

# The Window

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And more besides

## 'FEAR NOT LITTLE FLOCK' : THE VOCATION OF MINORITY CHURCHES TODAY

Our next international conference will take place at the Lajos Ordass Retreat and Conference Centre, Révfülöp, Lake Balaton, Hungary from Friday 12th to Tuesday 16th September 2014.

Belonging to a minority denomination in a country or community can be challenging. Often resources are stretched and the future can seem uncertain. However, small Churches enrich their members, their ecumenical partners, and the communities in which they are situated.

Some Christian denominations have been in a minority situation for decades, centuries even. All have stories to tell, and wisdom to share, that can encourage both their counterparts in minority Churches in other countries, and also Christians in historically larger and better resourced Churches, many of whom are finding that they, too, are becoming a minority within their own lands.

The conference will explore some of the ways in which minority Churches communicate with the wider society to which they belong. Anglican and Lutheran speakers will present papers in tandem, focused around four themes, highlighting specific issues important to their own churches:

**Diakonia** - with György Fábri (Lutheran, Hungary) and Madeleine Holmes (Anglican, France);

**Involving the Laity** - with Robin Greenwood (Anglican, UK) and Roy Long (Lutheran, UK);

**Divided Communities** - with Praxedis Bouwman (Lutheran, Netherlands) and Michael Jackson (Anglican, Ireland); and



East Window of St Mary's Muker, N. Yorkshire UK, courtesy Vicar and Churchwardens

**Ecumenism** - with Christiane Groeben (Lutheran, Italy) and Jorge Piña Cabral (Anglican, Portugal).

There is more information about these speakers, the conference venue and how to book your place on pages 2, 3 and 4. We are sure that the conference will be great fun. We hope that you will want to join in.

We shall worship and study together in a relaxed atmosphere, and spend a little time exploring the area, visiting Tihany Abbey and enjoying some wine tasting.

Whether or not you come from a minority Church, are ordained or a lay person, this conference is definitely for you. Do come. You will return to your own local church (whether large or small) with all kinds of practical ideas to help with its ecumenical relationships, and with its interaction with the communities it is there to serve.

## MORE ABOUT THE CONFERENCE IN HUNGARY

### Venue and Accommodation

The Lajos Ordass Retreat and Conference Centre, Révfülöp, is an attractive and well equipped lakeside venue on the Tihany Peninsula on the northern shore of the Lake Balaton. There is a good mix of single, double, and family accommodation available. All rooms are en-suite and free Wifi is available in the main conference rooms and surrounding areas.

In the event of the conference being heavily subscribed we have arrangements in place with local guest houses to allow our participants to be accommodated within 6-8 minutes walk of the conference venue.



*Tihany Abbey, which we shall be visiting during our conference*

### How to get to Révfülöp

There are plenty of flights into Budapest Liszt Ferenc (Franz Liszt) Airport from the UK, North America and most of Western Europe. From Central and Eastern Europe the trains go to Budapest (Keleti) Railway station. We shall be arranging a shuttle bus between Budapest and Révfülöp. Please ask for more information about booking a place on the bus when you complete your registration details. Space will be limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. From Germany, Riga and Moscow there are regular flights to nearby Heviz-Balaton Airport. Full travel information will be sent to everyone who applies to attend the conference.

### Our Speakers

**Ms Praxedis Bouwman**, from the Netherlands, is involved in international communication networking and chairs KALME, the Communication Committee of Lutheran Minority Churches in Europe. She is Vice-President of the World Association for Christian Communication, editor-in-chief of two Dutch Lutheran publications, and a researcher in the field of interfaith dialogue in both Europe and Africa. She has been a radio news reporter in the Netherlands, a foreign correspondent for both radio and television based in the Caribbean, and an investigative journalist for a major Dutch radio programme.

Praxedis will offer her perspective on how small Lutheran churches/traditions seek to position themselves in their respective European regions where there is tension within (and between) communities, and to promote the cause of reconciliation.



**Prof Tibor Fabiny**, from Hungary, is a Lutheran lay theologian and literary scholar. He is Director of the Centre for Hermeneutics and the Institute of English Studies at the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest, and he also teaches early modern English literature and the history of Biblical interpretation. Besides literature, Prof Fabiny's research interests include the recent past of the Lutheran Church in Hungary. He has, since 2007, been President of the Hungarian Luther Alliance which promotes knowledge of the Reformation heritage.

Tibor will open our conference by introducing us to the historical and theological scene, so that we can all appreciate the story of Lutheranism in Central Europe in general, and in Hungary in particular.



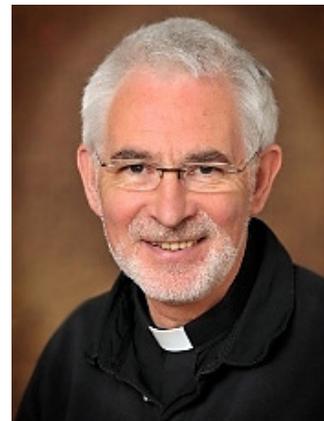
**Dr György Fábri** from Hungary is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education and Psychology at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest where he is also Vice-Rector for Public Affairs and Communication. His research interests are wide ranging and include the sociology and social-psychology of religion. Dr Fábri is a leading lay intellectual within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary and helps to edit its journal, *Credo*.

György will describe ways in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary is endeavouring to make a positive contribution to the changing currents and challenges to be found in Hungarian society today, especially in the area of Diakonal service.

**The Revd Dr Robin Greenwood** has over 40 years experience as an Anglican priest. He is William Leech Research Fellow at Durham University, based at St John's College there, and Canon Emeritus of Chelmsford Cathedral.

Though he has served for most of his ministry in the Church of England he was Provincial Officer for Ministry in the Church in Wales from 2001-5. His expertise has been utilised in both Anglican and Lutheran contexts worldwide including Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and the USA. His latest book is *Being Church: the formation of Christian Community* (2013).

Robin will show how the special conditions of minority church life can free both clergy and lay people to be complementary and fruitful in sharing the call to ministry within God's Church.



**Dr Christiane Groeben** is Lay President of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy (ELKI). Trained as a philologist and archivist she has dedicated her professional life to the history and research institutions of marine biology. She combines her church duties with biographical and editorial research projects. Dr Groeben will share her thoughts on the experience of the ELKI in seeking to bear witness to issues of wide public concern from a Lutheran perspective within the very heartland of Roman Catholicism, and on the possibility of partnering with the Roman Catholic Church in that enterprise.



**Mrs Madeleine Holmes** has lived in France for 20 years. Since 2009 she has been the Diocesan Environmental Officer for the Church of England's Diocese in Europe (DiE), a network for expatriate congregations covering the whole of continental Europe and parts of North Africa and Asia. For over three years she hosted a radio programme on behalf of the church with round table debates on the Environment amongst other subjects, and she represents the DiE within the European Christian Environmental Network, an organization which shares information, experiences and good practice among participating churches.

Madeleine will contribute stories about, and reflections upon, the role of the Diocese and its member congregations in bearing faithful witness to social concerns in general, and the Christian duty to display and promote reverence for the health and integrity of God's Creation in particular.

**The Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson** is the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland. He has served the Irish Church in both the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, and has spent periods in Oxford and Cambridge.

He is a past chair of the Church of Ireland's Church and Society Commission and its Board of Social Theology. Bishop Michael takes a vigorous role in both Anglican Communion and Ecumenical activities, including relationships between Porvoo member Churches.

Archbishop Michael will focus on the role played by the (minority) Church of Ireland in the civic diplomacy and cross-community relationship building which has accompanied the official Northern Ireland peace process.





**The Rev Dr Roy Long** is a pastor in the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB). He has served English-speaking Lutheran parishes in Corby, and in Leicester and Nottingham, as well as the Tigrinya-speaking Lutheran parish in London. For many years he taught Religious Education in secondary schools, but ended his educational career as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, specialising in the inspection of Evangelical Christian and Jewish schools. He is now retired and working on a history of the churches in the Faroe Islands, and is Secretary of the Vocations Committee of the LCiGB.

Roy will reflect on his many years of service in partnership with the lay people of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, and will make special reference to how images and models derived from the New Testament can illuminate good practice in the church today.

**The Rt Rev Jorge Pina Cabral** is the fourth Bishop of the Lusitanian Church (a member of the Anglican Communion serving the indigenous population of Portugal). Bishop Jorge became a Reader (a lay minister) in 1992 and was ordained Deacon in 1995 and Priest in 1997, when he became Vicar of the parishes of St John the Evangelist and the Good Shepherd, Vila Nova de Gaia. He was Northern Archdeacon of the Lusitanian Church in 1998 and served as its Vicar-General in 2007 before being consecrated Bishop on 25th April 2013. Bishop Jorge's background is in Physical Education/Sports Science, and also in Management Studies. He has worked as Executive Director of the Association of Schools of the Torne and Prado (AETP) in Vila Nova de Gaia, and has been heavily involved in social work in the same region.



Bishop Jorge will describe how the Lusitanian Church has sought to find a voice on public issues that is both complementary to, and distinct from, that offered by the Roman Catholic Church in Portugal.

## What the Conference Costs - How to Register - How to Pay

### Cost of the Conference

The standard conference fee is £265 or its equivalent in your own currency. A deposit of £65 or its equivalent is payable on registration and the full balance may be paid at the time of registration or at any time up to 20th July 2014. There is a daily rate for participants who prefer to arrange their own accommodation in Révfülöp. It will also be possible for people who cannot attend for the whole duration of the conference to pay a reduced fee. Participants will be responsible for their own travel arrangements. Full information is to be found on the website.

### How to Register

You can download the registration form, along with full details of the conference and how to complete the form, from our website [www.anglican-lutheran-society.org](http://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org). Or if you prefer you can contact our conference registrar, Pastor Erich Rust, via email at [erichundsigrunrust@gmail.com](mailto:erichundsigrunrust@gmail.com), by post at 11 Little Grove, Bushey, Herts, WD23 3BG, UK, or you can telephone him on +44 (0)208 950 2085. He will send you the conference brochure and advise you what you have to pay and when and how to pay it. You should also contact him if you have any questions or if you would like further information.

### Bursaries

A limited number of bursaries to help towards the conference fee are available for theological students and people who wish to attend the conference but would have difficulty meeting the costs. Again, see the website or contact Pastor Erich Rust who will be glad to provide details.



### Extend your visit to Central Europe

It seems a shame to visit Hungary just for the conference. So the Society is offering members a chance to extend their trip and to explore a little more of Hungary and Central Europe. A one-day pre-conference programme will be available in Budapest. Then, after the conference, there is a chance to visit Transylvania (Romania) and see places like Sibiu (Hermannstadt) pictured here. These are, of course, extras, not included in the Conference Fee. If you are interested in finding out more go to the website or, again, ask Pastor Rust who will be glad to tell you all you need to know.

## LANGUAGE OPENS WHOLE BEING TO WORSHIP

*Last April Helen Harding joined Swedish Lutherans for a very special day in Devon, UK*

Lutheran worship in Britain is conducted in many languages, including Chinese, Danish, English, Estonian, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish, Swahili and Swedish. Church services for the Swedish Church in Great Britain are centred in London at the Ulrika Eleonora Church, Harcourt Street, Marylebone. But during the year there are also Swedish services and various other activities in different parts of the United Kingdom, places like Bournemouth, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Cardiff, Devon, Dublin, Edinburgh, Hampshire, Liverpool and Newcastle.

These services and activities are set up by Camilla Persson, the Welfare Officer of the Swedish Church in London, and the Very Rev Michael Persson, the Rector. Camilla contacts groups of Swedish people in the various locations, creating opportunities for them to meet together and speak in Swedish. Groups may then decide to continue to meet for their own social gatherings in a town or area. When it seems appropriate Camilla asks if they would like a Swedish Mass and quite often the answer is 'Yes, please!'

There has been an annual *Vårmassa* in Devon or Cornwall for a number of years. This is probably because quite a number of Swedes have lived in the area and, in the past, worked at the glass blowing factory at Dartington. But a new 'tradition' seems to have begun this year, since it is the second year in a row that the service has been held at Ottery St Mary Parish Church.



*Jan-Eric Österlund, Trustee of London's Swedish Church*

St Mary's is a delightful church, built to resemble a small version of Exeter Cathedral, and it is Jan-Eric Österlund's local parish church. He is one of the trustees of The Swedish Church in London. So on Saturday 20th April, 2013, more than 60 people from all over the South-West of England, aged from two to over 82, most of them Swedish, gathered there for a Swedish Mass. The service was led by Michael Persson, assisted by the Rev Anders Bergquist, a Swedish priest in the Church of England who is Vicar of St John's Wood in London.

For someone like me who cannot speak a word of Swedish the service, held almost entirely in Swedish, was still a time of worship and a recognition of the God who is my shepherd as described in John 10.11-16. Michael Persson gave a short English explanation that, whilst the Good Shepherd is a nice image, we also have to remember the reality of shepherding - it can be a dirty and hard job! And, of course, at the time of Jesus shepherds were outcasts in Jewish society. But that in



*Ottery St Mary Parish Church with the Swedish flag flying on the tower*

itself speaks volumes about God for, when he came to earth as a human baby, he was made known first to those who don't fit in - the shepherds at Bethlehem.

Michael also spoke about Psalm 23 and its opening words, 'The Lord is my shepherd'. He said that the Hebrew words really should be translated as 'the Lord who shepherds me'. So God becomes a verb, not a noun. He is action, he is being, he is light and movement. When we read Psalm 23, we can do so either as a sheep (the one being shepherded) or as a king (the anointed one), for it was written by King David, after all, and he had himself been a shepherd. We are different people in different circumstances and places, Michael reminded us, but God is always active with us wherever we are.



Gunnevi Goode is a Swedish speaking Finn who fell in love with English as a student - and fell in love with and married an English man, Len! Here they are pictured together. Gunnevi has lived in England for many years. When I asked what it felt like to attend the *Vårmassa* and to worship God in her native language, it was almost too difficult for her to find the words to answer because, she said, it involved so many of her deepest feelings. It evoked memories of her childhood, of her home, of the years gone by, of her roots and family, of her school and of her faith.



*Enjoying lunch at Knightstone Manor*

After the service Jan-Eric Österlund remarked that people's different lives are often kept completely separate. For example, the 'compartments' in his life have always included Sweden, London and Devon. But until recently they hardly seemed to touch. However, he told me that since he has started living more full-time in Devon he has begun to discover lots of new Swedish friends in the area that he'd never known about before.

This service, and the lunch which followed it at Jan-Eric's home, Knightstone Manor, was just one opportunity for the different parts of his life to meet, making the whole day so rich and important for him.

Camilla Persson told me how important it is for people to use their mother tongue when trying to express their innermost feelings. These are the words and the tones that most accurately reflect what people are feeling. Several of the other people I spoke to during the day agreed with her.

For Eivor Gardner, pictured below with her husband Charles, and for several others attending the service, the first hymn, '*Den blomstertid nu kommer*' (literally: *Now the time of blossoming arrives*) brought back memories of school and summer. They told me that this hymn was always sung on the last day



of school (in June) before the long summer break. The words hold the promise of everything blooming, and the beauty of creation, the leaves on the trees bursting forth. Spring comes much later in Sweden than in Britain and it seems to burst out almost as you watch it, the leaves unfurling quickly to make up for lost time in the cold of the long winter before the summer follows on quickly.

People also reflected on Michael Persson's sermon, during which he had spoken of the prayer that every Swedish child used to be taught, and perhaps still is. It compares very favourably with the English prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I shall die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

They repeated it for me and it goes like this:

*Gud som haver barnen kär,  
se till mig som liten är.  
Vart jag mig i världen vänder  
står min lycka i Guds händer.  
Lyckan kommer, lyckan går,  
du förbliver, Fader vår.*

They kindly translated it for me, and I believe it goes something like this, though no doubt our Swedish members will be able to offer a better version:

God who loves children dear,  
look at me, who is so small.  
Wherever I am in the turning world  
my happiness is in God's hands.  
Happiness comes, happiness goes,  
you remain, our Father.

At the end of the church service, just before he gave the blessing, Michael Persson said these words, which I'd not knowingly heard before: 'Open your hearts to receive the blessing of the Lord'.

Somehow those words summed up the impression I gained as I talked to some of the people. During that very special day, and especially in the service in church, they had been able to worship with their feelings, with the practical side of their personality, with their whole being.

And as the service ended they had opened themselves to receive the Lord, just as the shepherds at Bethlehem had received him as a baby, and they could now go back to their homes throughout south-west England allowing God to shepherd them in their lives and their faith.

## HONOUR FOR OUR LUTHERAN PATRON



*Bishop Younan (left) receiving his award from King Abdullah II*

In a ceremony in Amman, Jordan, held on 3rd September 2013, the King of Jordan paid tribute to our Society's Lutheran Patron, Bishop Munib Younan, for his efforts towards peace, co-existence and interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East.

Bishop Younan, who is both Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and President of The Lutheran World Federation, was awarded the Al-Hussein Decoration for Distinguished Service, First Class, by King Abdullah II of Jordan.

The medal recognises achievement in philanthropy, the arts, science, education, commerce, or public service. Bishop Younan received his award during a conference hosted by the King entitled "The Challenges Facing Arab Christians".

During the course of the conference the Bishop had urged Muslims and Christians to work side-by-side to help promote stability and moderation in the region.

"This engagement is not just for religious understanding but for shaping our shared political future," he said, adding that Arab Christians must refuse all types of division in society, whether along sectarian or religious lines.

King Abdullah II also urged continuing interfaith dialogue saying, "Arab Christians are the closest to understanding Islam and its true values. We call upon them at this stage to defend Islam, which is subject to a lot of injustice because some are ignorant of this faith, which preaches tolerance and moderation, and rejects extremism and isolationism."

*(Lutheran World Information, 12th September 2013)*

## ICELANDIC BISHOP REMINDS CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S GENERAL SYNOD THAT UNITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD

*Sally Barnes, a member of our Society's Executive Committee, attended the Synod in York and sent this report*



One of the honoured guests at the General Synod of the Church of England, held last July in York, was the Rt Rev Kristján Valur Ingólfsson, Bishop of Skálholt in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland. He was invited to give an opening address on behalf of all the other ecumenical guests who were there.

The Archbishop of York gave a warm welcome to Bishop Kristján, mentioning that among his many gifts he was both a liturgical scholar and a composer of hymns.

Bishop Kristján spoke of his delight in being able to address the Synod on behalf of the ecumenical guests who were all bringing their thanks and prayers from their respective Churches. He felt it was also a great honour for his Church because, as he stated, "We are, as a Church, a tiny little sister in the big family of Christian churches."

He told the Synod of a recent service in Reykjavik in which he had taken

part. A Lutheran minister, the Rev Bjarni Thor Bjarnason, had been licensed by the Venerable Jonathan Lloyd, the Archdeacon of Germany and Northern Europe, to work in a church that belongs to the Church of England (see picture below and article on the next page).

He had felt this had been an important event in our common church histories and was a significant milestone on our way to closer communion through the Porvoo community.

He recalled one of the important statements in the Porvoo Agreement: "We acknowledge that one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of his Grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the spirit but also Christ's commission through his body the Church."

Bishop Kristján told us that The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland has been a member of the Porvoo community from the very beginning. As a former teacher of

liturgy he appreciated how closer relationships between our two communions had made our liturgies richer and more in harmony with the Gospel.

He gave us a brief account of the history of the development of the Lutheran Church in Iceland. Before the Nordic settlers began to arrive in the eighth and ninth centuries, he told us, Christianity had already been brought to Iceland from Ireland and Scotland. The Vikings had taken Irish and Scottish slaves there. They were mostly women who took care of the upbringing of the children, and brought with them to Iceland not only Christianity but also their own cultural inheritance.

From the Reformation until 1874 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland was the one and only church in Iceland. It is still the case that 78% of the population are members of the Lutheran Church, and today 85% of Icelanders belong to Christian Churches. But much earlier, from the year 1000, the *Alþingi* (Anglicised 'Althingi' - the Icelandic Parliament) had ruled that Christianity should be formally accepted as the Confession of all Iceland.

Bishop Kristján was delighted to be able to tell the Synod members (so involved in their discussions about women bishops and the church of England) that in Iceland they had only had to wait a little bit more than 1000 years for their first female bishop! Bishop Agnes Sigurðardóttir was consecrated last year and is the leading bishop.

Bishop Kristján brought Bishop Agnes's greetings to the Synod. He told us that one of her main goals is to attract new members to the



*Bishop Kristján Ingólfsson, the Very Rev Birgir Ásgeirsson (Dean of Reykjavik), the Rev Maria Bjarnason and the Rev Bjarni Bjarnason with their two daughters, and Archdeacon Jonathan Lloyd when Pastor Bjarni was licensed as the Anglicans' Priest*

Church of Iceland, not just to increase numbers but because of the good message we are entrusted with.



*Bishop Agnes Sigurðardóttir, who was elected Bishop of Iceland in 2012, is the first woman bishop in the Church of Iceland*

Bishop Kristján reminded the General Synod that, like every good gift, unity comes from the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit. His address was warmly received and it was clear that he was a popular and welcome guest.

## EUROPE'S MOST NORTHERLY CONGREGATION IS IN ICELAND

*The Church of England Diocese in Europe has over 300 congregations or worship centres serving Anglican and (mostly) English-speaking people in Morocco, Turkey, Russia and some central Asian countries, and right across Europe. Bishop David Hamid's blog recently included news of a new congregation in Iceland, referred to in the article on the opposite page*

The most northerly congregation in the Anglican Diocese of Europe became officially known as 'The Congregation of St Thorlak, Reykjavik' on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul at the end of June this year. The Rev Bjarni Thor Bjarnason was licensed as Priest-in-Charge of the Congregation by the Archdeacon of Germany and Northern Europe, the Venerable Jonathan Lloyd, on behalf of the Bishop.

Fr Bjarni is Vicar of Seltjarnarnes Church on the west side of the city, and leads the Anglican Congregation of St Thorlak (in English) at 2pm on the last Sunday of each month at the Hallgrímskirka in the city centre. Two churchwardens have been elected, Guy Stewart (from Canada) and Thorgerir Lawrence (Anglo-Icelandic), and Bjarni now becomes a member of the Anglican Nordic/Baltic Deanery Chapter and Synod.

Fr Bjarni developed close links with the Church of England after serving a curacy at Scunthorpe, UK, in the Diocese of Lincoln soon after the Porvoo Communion came into being. St Thorlak (1133-1193), the Patron Saint of Iceland, studied in both Paris and Lincoln. His feast day is 23rd December.

## WOMEN LEAD BOTH LUTHERANS AND EPISCOPALIANS IN USA

On August 14th, 2013, the Rt Rev Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop of the Synod of Northeastern Ohio since 2006, was elected the first female Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Her election came as a surprise to many because Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop for the past 12 years, had been widely expected to win a third term.

Bishop Eaton's election may in part be due to an anxiety felt by some members of the ELCA that, since it gave permission four years ago to ordain and install partnered gay pastors, their denomination has lost 500,000 members and 647 of 10,000 congregations to schism. Bishop Eaton is seen as someone willing to address the concerns of theological conservatives who have remained in the denomination. Whilst she herself has supported the decision to allow partnered gay clergy, she has said quite clearly that being an inclusive church means respecting those with different understandings of scripture and doctrine.

A native of Cleveland, Bishop Eaton studied music education at the College of Wooster before attending Harvard Divinity School. Before her election as Bishop in 2006 she served as Pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Ashtabula, Ohio, for 15 years.

She and her husband, the Rev Conrad Selnick, live out a 'call to common mission' in their everyday lives. Conrad is an Episcopal priest, so his Presiding Bishop is not his wife but the Most Rev Katharine Jefferts Schori! She was elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA in 2006!



*The Rt Rev Elizabeth Eaton, the first woman to be elected Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America*



## ECUMENISM IN THE U.S.A : NEIGHBOURS GROWING INTO UNITY

Mitzi J Budde, a member of our Society, is Lutheran co-chair for the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's representative to the National Council of Church's Faith and Order "Unity in Mission" study group, which she also co-chairs.

At the time of writing this article, I have just returned from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania where I was privileged to participate in a 'Lovefeast of Christian Unity'. This worship service took place at Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem on Sunday evening, July 14, 2013. Over 1,000 people gathered to celebrate Lutheran, Episcopal and Moravian unity in Christ with a Moravian fellowship meal, the lovefeast, in the context of worship and song.

The Lovefeast is a worship service with a uniquely Moravian flavour, derived from the Biblical agape meal, and focused on the themes of reverence, Christian love, and the oneness of the followers of Christ. It is based in song and the sharing of simple food, usually coffee and a sweet bun or cookie (and is not to be confused with the Eucharist).

For more information see [http://www.moravian.org/faith-a-congregations/moravian-traditions-a-](http://www.moravian.org/faith-a-congregations/moravian-traditions-a)

[customs/moravian-lovefeast.html](http://www.moravian.org/faith-a-congregations/moravian-traditions-a-customs/moravian-lovefeast.html).

At our Lovefeast a choir drawn from 25 churches, a brass ensemble, and three organists led the music, which represented each of the three denominational traditions. As the coffee was passed through the pews, we sang hymn 525 in the *Moravian Book of Worship (1995)*:

*One the name in which we pray,  
one our Savior day by day;  
With one cup and with one bread  
thus one cov'nant way we tread.  
One in spirit, one in life,  
one amid earth's frequent strife,  
one in faith and one in love,  
one in hope of heav'n above.*

This Lovefeast of Christian Unity was the first service to be celebrated by all three full communion partners.

We are just beginning to envision the possibilities presented by the proliferation of full communion agreements among Protestant churches in

the United States, and the proximity of these parishes to one another as neighbours. The deepest expressions of common mission are joint parishes and joint college chaplains.

Epiphany Lutheran and Episcopal Church in Marina, California, is a vibrant example of a fully ecumenical full communion parish which expresses its call to common mission in worship, in architecture (even the windows have embedded symbols of both traditions), in food pantry, and in outreach. Epiphany's priest/pastor, the Rev Jon Perez, also serves on the national Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee. He maintains a comprehensive list of joint parishes and other shared and exchange ministries on the parish website (<http://www.epiphanymarina.org/call-to-common-mission.php>).

One of the most recent joint parishes, formed in June 2013, is an Episcopal/Lutheran Community in Athens, West Virginia, established through the joint efforts of St Luke Lutheran Church and St Stephen's Episcopal Church in the neighbouring town of Beckley.

Eastern Oregon has several joint Lutheran-Episcopal parishes, and the Episcopal and Lutheran bishops in that territory have begun to raise intriguing questions about the possibilities for future collaborative or shared judicatories.

Military chaplaincy is another ministry where Lutherans and Episcopalians in the United States are closely coordinating their work together. The Federal Ministries of the Episcopal Church and the ELCA's Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries have held two annual joint retreats thus far, bringing together chaplains from



Soprano Joan Swingle of Nazareth Moravian Church sings in the combined Moravian, Lutheran and Episcopal choir of 100 church members during the Lovefeast of Christian Unity ([bethlehempress.blogspot.com](http://bethlehempress.blogspot.com))

both traditions for, in the words of James B Magness, Bishop Suffragan for Federal Ministries of The Episcopal Church, “fellowship, learning, and strengthening the common pastoral mission within these denominational bodies with an emphasis on long-term work together.” A college joint Episcopal - ELCA chaplaincy is ongoing at the US Military Academy, West Point, and another is in its second year at the US Naval Academy, Annapolis.

In order to educate parishes about the full communion relationship of the churches, the US Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee and the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission of Canada worked jointly to develop parish bulletin inserts for the six Sundays of Epiphany 2013. Each of these bulletin inserts provided a brief meditation on the gospel text for the day, gave an example of Lutheran-Episcopal/Anglican cooperative work in action (by design, some examples were local, some national, and one international), and ended with a collect written for this purpose. The bulletin inserts were commended to the four churches - the Episcopal Church (TEC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCC) - in the four presiding bishops’ joint pastoral letter that was released for Christ the King Sunday 2012. The bulletin inserts were also available for download on the four churches’ websites, and the churches issued a press release.

The presiding bishops of the ELCA and TEC are raising awareness of shared social concerns by issuing joint pastoral letters. Most recently ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori issued joint pastoral statements on the U S Senate’s passage of immigration reform (June 28, 2013) and on World Refugee Day (June 20, 2013).

The presiding bishops of The Episco-

pal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada also issued a joint pastoral letter on June 27, 2013. This joint pastoral, entitled “A Word to the Churches” (see article on page 13), reflected on accomplishments thus far in the twelve-year journey of full communion, highlighted some of the ways in which the churches have “drawn more closely together in the service of the gospel,” and raised pointed questions around theological education, shared episcopal oversight, and speaking with a united voice.

Another way in which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Episcopal Church are being missional together is by sharing a staff position in Washington DC to coordinate the work of the two churches on advocacy issues around global poverty and injustice. Sarah Dreier currently holds the position as Legislative Representative for International Policy. Last fall this office facilitat-



Sarah Dreier on a panel about Human Trafficking Photo ACNS

ed a meeting which brought six Episcopal bishops and six Lutheran bishops to Washington DC for three days of joint lobbying on behalf of South Sudan. Our work for advocacy and justice is immeasurably stronger when we speak with a united voice.

At the 2012 Episcopal Church General Convention, resolution A36 addressed the work of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee. It gave thanks for the full communion agreement and the work of the committee and encouraged the committee to continue to seek opportu-

nities for new mission and ministry.

The resolution also directed the coordinating committee to “address the areas of our common life where our ecclesiological practices differ, especially lay presidency and our understandings of the role of deacons” for reporting back to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations for its report to the next General Convention, in 2015 (see <http://www.generalconvention.org/resolutions/download/102-1342119802>).

The two Churches’ differing approaches to ordering the diaconate presents a challenge, further complicated by the fact that the ELCA has an internal study of its rostered lay ministries, which includes diaconal ministry, currently in progress.

The preparation of ordinands for service in the full communion partner Churches is a substantial challenge still before the Churches, as the Presiding Bishops’ pastoral letter notes. For the most part, the seminaries of the Churches are not yet equipping students for the possibilities of interchangeability of ordained ministers and clergy exchanges.

As the Bethlehem Lovefeast of Christian Unity ended last week, the massed choir from twelve Moravian churches, nine Lutheran congregations, and four Episcopal parishes sang these words from Craig Courtney’s anthem “One Faith, One Hope, One Lord”:

*One faith, one hope, one Lord,  
one Church for which He died,  
one voice, one song we lift in praise  
to Him who was and is  
and shall be evermore.*

May all aspects of our ecumenical work - its call, its challenges, and its common mission - be ever devoted to the praise and service of Him who was and is and shall be evermore.



## INTRODUCING THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ETHIOPIA

*A dialogue between Martyn Skinner, Methodist minister in the Newcastle area, and the Rev Dr Yacob Godebo, lecturer at the Lutheran Seminary in Addis Ababa*

### Martyn

Since the 1990s ministers and teachers from the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia have studied at Chester University. The university, which has an Anglican foundation, has supported them brilliantly and helped them to gain Masters Degrees in Theology. Some worshipped at Wesley Methodist Church in Chester city centre where I used to minister. I have been privileged to visit Ethiopia on four occasions to experience first-hand the vibrant life of their Church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; “Mekane Yesus” appropriately means “the place where Jesus is.” The Rev Dr Yacob Godebo was able to return to Chester University between 2008 and 2011, and successfully studied for a doctorate; in his research he reflected on the charismatic experiences of his Church. In this dialogue he kindly offers us some snap shots of educational opportunities in Ethiopia and the Lutheran Church there.

Yacob, please could you give us a brief history of the EECMY?

### Yacob

The EECMY was founded by missionaries from Lutheran Churches mostly in Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The German and Swedish missionaries lived and worked in the Western part of the country, while

the Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish missionaries lived and worked in the South, evangelizing these areas and forming Lutheran churches. In time they formed a national committee by selecting members both from the missionaries and indigenous evangelical pioneers. Finally, the EECMY was established as a national evangelical Lutheran church on 21st January 1959. At that time it only had eight synods and twenty thousand members. Currently it consists of twenty four synods and more than six million members. It is a fast growing African church.

### Martyn

In order for your wife Demewoz and you to study in Chester, you have spent several academic years away from each other, and sometimes one of you has been away from your children for these periods too. Do you think these huge sacrifices were worthwhile and, if so, why?

### Yacob

Access to further study is very narrow in Ethiopia. This is due to the country’s socio-economic situation. So the field of study one wants to join is, in most cases, unavailable. Consequently both religious and non-religious Ethiopians look to study abroad if possible. We chose to do this, even though it often involves leaving our beloved ones behind for years, because whilst our family’s suffering is for certain years, losing our educational opportunity would probably be forever.

### Martyn

I remember visiting you in 2007 when you were Principal of the Seminary in Hosanna in southern Ethiopia. At that time the students were on strike. They were protesting about how little they had to live on. What are their standards of living like in 2013? Have they improved?

### Yacob

When you visited us married students were paid about £16 a month and single students about £10. Currently, married students are paid about £40 and single students about £27 a month. However, the value of our currency is increasingly going down whilst the cost of living is soaring day-in-day-out. So really the allowance hasn’t improved at all. When the students are appointed as ministers in their respective congregations, parishes or districts after completion of their B.Th, only a few of them are lucky enough to receive more than they did in the seminary.

### Martyn

In the EECMY there is an emphasis on holistic ministry, seeking to help people in body and mind as well as spirit. Is this reflected in the training offered to students at seminary?

### Yacob

Yes it is, both in the seminaries and Bible schools and particularly in the “diakonia ministry” of the church. This is taught in every level of our training centres and throughout the twenty four synods. Its teaching almost entirely focuses on the holistic approach to evangelization. One example of this being put into practice would be a project that my home Church of Lalo in southern Ethiopia hopes to run when finance permits. It has short and long term aspects. In the short term it intends to support people by facilitating a “revolving fund”, loaning money at low interest rates which will encourage people to run small-scale businesses. In the long term it aims at offering local people education.

### Martyn

Could you say more about ways in which people at congregational level might be able to benefit from Church provided education?

**Yacob**

In the Ethiopian social context there are many people who lack educational opportunities, particularly women because of the traditional patriarchal ethos. Local churches offer education for women's groups about the Christian faith and also about sanitary and dietary issues. The latter encourages women to grow different kinds of vegetables and fruits in their gardens and this is made possible by the church providing them with seeds. Education is also offered about tree planting so that wood used for house building and fire wood can be replaced.

**Martyn**

Finally Yacob, what challenges do parents such as Demewoz and you face in providing your own children with a good education?

**Yacob**

This is a major challenge for us. Pri-

vately owned schools are perceived to offer a good standard of education but are prohibitively expensive for most people. Government schools don't charge but offer a lower standard of education compared with the private schools, often failing to score good grades in the national exam. Despite the government's continued efforts to improve their standards, this prospect still seems to lie far away ahead of us.

**Martyn**

"Education, Education, Education" was a slogan Tony Blair adopted during the United Kingdom 1997 election campaign, but he didn't invent it; it has been used widely in Ethiopia since the 1970s. The EECMY illustrates how essential education is for progress in so many areas of life in Ethiopia. But education is equally important for all of us who live in the north also, for two reasons at least. Firstly, so that we can be en-

couraged by growing Churches, such as the EECMY, and learning from what they value and are doing well. And secondly, so that we understand the importance of issues such as "trade justice" and "climate change", and how our lifestyles often impact negatively on our brothers and sisters in the south, for whom life is often so much harsher and "on the edge".



The EECMY Cross

## GROWING TOGETHER IN NORTH AMERICA

Dick Lewis illustrates how 2001's 'Called to Common Mission' and 'The Waterloo Agreement' are making an impact

### A Word to the Churches

Back in June 2013 the leaders of the Anglican Church of Canada, The Episcopal Church in the USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada issued 'A Word to the Churches'. Twelve years ago they had all embarked together on a journey of full communion, recognising each other as 'churches in which the gospel is truly preached and the holy sacraments duly administered'.

Since then, in the USA, a small number of congregations have been worshipping together and sharing buildings and clergy, Episcopalians and Lutherans have pooled resources when responding to victims of natural disasters, and they have begun to share in training chaplains for federal prison and military chaplaincy. They also have a joint policy and advocacy staff person in Washington DC (see Mitzi Budde's article on page 10).

Meanwhile, in Canada there have been joint Anglican-Lutheran youth gatherings, the Diocese of Rupert's Land and the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod are sharing the same office space in Winnipeg and, in July 2013, the first ever joint General Synod and National Convention saw members of both traditions worshipping together and seeking to discern the next steps in their relationship as churches in full communion.

In 'A Word to the Churches' the church leaders outline several further areas for possible joint action. People training for leadership in both traditions must be equipped with the knowledge and tools required to express as fully as possible what full communion can mean within the local communities they serve. Shared episcopal oversight in some places might enhance the church's ministry and mission. The voice of the four Churches might be heard more clearly if they spoke as one.

### Joint Assembly

In Canada, July's Joint Assembly in Ottawa was a milestone. There were around 500 delegates and it took red (Anglican) and yellow (Lutheran) lanyards to tell members of the two denominations apart. They met together to discuss issues around mission and social justice, and only went into separate sessions when decisions were needed specific to their own denomination.

There were 36 youth delegates who led a prayer gathering at Parliament Hill focusing on the need for clean water for all Canada's people. Archbishop Fred Hiltz referred to the young people as the 'most hope-filled expression' of the Church. He also reminded delegates that the theme of the Assembly, 'Together for the love of the World', was significant. 'The fellowship we share must be for the benefit of the world,' he said.

National Bishop Susan Johnson urged delegates to address the challenges facing both churches. ‘The reality we are facing is that our church is declining in membership, in number of congregations and in financial resources,’ she told them.

**Grassroots Activity**

Now, meet two people who illustrate the variety of ways in which full communion can be expressed in the Canadian churches.

**The Rev Brad Mittleholz** is both a Lutheran Pastor and an Anglican Priest, caring for seven congregations in Ontario’s scenic Bruce Peninsula. His home base is at St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wiarton, but for the past three years he’s also been incumbent priest and pastor of the six-congregation Anglican parish of the Bruce, part of the recently established Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce (LAAMB).



Pastor Brad Mittleholz (third from left front row) celebrates the formation of the Lutheran and Anglican Ministries of the Bruce Peninsula and his induction as priest at Trinity Anglican Church in Wiarton, Ontario. Photo: June Manewell

Once a month, his Anglican congregations have Lutheran Sunday, when the services follow the Lutheran liturgy. Whilst the basic order of Anglican and Lutheran worship is the same, there are some differences. ‘For example, the Lutheran confession, petition for forgiveness and absolution come at the beginning of the service, not in the middle,’ he says. And Lutherans have no counterpart to the doxology, which he describes as ‘a wonderful gift.’

On the whole, the Anglican liturgy features more choir-only singing; Lutheran congregations sing more of the service. Unsurprisingly, Lutheran worship also features more German composers.

‘Having this diversity of congregations is the wonderful thing about my ministries here,’ says Pastor Mittleholz. And that’s what he prefers to be called. ‘As pastor, I listen and pray,’ he says. ‘The priest is my worship role.’

Pastor Mittleholz will soon move to a new parish in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario.

**The Very Rev Christian Schreiner**



Photo: Bruce Myers

Under the terms of 2001’s full communion agreement, pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada do not need re-ordination to serve as clergy in the Anglican Church of Canada - and vice versa. Clergy of either church can minister in the other. But the Very Rev Christian Schreiner, Dean of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City, was in fact re-ordained as an Anglican priest in June 2008. That’s because he was originally ordained pastor in the Lutheran Church of Bavaria, which is not as yet part of any full communion arrangement with the Anglican Church.

Since the process for becoming permanently rostered with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada would have taken considerable time, the most expedient solution to his joining the clergy in Canada was to ordain him an Anglican priest. And so, in an historic move, he was ordained in June 2008 - as an extension to his Lutheran ordination.

For Dean Schreiner, joining the Anglican Church was a painless transition. ‘It was like coming home. It was effectively what I had been looking for without knowing it,’ he says. ‘Martin Luther never changed the mass, so the liturgies are really not that different.’

As a delegate to the recent Joint Assembly he regarded the combined Anglican-Lutheran sessions as ‘an important opportunity for the two churches to live up to their historic 2001 commitment to full communion.’



## BEING IN A MINORITY

*Helen Harding offers this reflection*



Linda Bruch

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Jesus said these words

to reassure his tiny band of followers (Luke 12.32), and they provide the title for our conference in September 2014 which focuses on the vocation of minority churches today.

But what is a minority church? I belong to the Church of England. If you look at census statistics you find that 33million people out of around 50million in England claim to be Christian. But look at the figures for the Church of England and you find that 1.1million people attend church ‘regularly’ (whatever that means). But if only one in fifty people attend my church, my church is a minority church! What about the other 31.9million Christians? Do they regularly attend other churches? No, they don’t. There are so many ‘soft’ adherents to the churches it’s impossible to assess how many ‘real’ Christians there are in England. But Christians feel that they are becoming marginalized in our society, which suggests that the Church as a whole is conscious of becoming a minority.

So how do members of churches that are smaller than mine feel? What are their experiences of being part of a “little flock” that Jesus has chosen to witness to the fact that he is there, hard at work in the communities to which they belong? Might it be better for them to join forces with larger churches so as to exercise greater influence? Or are there virtues in having lots of little flocks from different folds living alongside each other?

On 1st June I met Linda Bruch of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and

Andris Taurins of the Latvian Evangelical Church in Great Britain in Truro Cathedral in the far west of England. A group of Lutherans was meeting there for worship. I asked if they thought there were advantages in belonging to a Lutheran minority in Britain.

“When I say I’m Lutheran it provides a good conversation point,” Andris told me. “‘A Lutheran,’ they say, ‘What’s that?’ So it’s part of evangelism, my way of increasing people’s awareness of Christianity in general and Lutheranism in particular.”

Linda agreed. “We’re memorable in some way because we’re small, or different. I think that’s an advantage because it opens doors for us into occasions and networks that we would otherwise not be part of.”

But they were very aware of the disadvantages. “We’re geographically dispersed and we’re small in number, so we can’t easily support the infrastructure needed to run a church properly. Small numbers mean that there aren’t many donations, so we can’t support pastors’ salaries. Our clergy have to have other jobs, secular jobs, and do their ministry part-time. We call it a ‘tent-making ministry’. That has severe disadvantages because the time they can give to their church work is limited.”

Both Andris and Linda attend Anglican worship when there is no Lutheran congregation for them to join. Andris lives in Wales. “I’ve gone to the Church in Wales which under the Porvoo Agreement is now embracing Lutheran churches,” he told me. “The Lutheran rites are quite similar to the Church in Wales’ rites, so it’s just a different language.” In his experience Anglican services contain more humour than the Latvian churches in which he grew up!

Linda, too, is happy to attend Anglican worship, but said that she loves

to be in a Lutheran service. “I can’t put my finger on why that is,” she confessed, “but it has to do with the music, it has to do with the enthusiasm and the singing. There’s something different about the Lutheran tradition. I can’t say exactly what the differences are, but I find it more touching to my heart. In Lutheran worship everyone participates so fully and wholeheartedly.”

Both Linda and Andris were born outside the UK and brought up Lutheran. So whilst they rejoice in worshipping with Christians of other denominations, they both take every opportunity to meet and pray with people from their own tradition. It’s part of who they are.

They both wish the Lutheran presence in Great Britain was larger. “What I find discouraging is the extent to which we have to deal with practical matters rather than mission,” said Linda. “We’re so few on the ground and people can feel that they’re slogging away at the workload, the administration, preparing for meetings and worship, but somehow it feels as if the mission of the church is getting pushed aside.”



Andris and Ann Taurins with Eliza Zikmane

Perhaps the greatest virtue in being a tiny minority is that it reminds us of what being a disciple of Jesus is really about. He walked alongside people who were hurting and blessed them and he taught his tiny band to do the same. He led a minority group of people who offered hope to the poor and broken through reconciliation with God. Lutheran or Anglican, majority or minority, that’s something we all should want to do.

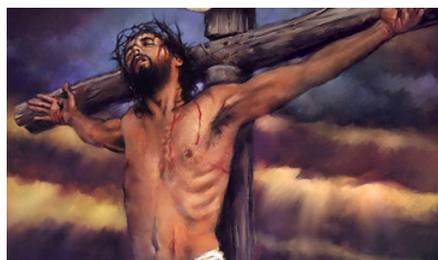


## LEAD US TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

Recently Dick Lewis, our Editor, was in conversation with Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, Bishop Emerita of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain. He asked her what the rationale was for the continued separate existence of Lutherans in the UK, given the ways in which Lutherans have already drawn closer to the Anglican churches in particular. His question prompted Jana to write this short article.

The fact is that, as small entities, struggling with a lack of resources of all kinds, maintaining a Lutheran presence and identity in Great Britain is always something of a challenge. But there are, I believe, many good reasons for doing so. It is important to provide a ministry of presence, as Bishop Walter Jagucki often says. We welcome people from many parts of the world and build a church home away from home. We also maintain our particular liturgical and musical tradition.

However, I believe that there is another reason, at least as important as those, which is that Lutheranism and Lutheran teaching have something very particular to offer, especially in our current Western European context. Justification by faith alone, the article by which the church stands or falls according to Luther, may not sound these days as though it is relevant to life outside the elevated corridors of Faculties of Theology but, in fact, it can be very illuminating - literally, in the sense that it can shine a light not only on what churches believe and how they act, but also on the fundamental question of justice in both secular and religious spheres.



Article IV of the Augsburg Confession set out the early Lutheran view of justification back in 1530: 'It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions, but

that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.'

The importance of this is not simply in the doctrine itself, but in the way that it is seen to permeate and support all other teachings of the church, a meta doctrine, according to Gordon Jensen in his presentation to the Convocation of Teaching Theologians of the ELCA back in August 2006 which was entitled '*Is the Doctrine of Justification a Meta Doctrine in Lutheran Thinking?*'. Carl Braaten, quoted by Jensen, calls it 'a foundational truth with generative power'. In many senses, justification by faith speaks directly to some of the crucial problems and issues of our society today.

A few thoughts on the relevance of this historic doctrine follow here, but inevitably this is by no means an exhaustive analysis.

- If monetary worth, ability to achieve and human capital theory are almost universally accepted as measures of the intrinsic worth of human beings, this leads, almost inevitably, to the denigration of people who are not able to earn large salaries or do great works, and of everything associated with that (the elderly, sick or disabled, the care they need, and those who care for them, for instance). In such a social context preaching justification by faith is counter-cultural, arguing against the valuation of people by their achievements. It is, potentially at least, radical thinking. Our inability to

gain salvation and wholeness by our own effort, and understanding that God offers it to us independent of any worth, works or achievements of our own, let alone the size of our bank balance, brings some sense of perspective to the huge and growing inequalities that our society not only tolerates but, in some sense, even encourages.



In April of this year, Huffington Post wrote: 'The ratio of CEO-to-worker pay has increased 1,000 percent since 1950, according to data from Bloomberg. Today, Fortune 500 CEOs make 204 times regular workers on average, Bloomberg found. The ratio is up from 120-to-1 in 2000, 42-to-1 in 1980 and 20-to-1 in 1950. "When CEOs switched from asking the question of 'how much is enough' to 'how much can I get,' investor capital and executive talent started scrapping like hyenas for every morsel," said Roger Martin, Dean of Toronto University's Rotman School of Management.' ([www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/30/ceo-to-worker-pay-ratio\\_n\\_3184623.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/30/ceo-to-worker-pay-ratio_n_3184623.html)) A view of humankind that does not value us by our possessions would help us move back to the understanding that having enough is riches indeed.

- Martin Luther wrote in 1536: 'A man is truly justified by faith in the sight of God, even if he finds only disgrace before man and in his own self. (Third Disputation Concerning Justification, 1536, LW 34:151-153) For those of us who are Christians, this means that our ultimate judgement lies not in the assessment of those around us, or public opinion, or even our own often distorted views of ourselves. What really matters is not the ephemeral spirit level of human opinion, but the eternal and always just judgement of the God who justifies us. That should, if nothing else, mitigate against us taking social media too seriously! More importantly, as Gordon Jensen writes, 'Justification probes and explores human motives and all attempts at self-justification or self-aggrandizement that consistently creep into human agendas for building God's realm.'
- All have sinned, and all have fallen short of the glory of God, says Paul in Romans 3:23, part of his extended argument on justification by faith; we are all equal, therefore, both in being sinners, and being justified by the God who loves us all. Boasting, or boastfulness on the basis of our achievements, talents, riches or even holiness, is excluded, as Paul goes on to say in Romans 3:27. Or, indeed, as the Epistle of James says, 'Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow

we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.' (James 4:13-16) This may be something of a stretch, but surely our pervasive celebrity culture, which is damaging in various ways, would be tempered by an increase in general humility and recognition of our essential equality, and less admiration of the boastful.

- According to Canon Nicholas Sagovsky in his excellent book, *Christian Tradition and the Practice of Justice*, 'the doctrine of justification is based on an understanding of God being just, not merely in the sense that a judge is supposed to be just - attending to arguments and then pronouncing on the case - but actively doing justice. In the case of Jesus, God actively rights a wrong. He does justice by acting to ensure that the just person who has been wronged is thoroughly vindicated.' (Nicholas Sagovsky, *Christian Tradition and the Practice of Justice*, SPCK 2008, p73-74) This points to the relationship between justification and justice, one that is being explored by theologians and those involved in practical diaconal

and advocacy work. There is not scope within this short article to go into this in great detail, but for a good overview of contemporary explorations in the contextualisation of the doctrine of justification, have a look at a paper called '*The Lutheran Doctrine of Justification in the Global Context*' by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. It is available at <http://www.ltsg.edu/Programs/LutherStudies/AARpapers>

Olaf Fykse Tveit, a Norwegian Lutheran pastor, is the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches. In a recent speech to the United Nations, entitled *The Role of Religion In Our Work for Justice and Peace*, he told his listeners, 'God does not need religion. We as humanity can, however, be well served by our religious traditions if they inspire us to honour God by striving for justice and peace for all of humanity and the whole creation. Therefore we pray, God of life, lead us to justice and peace.' If an increased awareness of our Lutheran traditional emphasis on the foundational importance of justification by faith does inspire us to do that, it will indeed serve us, our communities and God's creation well. In my view, if Lutheran churches, no matter how small they may be, can give voice to the liberating and saving Word of God by preaching the Word and gathering their communities around the Sacraments, that alone justifies our presence.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHETIC IMAGINATION

Prebendary Donald Barnes (right) was for many years an enthusiastic member of our Society. He was also a founder member of the Hampstead Christian Study Centre in London. Donald died in 2011 and the Study Centre has instituted an annual lecture in his memory, the first of which is to be on Wednesday 6th November 2013 at St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, London NW3 4HJ at 8pm.



The speaker will be the Rev Lucy Winkett (left), Rector of St James's Church, Piccadilly. Her title will be "*Prophetic imagination: living with what is, in the light of what's promised*".

ALS members are cordially invited to attend. Admission is £5 at the door, which includes refreshments. More information from Sally Barnes, [sally.barnes@btopenworld.com](mailto:sally.barnes@btopenworld.com) or from the Rev Claire Wilson, [revclairewilson@btinternet.com](mailto:revclairewilson@btinternet.com).



## FINDING COMMON GROUND IN TEXAS



Ms Laura Lincoln, our Society's National Coordinator in the USA, is Executive Director of the Texas Conference of Churches. In this article she offers an overview of the Conference's current projects to inform your prayers



The Texas Conference of Churches is an association of 46 denominational judicatory bodies, individuals and institutions committed to living out an ecumenical understanding of Christianity. Currently, we work with the Christian Church-Disciples of Christ, the Episcopal Church USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Religious Society of Friends, the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. Conversations are also taking place with the Christian Life Commission of the Greater Baptist Convention of Texas exploring ways in which we might work together. Anyone can attend our events, and we make particular efforts to invite independent churches (a significant proportion of churches in Texas) to participate.

Our mission is to bring Christians of all sorts together so that they might find common ground and better serve the people of their shared communities. Toward that end, we offer several different types of opportunities for connection, ranging from formal theological discussion to a festival of faith and the arts!



Austin Presbyterian Seminary students working out a trust exercise

Our current projects:

- A private Facebook group for young pastors so that they might connect across Texas without worrying about distance and budget.
- Several denominations have particular programmes to support ministers in the first year or two of active ministry.
- Three judicatories (the Palo Duro Presbytery, the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, and the Southwest Texas Synod of the ELCA) have asked TCC to help develop an ecumenical component to their programmes. Full Communion relationships exist between these bodies, but most pastors are not taught about the

practical aspects of polity and denominational language in seminary. We hope to better equip these pastors to both talk and work with one another.

- Starting lunch table conversations at Austin Presbyterian Seminary and the (Episcopal) Seminary of the Southwest. Each month students will be invited to share food and conversation at a designated table at each of the seminaries (which are within walking distance of one another). If seminarians don't learn to reach across denominational lines within the protective context of education, it is unlikely they will do so when in active ministry. We are also working with Brite Divinity School and plan to bring Perkins School of Theology and Oblate Seminary into this network by 2014. We hope to add more schools each year.
- In an effort to redevelop relationships with Roman Catholic leaders (over recent years there has been a waning of the once very robust ecumenical intention of RC bishops in Texas), in October we will have an initial meeting to plan out something we are calling "Catholic Conversations". At this first effort, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin will take the lead, and several members of the Board of the Texas Conference of Churches will be part of the initiative.
- Invitations are going out to a select, diverse group of church leaders to participate in a focus group to be held in November in Houston, on the topic of "the congregation as peacemaker in the context of a violent society".
- In Spring 2014 in San Antonio, we will host a panel discussion concerning how to minister to returning soldiers and their families entitled, "What do you say after the hug?" TCC is planning to develop a curriculum to help pastors with this specialized, but not unique situation. Texas has several hundred thousand soldiers as part of its population.

There is a lot of work to do. In the 1950s and 60s in Texas, bishops from many denominations courageously stood up in the midst of political and racial turmoil to say publicly that they were committed to stand together as religious leaders and to give voice to the powerless. In the 1970s and 80s, many formal ecumenical agreements were signed and celebrated. Today is no less a time for courage and commitment in the face of suspicion of institutions and a demand for action to back up theology. I am heartened by the enthusiasm and imagination of the church leaders across Texas who are finding new ways to live into those agreements we pledged to one another decades ago.

## IMPRESSIONS OF A MEMORABLE KIRCHENTAG

More than 100,000 people gathered in Hamburg, Germany, between 1st and 5th May 2013 for the 34th Protestant *Kirchentag*. Among them were quite a number of our Society's members, and our Society set up a stall in the *Markt der Moeglichkeiten* (market of limitless possibilities) under the watchful eye of one of our German Coordinators, Gudrun Kaper. Two families she knows in Stuttgart gave 220 Euros towards the cost of the stall, which the Society very much appreciates, and they also donated the cost of the wonderfully colourful banner that stretched across it. The banner came all the way from South Africa.

### The Banner



'Our banner was hand-made for us by some of the women in the Boitumelo Sewing Project,' Gudrun explains. The Sewing Project is one of a number of projects located in the grounds of the Lutheran Church in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, Gauteng. Hillbrow is a very neglected suburb of the city, but the old grey stone church there provides a safe, warm and dry environment where people can share skills, stories and lives, and create an income for themselves and their families.

'How did we connect with them?' continues Gudrun. 'The Rev Dr Lutz Ackermann from Germany is one of their supporters. He saw my request on Facebook for a colourful and joyful banner. In less than two weeks the women had made it. René Risch from St Peter's parish in Pretoria very kindly brought it to Hamburg, and what a splendid addition it made to our stall.'

So if ever proof was needed that social media like Facebook can be effective, there you have it!

### Our Marketplace Stall



Gudrun was delighted with the support members gave her in making sure the stall was open throughout the event. 'Look at the photo,' she says. 'You can see Rupert Hoare (with his back to us), me sitting in the background working the 'beamer' [data projector], Gesine Hoare in front of me, and Pfarrer Joachim Bremer talking with an enquirer. In addition, Angela Stewart, Archdeacon Peter Townley, the Rev Patrick Irwin, Pfarrer Jochen Dallas, Bishop Juergen Johannesdotter and Monica Schofield all gave us valuable time. I wish I had been able to get a photo with all of us together at the stall, but I haven't found one yet.'

'Many of the thousands visiting the *Markt der Moeglichkeiten* took a look at us,' Gudrun tells us, 'and while they were eating *Gummibaerchen* [like Jellybabies] the important aspects of our Society were explained. We connect Christians in our different churches without asking them ever to switch churches. Emails, our website, phone calls and text messages, our conferences and our Annual Meetings draw people together. This kind of personal interaction will become more and more possible as our Society begins to make better use of social networking.'

Gudrun was delighted that people of all ages and many nationalities stopped by to share their personal stories and ecumenical experiences. 'Some of them very frankly asked us if the British members of our team could assist with opportunities for internships, obtaining temporary work in the UK, and finding out about research projects. Rupert Hoare and I are doing our best to respond to them.'

## Dreams and Visions

On the Saturday evening some of our stallholders visited the Anglican Church of St Thomas Becket. A Meissen Eucharist, celebrating the relationship established in 1991 between the EKD (The Evangelical Church in Germany) and the Church of England, has become an important element during the *Kirchentag* in recent years. There, in the Anglican church where the nave and galleries were filled to the rafters, Bishop Nick Baines of Bradford, the Anglican Co-Chairman of the Meissen Commission, presided and his EKD counterpart, Bishop Professor Friedrich Weber of Braunschweig, was the preacher. A local school choir provided the music and the St Thomas Becket parishioners provided a warm reception for the visitors after the packed service. Our Anglican President, John Arnold, was one of the authors of the Meissen Agreement, and he tells us that, for him, this service was ‘the fulfilment of a dream’.



John Arnold (centre) with the Rev Matthew Jones, Chaplain of St Thomas Becket Church, and Bishop David Hamid

The next day the service to close the *Kirchentag* took place in the *Stadt-park*. It was attended by about 120,000 worshippers. However, Erich Rust, our Treasurer, says, ‘I did not want to be in that huge crowd, either standing on my feet for more than two hours or trying to be comfortable sitting on the ground. So I attended the service at St Thomas Becket Church. I felt quite at home, especially as the sermon was delivered by our Society’s very own Anglican President, John Arnold from Canterbury.’

Back in the *Stadt-park* the closing sermon was preached by Bishop Nick Baines. You can find the full text on our website ([www.anglican-lutheran-society.org](http://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org)). Taking the theme of the whole event, *Soviel du brauchst* from Exodus 16.18 (translated ‘As much as you need’), he drew on the experience of the Old Testament prophet Micah who, he said, ‘speaks to us now because what he addresses is not particular social or economic arrangements, but the human heart and mind – which, for all our technological progress, doesn’t seem to change much from one generation to the next.’ Micah was less concerned about establishing political programmes than imagining a vision. He calls people not to *take hold of* a vision ‘out there’, but to be *grasped by* a vision that transforms the way they see God, the world and themselves. The Bishop reminded his listeners of Michelangelo, the famous Italian artist and sculptor, who was seen rolling a huge stone down a hill. When asked what he was doing he replied that he was in a hurry because there was an angel in the rock waiting for the artist to reveal him. In a similar way, Bishop Nick went on, ‘Micah invites us to think differently, and to be fired with a vision of a different world – a world in which we can be satisfied with ‘enough’ and in which our neighbours can be satisfied without us having to be afraid.’ The images Micah uses in chapter 4, verses 4 and 5, are deliberate: there will be no terror or fear because every person will be satisfied with their own tree and won’t need to capture their neighbour’s tree because they don’t need it. ‘We are called to see as Michelangelo did,’ the Bishop asserted, ‘and to recognise God’s face in the world, and to reveal hope to the world.’



Bishop Nick Baines gives the blessing at the Closing Service (Photo; *Kirchentag* Schultz)

## A Personal Response

In just five short days thousands of events, exhibitions, concerts, worship services, study groups, lectures and meals were shared across the city. It was impossible for anyone to do more than merely scratch the surface. It could be quite frustrating, but almost everyone remained cheerful, as Erich Rust discovered.

‘The people in the crowds showed lots of patience, especially when halls were overcrowded and they couldn’t gain entrance to their favourite speakers or performances,’ he tells us. But there were plenty of positive experiences to be enjoyed. ‘Yes, the *Kirchentag* was very well organized, there were quite a few inspirational events, even though I missed out on some that I had wished to attend because they were full. During the breaks everyone could enjoy the

## TAKING TIME OUT TO VISIT AN EXCITING PROJECT

*Dr John Arnold reports*

In the old German Democratic Republic there was a crime of which I was often guilty, namely "misuse of an official journey for personal reasons." Now, in the happier circumstances of the Federal Republic, I have fallen again.

Travelling ostensibly to represent the Diocese of Canterbury at the Kirchentag (German Protestant Church Gathering) in Hamburg, I took the opportunity to visit my old friend Antje Heide-Rottwilm. She was recovering from the hip-replacement operation which had prevented her from taking up our offer to speak at the Society's AGM in March. She was walking on sticks but making good progress, determined to get to the next Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, in which we had been colleagues, and to help with the expected birth of a grandchild. Antje is the spiritual and administrative leader of the splendid new Ecumenical

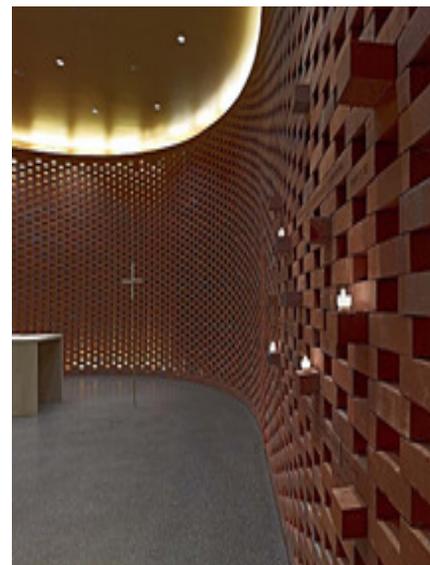
Centre in Hamburg's HafenCity, an inner city renovation programme comparable to London's docklands.

When the project started eighteen churches, led by the local Lutheran Church and including the Anglican Church of St Thomas Becket, decided not to erect separate buildings, but to work together in the service not of Mammon but of God and neighbour.

The Centre houses about forty residents as well as offices for various ecumenical and ecological bodies.

At its heart is a lovely small chapel, a spiritual oasis in a busy, modern city with huge social problems and, like London, extremes of poverty and wealth. Antje and her husband are members of the Laurentius Konvent, one of those contemporary communities which featured at our Annual General Meeting. Some of the smaller churches use the chapel for Sun-

day worship, but most residents attend their own church in town, in the case of the Lutherans the beautifully restored St Catherine's, one of the historic *Hauptkirchen* (main churches) of Hamburg.



*The Chapel at the Ecumenical Centre  
(Photo Courtesy of Wandel Hoefer + Lorch)*

*Continued from previous page*

beautiful park "Planten un Blumen" around which most of the venues were located. The wonderfully sunny weather during the whole of the Kirchentag was a great benefit, and it was a good and encouraging experience, for which I am grateful.'

Erich was delighted to meet some old friends from Cape Town, South Africa, at the Kirchentag. With so many Christians all gathered together in one place you never know who you are going to meet around the next corner! However, two things struck Erich quite forcibly. 'My overall impression was that young people and the elderly were better represented at the event than the middle-aged,' he says, 'and something I missed was a spirit of 'togetherness'. There were no "Good mornings" when we caught the bus or the U-Bahn, even though the Kirchentag-people were clearly distinguishable by their blue scarfs. From that viewpoint it was not so difference from any other place where people are hurrying to reach their destination.'

There is a very good personal account of the Kirchentag in English by an old friend of our Society, the Rev Tony Dickenson, online at <http://www.kirchentag.org.uk/tony3.html>

### **Next time in Stuttgart**

The next Kirchentag will take place in Stuttgart - from 3rd to 7th June 2015. If it's Gods will, and we are all still alive, we can meet in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Gudrun Kaper is already making plans for the Society's stall there. She would love to hear from any member willing to help out.



## LUTHERANS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS AGREE: COMMEMORATION OF REFORMATION IN 2017 SHOULD BE ECUMENICAL

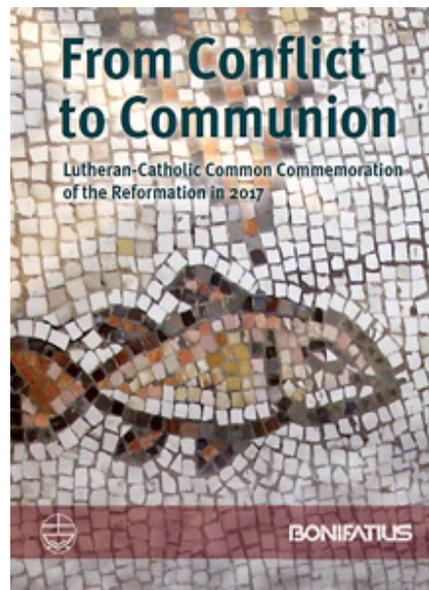
*Our Anglican President, Dr John Arnold, reviews a recent Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*

I well remember the first Lutheran sermon I ever heard. It was in 1951 and I was a schoolboy on an exchange visit to a family, which had moved from Lübeck to Munich. The Pastor took as his text, "I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10.3) and applied it directly to his hearers' situation in Catholic Bavaria. That is how things were in those days before the ecumenical movement had taken hold in Protestantism, and the Second Vatican Council had transformed Roman Catholic attitudes to fellow Christians. Those of us who wish we could go further might well reflect on how far we have come - nowhere further than in Germany, the heartland of the Reformation, and in the worldwide Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogues.

Now, if there were any anxiety that the forthcoming celebrations of the quinquecentenary of 1517 might exacerbate conflict, this admirable volume quietens our hearts. As it says in the Foreword, "In 2017 Catholic and Lutheran Christians will most fittingly look back on the events that occurred 500 years earlier by putting the gospel of Jesus Christ at the center" and "We take as our guiding rule the doctrine of justification." It sets two challenges: the purification and healing of memories and the restoration of Christian unity. And the Introduction boldly asserts that Luther's reforming agenda proposes a spiritual and theological challenge for both contemporary Catholics and Lutherans, and that they will celebrate 2017 together.

Whereas previous celebrations took place in polemical and divisive contexts, the present perspectives are ecumenical, global and evangelistic. A joint re-telling of the story is now possible, based on new views of the later middle ages and on more re-

cent Catholic research on Luther. "The breakthrough for Catholic scholarship came with the thesis that Luther overcame within himself a Catholicism that was not fully Catholic." The baleful influence of the patently spiteful and biased work of Cochlaeus in the sixteenth century is acknowledged, but not the contribution of Denifle in the twentieth century, which was more hurtful because he was so widely respected for his scholarship and learning, not least by Lutherans. Since Vatican II there has been a new evaluation of "Luther's catholicity and intention to reform, not divide the church".



Meanwhile, there has been wider recognition of the entanglement of political interests on the Protestant, as well as the Catholic, side.

This enables the authors to claim, "Today we are able to tell the story of the Lutheran Reformation together", which they do in a masterly essay in revisionist history. Scholars may dispute specific judgments, as the authors rival one another in trying to see the events of the period 1517-1555 from each other's point of view; but if there are faults, at

least they are faults in the right direction. Especially valuable is the section on 'Theological attempts to overcome religious conflict', dealing with the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Catholic response or Confutation, and the proto-ecumenical dialogues at Haguenau, Worms and Regensburg (1540-46), brought to an end by the disastrous Smalcald War (1546-47). The Diet and Interim led to the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and the establishment of the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*, whereby the religion of the ruler determined the religion of his subjects. This was designed as a temporary expedient to save Germany from the kind of catastrophe which eventually engulfed it in the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), but its effects have lasted to the present day. The Wittenberg Articles of 1536, between the Lutherans and the Church of England, do not feature here, but they formed part of the admirable attempts in the 1530s to seek agreement, and they played their part in the conversations which led to the Meissen Common Statement in 1988. The Council of Trent (1545-63) both clarified Catholic doctrine and instituted reforms, but "Because the doctrinal decrees... were largely in response to what it perceived to be Protestant errors, it shaped a polemical environment... that tended to define Catholicism over against Protestantism (mirroring many Lutheran writings) until Vatican II."

An even more ground-breaking section is the chapter on 'Basic Themes of Martin Luther's Theology in the light of Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogues'. Each main topic (Justification, Eucharist, Ministry, Scripture and Tradition, and the Church) is first presented from a Lutheran point of view. Then Catholic concerns are expressed and an at-

tempt is made to come to “a consensus that does not eliminate differences but rather explicitly includes them.” What is remarkable, however, is not so much the extent of the agreement as the tone of the discourse, attentive, courteous, generous and hopeful. Here, indeed, is the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5.22f). It is tragic that this method and these attitudes were not available and adopted earlier. There is, and was, no law against such things. Still, the joint presentation does not mean that the Catholics necessarily agree; differences persist and work remains to be done.

Comparatively little is made, in the section on ministry, of the Apostolic Succession, which was not a point at issue in the sixteenth century before the work of Irenaeus became widely known. (Lutherans had refrained from the non-episcopal ordination of pastors until 1535 and then only *im Notstand*, in case of need.) The

emphasis is more on the responsibility of bishops for maintaining apostolic doctrine, which is consonant with what is said in the Anglican-Lutheran Porvoo Agreed Statement (1992).

In the last two chapters the focus shifts from history and theology to joint planning for the future, based on a re-affirmation of the implications of our Common Baptism. Both sides repent of bearing false witness against each other and confess their sins against unity.

Lutherans recognize their historic guilt vis-à-vis Jews and Anabaptists and in the identification of the Pope with the Antichrist in the sixteenth century, and quote extensively from recent statements of the Lutheran World Federation. Catholics, similarly, move straight from Pope Hadrian’s recognition of abuses and errors in 1522 to the irenic utterances of Vatican II and of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. The intervening centuries may offer too little to cheer us. Still, the final chapter begins confidently; “The struggle of the sixteenth

century is over. The reasons for mutually condemning each other’s faith have fallen by the wayside.” It sets out Five Ecumenical Imperatives: to begin from the perspective of unity rather than division; to let ourselves be transformed by the encounter with each other; to re-commit ourselves to the search for visible unity; to re-discover the power of the gospel for our age; and to witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and in service to the world. The Report is offered as “A basis for an ecumenical commemoration that stands in contrast to earlier centenaries.” It should be required reading for all who intend to participate in the celebrations in 2017 and, indeed, for all who “seriously lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions.”

*From Conflict to Communion : Lutheran-Roman Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation 2017; Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, 93pp, Leipzig and Paderborn, 2013 ISBN 978-3-374-03390-4 and 978-3-897-10-548-5. No price.*



## PAWS FOR THOUGHT

My name is Winston ... I’m a cat (fur, paws and claws) ... and I’m, well, bi-denominational, so to speak. You see, I’m part Russian Blue, part Siamese. In modern religious parlance this would mean that I’m an Orthodox Christian as

well as a Buddhist. Yet, I feel neither and I feel both! One could say that I am a true interreligious ecumenist!

To complicate matters further, I’m also adopted ... and that again signifies my life as one of multi-belonging; I live in a loving home of a lapsed Roman Catholic and someone more overtly Lutheran with connections to the Reformed Church and the Church of England (in short, a Protestant). I myself attend no denomination. That would intrinsically go against my nature.

Many other kitties ask me, “Winston, where do you belong? You must be so confused!!” I wonder why they think that.

Is it because I don’t subscribe to one particular and individual piece of paper with one particular and specific statement of faith on it? I multi-belong. That doesn’t

mean that I drift ... I know exactly where I belong. It just happens that I belong in more than one faith place at the same time. It’s the sign of our times; people want to belong and often do, but just not confessionally, institutionally or doctrinally.

Is that strange? Is that selfish? Pussycats, that’s what in reality very many *people* are these days. It’s not being greedy or gluttonous! It’s a sign that they see the world’s religions as more interconnected (after all we’re not canine). It’s a sign that more and more denominations are giving their interrelated members the option to teach their pets both traditions, instead of having to make those heart rending choices of the past. Is it that easy and self-evident? Of course not, especially in families where one doesn’t and the other does show up for church, temple, synagogue, mosque ... whichever. And that’s difficult and troublesome to many good un-furry folk out there and we should respect that.

But this rich tapestry of multi-belonging people - and kitties - has a very precious opportunity to share a message among themselves and with others. It’s that the ‘Golden Rule’, one way or another, has been spoken and written in ALL of humanity’s great traditions.

**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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**MEMBERS VISIT ICELAND**

*Sally Barnes reports*

What an enjoyable time we had! A group of twelve ALS members, from the UK, Ireland, Sweden and Finland, met in Reykjavik, Iceland, in early September for a four day visit designed to help us learn more about church life there. An action-packed programme arranged by the Rev Soggi Arnarson took us over a great deal of ground - in every sense.

We met with pastors and congregations in their churches, worshipping and discussing different aspects of church life, comparing theirs with our own. We were invited by families to share delicious meals in the evenings, with lots of discussion, laughter and warm hospitality.

On the first day we were invited by Bishop Agnes Sigurðardóttir, Bishop of Iceland (see page 9), to her home. Several dignitaries from the Church and University were there to meet us. It was a splendid evening, and wonderful to meet members of the Bishop's family and learn about their lives and studies. Those of us from England were very interested to learn about how bishops are elected in Iceland, how Bishop Agnes had been received, and what is involved in her ministry.

Another day we were taken by coach to explore the stunning scenery of the 'Golden Circle' and to learn about the formation of the Icelandic government and how people lived long ago - which made me wonder how they survived with such strength and determination in what must have been a challenging environment, beautiful though it is. Our guide was Svava Bernharðsdóttir (grandchild of Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson and daughter of Rannveig Sigurbjörnsdóttir and the Rev Bernharður Guðmundsson). She is a musician, a member of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, and she kept us riveted with interesting details of social history as well as entertaining us by singing songs and telling stories from her childhood. That day ended at Skálholt Church with Evensong and a meal provided by Bishop Kristján Valur Ingólfsson (see page 8).

In between visits we explored Reykjavik. The National Museum was of particular interest with thoughtfully exhibited displays offering much to see and absorb. Well placed seats and the tea room provided welcome relief for very tired feet and minds trying to take it all in.

Our last day was divided between the Bishop's office, the University of Iceland and Hallgrímskirkja, the church in Hallgrímur and a national monument (of real beauty). We learned about the history, structure and work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, particularly the valuable role it has played since the financial crash in 2008. Our co-moderator, the Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama, gave a fascinating lecture offering an in-depth analysis and overview of the world-wide Lutheran Church, and showing how it stands in comparison with other denominations and faiths. He gave us much to absorb, think and talk about, and I felt that his talk contained enough material for a future conference.

Our four excellent, enjoyable days provided us with many insights into Lutheran life in Iceland. We made new contacts with people who received us with great kindness and warmth. A big thank you to everyone involved; to Roy Long whose inspiration it was some time ago that we should have a trip to Iceland and especially to Soggi for providing us with a carefully designed programme of such variety and interest.