the German and English reformations, and the European dimension of the English Reformation.

The highlight of the Erfurt conference was the Eucharist on Sunday morning at the *Augustinerkirche* together with the local congregation. The Rt Revd Jürgen Johannesdotter (former bishop of Bückeburg) preached about the gospel of harvest festival (Matthew 6:25-34): “*Don’t worry!*” Bishop Rupert was co-celebrant during the Eucharist. It was a lovely sign of ecumenical communion watching the former Anglican Moderator and the current President of the A-LS standing at the altar and leading the service together.

On Sunday a Lutheran Provost emeritus, the Ven Heino Falcke, and a former Catholic bishop, the Rt Revd Joachim Wanke, came to the *Ursulinen-Haus* in order to discuss the expectations of the *Gedenkjahr 2017* (the Reformation Anniversary) with one another and with us. It was done in a good spirit and gave us a foretaste of the dialogues which we expect at the *Wittenberger Oekumenischen Versammlung* (Wittenberg Ecumenical Gathering) between 21st and 28th August 2017. There was mutual agreement that both Churches have to stand close together if they are to be credible when they give witness together and not against one another – preaching the gospel of reconciliation which was given and entrusted to us through Jesus Christ.

On departure many of the participants thanked the organiser for an emotionally, spiritually and theologically successful conference which put them in the right mood for coming back to Germany in August 2017 in order to follow up the real treasure of our churches together.





## TRAINING IN THE DIOCESE IN EUROPE

*Madeleine Holmes is a Church of England Reader (that is an accredited lay minister) in the Diocese of Europe, a Mission-shaped network of communities and congregations serving Anglicans and other English-speaking Christians across an enormous geographical area.*

In the Diocese of Europe we minister in a myriad of situations, in most of which the Church of England has scarcely been heard of. Questions of establishment scarcely arise, civic links take very different forms, and denominational identity is often much less important than the language of worship. Like the other 43 dioceses of the Church of England we are facing questions of identity, organisation and maintenance; but we do so in a very different context from the others.

The Diocese in Europe is made up of churches and congregations spread across forty-two countries on three continents, and covering one sixth of the earth's land surface. And yet, this is just one Diocese! Services are held more or less frequently in around 300 churches. The people of the Diocese are served by about 150 clergy and by over 90 Readers. Vocations are strong in the Diocese, but most of our clergy and many of our Readers come into the Diocese from other parts of the Church of England or the Anglican Communion.

Churches in the Diocese are very far flung and there is only a small General Staff overseeing both the training and in-service training for those called to the ordained or lay ministry. The Chaplain of the congregation is the first person someone feeling a sense of vocation speaks to. That will be followed by a meeting with one of the Area Vocations Advisors. At this point it is probably a good idea for the person offering for ministry to read the oath that they would take if they were to be licensed to work in the diocese.

If the candidate has a call to Reader (lay) ministry the Vocations Adviser informs the Chaplaincy Council that a suitable candidate has come forward for training as a Reader and details are passed on to the Warden of Readers and the Director of Readers.

The Director visits and interviews the candidate and this often entails a very long journey from one country to another. If the Director considers the person to be a suitable candidate s/he reports to the Warden of Readers. If the candidate is accepted the training then commences.

In all Dioceses in the Church of England there are the set modules to study. These cover Old and New Testaments, Ethics, Holy Spirit and People of God, Church History and Creeds and they are normally to be completed within three years. Assignments have to be produced on a regular basis and are sent to the Director for comment and help, and each candidate has just one Tutor throughout the training. Of course the use of computer and Skype has very much improved distance learning. It feels less isolated and offers a friendlier and more intimate support. The training is reviewed annually with each Reader-in-training.

The Chaplaincy undertakes to pay for the training modules and to support the candidates by giving them opportunities to lead worship and to speak under supervision. Candidates also receive a sum of money towards the cost of books necessary for study. In my day we only had telephone contact with our tutor and I also had the hazard of a different tutor for each module, which meant that as soon as I had a rapport with one tutor it was time to change. Sometimes this was very difficult.

I was very dependent on the administrator at St John's Theological College in Nottingham, UK, for the distribution of the modules, borrowing books from their library and for help if, for instance, there was a difficulty in rapport with a tutor, as did occasionally happen. The highlight of my year was the week long Summer School at St John's College with other candidates from the Church of England, where we were able to have a full, encouraging and helpful time of training in worship, prayer and other associated studies.

Things have changed, and today it is the responsibility of the Diocese to administer the modules and any extra training required for Readers-in-Training. Recently they have provided some short residential courses for candidates from the Diocese. These are usually held in Woking in the south of England at a very valuable and appropriate place, St Columba's House, where the accommodation and ambience for such study is perfect. The cost for this kind of training is covered by the Diocesan Continuing Ministerial Education fund. Each Archdeacon has access to this fund to which all the congregations contribute annually. The cost of any travel is always sought from the candidate's congregation/Chaplaincy, but can be supplemented by the Friends of the Diocese or by other grant awarding bodies.

The hopeful culmination of this time of study and support is the Licensing of the Candidate. This is normally done by the Archdeacon. The support of their Chaplain and the congregations is paramount and continuing courses are available for special areas of ministry such as Listening Skills, Pastoral Care, Liturgy, Worship and Safeguarding, to name but a few.

The training and post-licensing training of ordinands from Diocese of Europe follows Church of England training syllabus and is overseen by our Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Director of Training.

Not everyone engaged in ministry, either lay or ordained, is British. This is because there are many Anglicans living in Europe who are bi-lingual and our congregations are generally made up of many nationalities and languages and make a very rich tapestry of faith and work in this particular Diocese.

PS There is a Readers' Handbook on the website of the Diocese in Europe which is available for further details at [www.europe.anglican.org](http://www.europe.anglican.org)

## LUTHERANS GO CATHEDRAL HOPPING IN ENGLAND

*For the past four years Pastor Jochen Dallas has invited members of his Lutheran parish in Lemwerder (near Bremen in Germany) to join him on study trips to England. Here he describes the kind of things they do.*

It all started in 2013 with a trip to Ely in Cambridgeshire which included visits to Peterborough, Cambridge, London and Bury St Edmunds. Our group from Germany stayed in Bishop Woodford House, enjoyed meetings with English clergy (the Ven John Beer and the Rev Andrew Brown) and visited Lutheran congregations in East Anglia. For the next two years they continued to have Bishop Woodford House as their base for more cathedral visits. So in 2014 the travellers gazed at Norwich Cathedral and worshipped in Ely and Cambridge, in 2015 the cathedrals at Chelmsford, Ely and St Albans were the focus of their attention. But they did not just get to know the buildings, they also met people who live and work in those places, so there were lively discussions with Bishop David Thompson (Ely) and with Canon Maggie Guite (Linton near Cambridge) who told them a lot about being an Anglican country parson.

This year, for a change, we stayed at Lincoln Cathedral, an easy place to dive into English history. As a symbol of the city of Lincoln it stands above the town and is a landmark of England's historical development. But the cathedral is much more than that. As a special place for worship it has been the focus for services, daily prayers and music of all kinds, both ancient and modern, for more than 1,000 years.



*Lincoln Cathedral from the Castle Museum*

Nothing could prevent the twelve travellers from climbing right to the top of the roof of the cathedral. Our tour of the roof vaults of this fascinating cathedral was certainly one of the most impressive experiences of the whole trip. In addition, there was a prison visit in the museum in Lincoln Castle where we learned what a prisoner's life was like, and a guided tour of Belton House's cellar and kitchen made the life of the servants in a manor house very real. Whether it was a beach walk in Skegness with fish & chips, climbing up the tower of St James Church in Louth - here visitors were locked up - or visiting the Usher Gallery in Lincoln, all the travellers found their own favourites during the trip.

In addition to all that, living the Christian life was in the foreground on this journey. We shared in daily morning prayers with one of the bishops working at the Cathedral, spent an interesting evening with Canon Dick Lewis from Retford and his wife Janet, and joined in sung evensongs and in discussion groups.

Journeys of this kind not only strengthen the links and friendship between Anglican and the Lutheran churches, but are also rewarding for the individuals and show how God's grace has been working through the centuries in different places.

The next cathedral visit is already booked! In September 2017 Hereford will be our destination.

### WHAT MAKES OUR ANGLICAN PRESIDENT LAUGH?

You can tell quite a lot about a person from the kind of stories that make them laugh. Dr John Arnold attached two of his favourite jokes as illustrations to his sermon on the Lord's Prayer (see *page 15*), suggesting that they might fill an odd space.

Well, this is an odd space, and here are his stories. The first was told by Rabbi Lionel Blue, who sadly died just before Christmas.

An old Jew kept on lamenting that, though he prayed day and night to God with tears and fasting, he never won the lottery. Eventually God got fed up. "Meet me half way," He said, "meet me half way. Buy a ticket!"

John's all-time favourite joke has an ecumenical flavour! An old Jew is wailing and lamenting. 'My son has become a Christian,' he complains. God does not reply "But you don't understand, you don't understand. My son has become a Christian." Again, no reply. This is repeated ad infinitum until, eventually, 'Oi vey,' says God, 'Oi vey! Now you know how I feel!'

## 2018 CONFERENCE TO BE IN NORTH-EAST ENGLAND

*Following the success of our 2016 conference in Visby, fully reported in the October Window, plans are already in hand for the next one.*

The 2018 Conference will be from Friday 24th to Tuesday 28th August 2018 in the city of Durham in the North-East of England, and will be based in St Chad's College very close to the Cathedral.

For those who would like to extend their stay at the end of the conference it may be possible to make a visit to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. Saint Aidan went there from Iona in 635AD and founded his monastery which soon became the base for Christian mission throughout the North of England.



*Durham Cathedral from the River Wear*

Make a note of the dates now so as to be sure not to miss out. Fuller details will be available in the October Window.

## COMMON PRAYER BETWEEN FRENCH LUTHERANS AND CATHOLICS

*A joint ecumenical service commemorating the Reformation took place in St Thomas Lutheran Church in Strasbourg.*

More than 800 people packed into the 12th century St Thomas Lutheran church in Strasbourg, which has been a place of Christian worship since the 6th century, for a special service arranged by the Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine (UEPAL) and the United Protestant Church of France, the Council of Christian Churches in France, the Conference of Bishops of France and the Archdiocese of Strasbourg.

### Five ecumenical commitments

The service followed the Common Prayer liturgy prepared for the Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund and Malmö, Sweden, on 31st October (see page 6 of this issue). A highlight of the service was the lighting of five candles. Each of them marked one of the five ecumenical commitments. There was a specially emotional moment when Catherine and Dominique Keller (pictured below), a married couple, lit one of them. Catherine is a Lutheran and Dominique is Roman Catholic and they are both engaged in work in both Churches.



### Suffering people remembered

A feature of the service was the music which included modern songs, traditional Lutheran hymns and Catholic music from the Middle Ages. The fifth ecumenical commitment is that Catholics and Lutherans should 'witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world.' The situation of people in need was highlighted, and the collection was especially dedicated to refugees and Christians in the Middle East.

Among those present were Kurt Cardinal Koch (President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), Pastor Laurent Schlumberger (President of the United Protestant Church of France), Jean-Pierre Grallet (Archbishop of Strasbourg), Pastor François Clavairoly (President of the Protestant Federation of France), Bishop Vincent Jordy (President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of France) and Metropolitan Emmanuel (President of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France).

### Service to be Broadcast in 2017

The whole service is to be broadcast on TV France 2 on 22nd January, 2017, at 11am as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is anticipated that as many as one million viewers will tune in.

Relationships between the Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholics in Alsace are very good and this service will provide a useful springboard for the 2017 Reformation 500 Commemoration.

As well as commemoration events around 31st October, Lutheran pastors of the UEPAL have been invited to jointly write a musical about Luther and perform it in Strasbourg's Catholic cathedral, something that would have been barely imaginable just a few decades ago.

## HOW 'CULTURE' HAS INFECTED THE CHURCH

Dick Lewis recommends a recent book\* by Society member David Brown which many might find unpalatable but which offers an analysis of hidden influences which, in David's view, degrade the historic Churches' ability to be 'Church'.

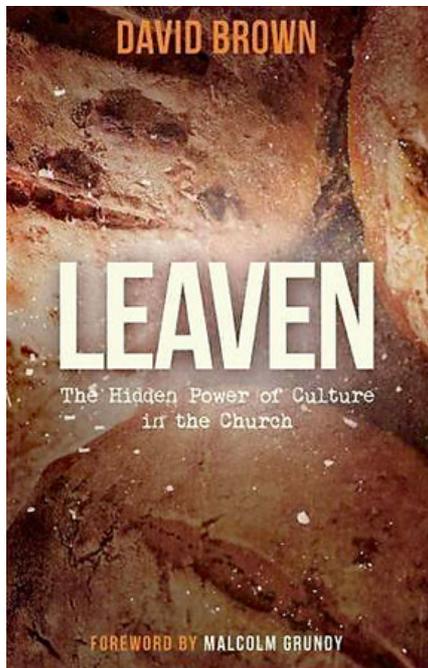
\*Leaven: the Hidden Power of Culture in the Church' by David Brown, 2016, is published by RoperPenberthy, ISBN 978 1 90390593 7

'People love being Church. Leaders and led find Church no longer a duty. They love meeting together. The Ministers' dominant aim is to prepare and launch disciples into places bound by the wrong leaven. Episcopal leaders' dominant aim is to nurture and strengthen ministers and parishes in this equipping task. Mutual affection becomes palpable, attracting comment and interest. People love looking for where Jesus is at work, and joining in. Jesus' Lordship becomes public knowledge. The New Temple, especially when in the place of suffering, becomes energised by Kingdom leaven. Here God demonstrates his relational unity, releases his power and displays his glory. The loan-sharks and lap-dancers will hammer at his door to get in. The nobodies become somebodies and, perhaps, somebodies become nobodies. The unlearned instruct the learned; people who are damaged and derelict heal the healthy; those who have lived on the streets bring comfort to those in palaces; one-time terrorists bring peace to the secure; one-time prisoners free the moral from their bondages; widows and orphans become royalty. Love reigns and lovelessness withers.'

This is a vision for the Church (and the Church of England, in particular) that David Brown offers. It is far from the picture of the Church that most of us are familiar with and David thinks he knows why. Jesus spoke of two types of leaven. The Kingdom of God is like yeast leavening bread, a culture empowered by divine love. In contrast, the leaven of Herod and of the scribes and Pharisees promotes a culture of "lovelessness" directly opposed to God's love.

Leaven is, David tells us, an organism that biologists call "a culture", and 'a culture's power rests in its reproductive ability, spreading both laterally and generationally for good or ill,' he says. Culture can be an insidious thing, shaping the whole of life but largely unseen, unrecognised and unacknowledged.

David identifies a number of trends that show that the Church of England has become infected with attitudes,



systems and values that are clearly not of God yet are accepted without question and sometimes even venerated. They are i) a worldly use of controlling power; ii) a worldly enchantment with historic customs; iii) a worldly individualism; and iv) a worldly dogmatism.

In a very accessible and clearly argued text, David first examines the roots and characteristic of these trends, showing how each one acts like a virus penetrating individuals and structures, distorting them so that "lovelessness" replaces love. He then considers ways of remedying the situation. He is realistic yet radical. Institutions do need systems and regulation, but these should be as few and as generous as possible. Forming an élite, for example, bears no relation to the life of Jesus. A preoccupation with historic enchantment quickly shifts the defining aim of the Church from "mission", the Gospel imperative, to "worship", and people feel more "at home" with forms and rituals than with relationships, while churches become clergy-centric instead of emphasising all-member ministry.

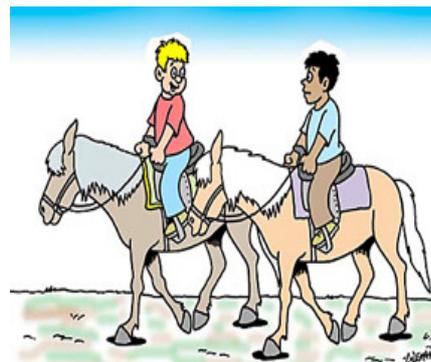
Throughout, David draws on a wide range of Biblical, historical, political and literary resources. His passion for a Church that better aspires to being

Christ's Body shines through. He carefully outlines the characteristics of Jesus' ministry and the ways in which the Church has diverted from them, allowing "lovelessness" to creep in.

David contrasts an "organism" and an "organisation", arguing that the Church should be more of the former and less of the latter. The principle of ministerial partnership needs to be rediscovered if the laity are really to be enabled. 'The promised land is not just a place of salvation for individuals,' he writes. 'It is the place where Kingdom leaven is given full rein and full reign.' But time is pressing because the dominating leaven in the Church of today is that of Caesar, the scribes and the Pharisees. 'They are spreading bad leaven's spores with virulent power and urgency.'

The way ahead involves three things: i) prayer; ii) reshaping our imagining; and iii) developing the habit of reviewing our organisational systems and our customs.

This is a book that deserves a wide readership. Many church members and church leaders are likely to find its premises unpalatable and the remedies it suggests challenging. 'I am imagining a church structured on cascaded friendship,' David concludes, and if people take heed, the Church may yet fulfil its calling to 'model God's quality of institutional life in a way that speaks of heaven, and cannot be contrived. The world stands to be amazed.'



"I THINK JESUS HAD A HORSE. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT?"

### The Window

supports members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society in better understanding our different traditions and social contexts so that we can more faithfully proclaim God's love and justice together in the world

[www.anglican-lutheran-society.org.uk](http://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org.uk)

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The Anglican-Lutheran Society

### The Anglican-Lutheran Society

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## TWENTY YEARS OF PORVOO

John Arnold commends 'Towards Closer Unity: Communion of the Porvoo Churches 20 Years' edited by Beate Fagerli, Leslie Nathaniel, Tomi Karttunen; Porvoo Communion of Churches 400 pp ISBN 978-9985-879-21-4 (p'back)

One of the characteristics of the Porvoo Common statement was the provision of structures of implementation. Just how significant that was is shown by this volume, which chronicles the work over the past twenty years of the Church Leaders' Consultations, the Meetings of Primates and Presiding Bishops, the Theological Conferences and the Consultations. The fifty items form a very substantial body of ecumenical work of value especially, but not only, to Anglicans and Lutherans.



### Towards Closer Unity: Communion of the Porvoo Churches 20 Years

The Roman Catholic James Puglisi writes appreciatively and perceptively in current ecumenical mode and makes a plea for the recognition of the unique significance of the Twelve Apostles and the election of Matthias for any consideration of apostolicity. I wish I had thought of that. On the other hand, the Orthodox Ionut-Alexandru Tudorie seems to expect a degree of consistency within the Communion, which is scarcely achieved by the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches among themselves.

The basic theology and methodology of the Agreement, however, appear to have stood the test of time. As foreseen, much thought still had to be given to the Diaconate; and much remains to be done. It could well be the case that the tension between the Lutheran insistence on the oneness of the ministry and the Anglican emphasis on its three-fold nature will only be resolved when we make progress on the theory and the practice of diaconal ministry. Tiit Pädam's critique of the non-ordination of deacons and deaconesses in the Church of Denmark is a good example of disagreement *within* rather than *between* confessions. And this is not just a matter of 'theological synchronised swimming' (to quote Michael Jackson).

It is in the realm of Life and Work rather than Faith and Order that unforeseen problems have arisen. Much attention has been given to Economics and Migration as well as to Marriage and Human Sexuality. Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, as biochemist rather than as bishop, contributes a masterly essay of great clarity on 'Gender and Genetics'. Is there no limit to her gifts and graces? Stephen Plant argues brilliantly for Public Theology on the basis of our 'shared Augustinian inheritance' as interpreted by Hooker 'in ways that Luther would have deplored' but Lutherans ought to take seriously, and by Bonhoeffer in ways that challenge Anglicans and Lutherans alike.

Much of the material is written for theologians, for ecumenists and for church archives; but everyone can enjoy 'The Reformation's Legacy', an inimitable tour de force by Rowan Williams and an excellent introduction to thinking creatively about the meaning of what we are commemorating in 2017.

This publication is available to download as a pdf at [http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/011D769654A0DC70CCC2257BDB003900F9/\\$FILE/Porvoo%2020%20years%20verkkoversio.pdf](http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/011D769654A0DC70CCC2257BDB003900F9/$FILE/Porvoo%2020%20years%20verkkoversio.pdf)