

# The Window

DECEMBER 2006

THE ANGLICAN – LUTHERAN SOCIETY

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## A NEW BRANCH BEGINNING IN ICELAND

Twenty-five people gathered on a Friday morning this November in the church of Grafarvogur, a suburb in Reykjavik, to discuss the possibility of establishing an Icelandic branch of the Anglican Lutheran Society.

Among those present were the Bishop of Iceland, the Most Rev. Karl Sigurbjörnsson, the Suffragan Bishop of Holar, the Rt. Rev. Jon A. Baldvinsson, and the British Ambassador in Iceland, His Excellency Alp Mehmet.

Canon Dick Lewis, Vicar of Christ Church and St. Mark's in Watford, England, and a member of the Anglican-Lutheran Society (ALS) committee, gave a very lively introduction to the society. He stressed that it is a society for the ordinary pastor and layperson as well as for people with special responsibility for ecumenism within their churches.

Establishing friendships between Anglicans and Lutherans has always been an important aspect of the Society's work. Canon Lewis illustrated how this was achieved in a variety of ways. The ALS organises conferences that provide opportunities for considering important topics and sharing worship – all in a holiday atmosphere that enables people to get to know one another. From those contacts mutual exchanges become possible between individual members and then between the Lutheran or Anglican congregations to which they belong. Whatever forms these exchanges may take -- visits or personal communication -- they help to expand horizons and create networks of prayer.

It was clear from the frequent bouts of laughter that the Canon Lewis' audience was not merely being informed but engaged and also entertained - a good start for what we hope will become a strong Icelandic presence in the Anglican Lutheran Society. *Steinunn Arnþrúður Björnsdóttir is Ecumenical and Communications Officer for the Evangelical Church of Iceland.*



*Pr Siggí Arnarson, Pr Bjarni Bjarnason, Bishop Karl Sigurbjörnsson, Canon Dick Lewis and Bishop Jon Baldvinsson.*



*Icelandic participants listening to ALS emissary Canon Dick Lewis*



*Front row from the centre to right: The British Ambassador, Alp Mehmet, Bishop Jon Baldvinsson, Bishop of Iceland Karl Sigurbjörnsson, Canon Dick Lewis, Pr Bjarni Bjarnason. Photos by Adda Björnsdóttir*

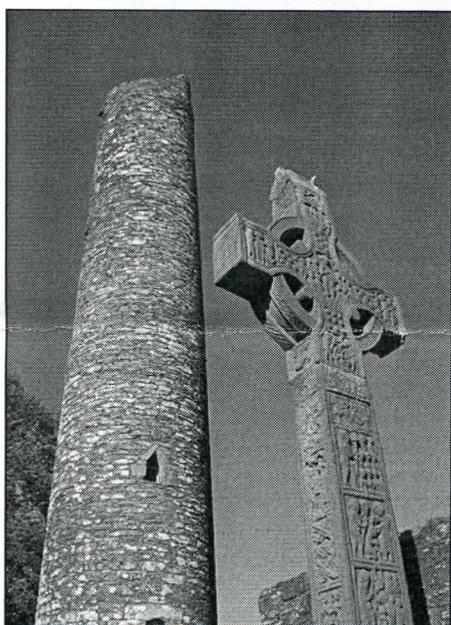
### Also inside this issue of *The Window*

Unity is a Gift from God: An interview with Lutheran Ecumenist Sven Oppgaard; Anglicans and Lutherans in St Petersburg; New Website; Dublin 2007; ALS AGM; New US Programmes.

The Annual General Meeting of the Anglican-Lutheran Society will be held on Saturday, the 10th of March, 2007 at the Finnish Church, Rotherhide, London at 10:30 am.

The special topic for the day's programme is "Touching the Fringe"—with participation from the Lutheran Bishop of Porvoo, Anglican "Fresh Expressions" and the Church of Finland's "Thomas Mass."

All are welcome!



## THE ALS WEBSITE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Anglican Lutheran Society's website is now on-line. Open it at [www.anglican-lutheran-society.org](http://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org) and obtain up-to-date information on the current activities of the society, the history and purpose of our organisation and a host of other interesting and helpful articles about Anglican and Lutheran traditions and concerns.

Perhaps of most interest to members and others are the papers presented by two outstanding church historians to our 2006 Annual General Meeting on the subject "Must Ethical Issues be Church Dividing?"

Dealing primarily with current concerns about sexuality in the Anglican Communion, the presentations by Dr Kenneth G Appold (Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg) and Dr Jeremy Morris (Trinity Hall, Cambridge) are now available for download in their entirety on the ALS website.

## ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION – THE 2007 DUBLIN CONFERENCE

The 2007 Conference of the Anglican Lutheran Society will be held in Dublin, Ireland from Friday 7th to Tuesday the 11th of September 2007.

The topic : 'Aspects of Reconciliation' is deliberately broad in nature. With the help of an international panel of speakers, participants will be able to explore a wide range of theological, political, sociological and ecclesiological challenges confronting our Churches. There will also be opportunities to meet people engaged in different aspects of the work of reconciliation, and time to explore the city of Dublin and to enjoy some of Ireland's historic Christian heritage sites in the beautiful countryside.

The conference will be held at All Hallows College, Dublin. Further information about costs will be provided to members in a direct mailing but anyone who is interested in the topic and the aims of the Society is welcome to attend. If you would like to register an interest in attending the conference simply e-mail [helen@ccwatford.u-net.com](mailto:helen@ccwatford.u-net.com) or write to The Anglican-Lutheran Society, 30 Thanet Street, London WC1H 9QH, UK.

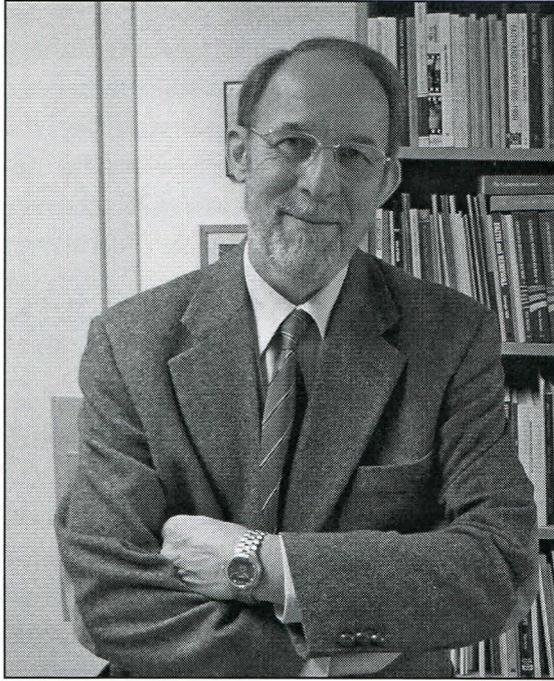
## NEW COORDINATOR & PROGRAMMES FOR USA

The USA chapter of the Society is starting new programmes in 2007. A brand new website ([www.alsocietyusa.org](http://www.alsocietyusa.org)) introduces the Society to newcomers and provides a forum for connection and conversation. The site features a members-only discussion board and an invitation to join in a national Prayer Pals scheme. Members can also send photos of their congregations or ministries to be posted in the member's photo album. In addition, visitors to the site can plant a flag on an interactive map to help everyone visualize just where other ecumenists might be!

Ms Laura Vaught Lincoln is the new national coordinator for the USA. She is an organizational consultant, specializing in churches and non-profit organisations. She holds an MA in Theology from Yale University Divinity School and St. John's School of Theology, and is currently completing an MS in Organizational Psychology. She has served as ecumenical officer for both Roman Catholic and Lutheran judicatories and as the chair of Faith and Order for the Texas Conference of Churches. She is a member of Peace Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas.



ALS-USA officers: (left to right) Ms Mary Sexton (Membership Secretary), Rev Bill Sappenfield (Board Member), and Ms Laura Vaught Lincoln (National Coordinator)



## UNITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD

### An interview with Lutheran Ecumenist Sven Oppegaard

*The Rev'd Sven Oppegaard is well known and regarded by all who have been involved in Anglican-Lutheran discussions over the past nine years. As Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Sven has been a key participant in Lutheran dialogues with Anglican, Mennonite, Methodist, Orthodox, Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Seventh-Day Adventist communions. He retires from this post in December 2006 and will return to ecumenical work in the Church of Norway. The editor of the Window interviewed Pastor Oppegaard in Geneva on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October.*

JAE: Sven, what was your ministry before you joined the LWF in 1997?

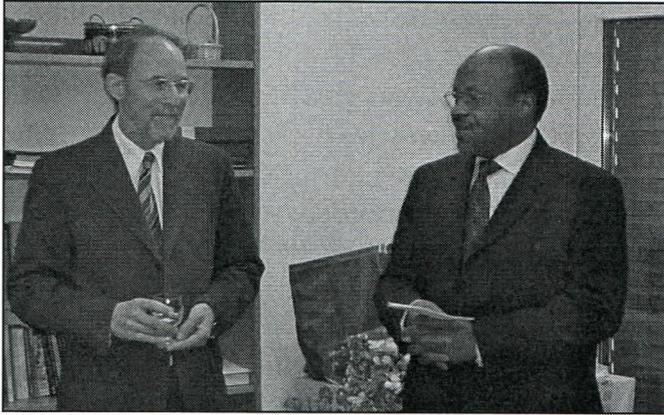
SO: I was already in Switzerland as the pastor for the Norwegian Church in Geneva. Earlier I had taken a real interest in ecumenical theology and spent three years at the University of Oslo

doing research on the Catholic Lutheran dialogue. The LWF position had been announced and I was encouraged to apply. But I wasn't sure I was prepared for the post. The Church of Norway had just signed the Porvoo Agreement and I needed to think about that more than I had before. The other major task that the LWF was involved with was the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification' with the Roman Catholic Church. That text was essentially finished by 1997 and had to be processed within the Lutheran family... And I had not asked myself whether I agreed with the document on the joint declaration.

After study, I decided that these were very important developments in bridge building among the communions. Most important was the realization that I could affirm the methodology of the Joint Declaration, which is to say that though the two communions do not have the same opinion about the consequences of our agreement, both Roman Catholics and Lutherans do agree on basic truths of justification. It is valuable ecumenically to be able to say this and, later on, to continue working on the consequences with regard to ministry, sacramental practices and church structures.

JAE: In the Porvoo negotiations the Church of Norway differed somewhat from the Swedish and the Finnish church, especially in regard to Anglican concern around the Apostolic Succession. How did you view this as a pastor?

SO: When I took time to study the Porvoo text and background papers, I understood how immensely rich and theologically penetrating Porvoo is. Porvoo is not a question of affirming a formalistic kind of apostolic succession, the so-called tactile laying on of hands... What Porvoo has done is to clarify for both Anglicans and Lutherans the essential aspects of the mission of the church in continuity with Christ and the apostles. ...Anglicans would never say that the apostolicity of the church is guaranteed through the Episcopal office as such. They uphold the 'Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral



*The Rev'd Sven Oppgaard with The Rev'd Dr Ishmael Noko,  
General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation,  
at Sven's retirement celebration.*

(1886-1888)' with its emphasis on Holy Scripture, the Creeds of the Church, the two Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist and the Historic Episcopacy locally adapted, as basic dimensions of the Anglican tradition. And in a certain sense Lutherans can affirm this...but there are and will be differences of interpretation of what the historic episcopate is, particularly for those churches which do not have bishops at all. For a Norwegian this was not a problem - we have always had an episcopal order and see bishops as regionally mandated ministers.

JAE: When I grew up in the Lutheran Church in America, we had Synodical Presidents and ordination was withheld until a congregation actually called a person to be their pastor.

SO: Luther said 'whoever has crawled out of baptism is ordained priest, bishop and pope', which means that baptism is the basic sacrament of ordination. Before God, all are ordained. A person who becomes a pastor, priest, or bishop does not have a different position in relationship to God than a lay person. But Luther never used this notion of being ordained through baptism to remove the emphasis on the calling, through ordination, to the public ministry of word and sacrament... Luther was very strong on the importance of having a call from the church if you are going to carry out a public ministry. You have to have the confidence of the community... Those who

hear the gospel from your mouth and receive the sacrament from your hands must know this is not something that you initiate from yourself but you have been called and installed to do this. The community of believers must be able to receive God's gracious word and sacraments as God's own gifts.

JAE: Called from among the people of God and given a special task?

SO: Yes. And in this way the congregation, the church, designates but the ministry that the pastor carries out is a divine ministry - the content and nature of the ministry does not arise from the decision of the congregation or the church, it is a divinely instituted ministry. The Lutheran reformation is very consistent on this...

And this brings us to the understanding of the episcopal ministry, because for Lutherans these are not two different ministries; the ministry of a pastor and the ministry of a bishop are levels of the same ministry. A bishop is also a minister of Word and Sacrament, and we can identify completely in our relationship with Anglicans in that this ministry, which is a ministry of episkopé, is necessary for the good order of the church. It is also ministry that has to do with ecumenism because as churches seek to move closer together they need to be able to trust those who are in charge. ...In ecumenical work it is not sufficient simply to read about the teaching of the church because church life is a life of relationships. We must know who is accountable for the life and the teaching of the church in daily practice and this is where the accountability of bishops comes into the picture.

JAE: Porvoo was an agreement primarily of state churches with a monarchical history. What occurs when we look at other parts of the world, where Lutherans and Anglicans are minority churches without a similar history?

SO: The Niagara Report of 1987, a statement from an international Anglican-Lutheran consultation, was able to define the apostolic mission of the church in a way that it fits churches from many backgrounds. It laid the

groundwork for Porvoo, the 'Call to Common Mission' in the United States and 'Called to Full Communion -the Waterloo Declaration' in Canada. I think the Niagara text is foundational because it so clearly shows that the reason of the church is its mission. It is within that context that everything pertaining to public ministry must be understood.

JAE: And in other parts of the world?

SO: There are two other agreements in Europe which are important even though they do not provide the same fullness of communion: 'The Meissen Agreement' between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany (Lutheran, Reformed and United), and the 'Reuilly Common Statement' of the Church of England and French Lutheran and Reformed churches. With regard to the understanding of the episcopal ministry, the Reuilly Common Statement goes a bit further than Meissen. The ministry of oversight has clearer role in this French agreement than in the German. Personally I would have been happy if the Reuilly text could have been seen as a basic common framework for Anglicans and Lutherans worldwide. It is a text that, in my view, can easily be generalized to involve churches that do not have any present agreement and it can also help Lutherans to bridge ecumenically with Reformed and Anglicans at the same time - a very significant task. But until now this has not been seen to be an acceptable way forward globally.

JAE: What about relationships in Africa?

SO: Anglicans and Lutherans in Africa were able, after years of careful preparation, to institute an All African Anglican Lutheran Commission which has met and will meet again. The texts that come out of this process in Africa have a much stronger diaconal focus than many other ecumenical texts

that are more directly focused on doctrine, sacraments and ministry. This is a fascinating development. These texts enrich the ecumenical agenda for they strongly add the whole dimension of living together, helping each other, participating in each other's suffering, as being integral to an ecumenical relationship.

JAE: The Anglican Communion is presently engulfed in controversy regarding the role in ministry of persons of same sex orientation. How does this affect Anglican-Lutheran ecumenism?

SO: It is a difficult time. But it is a challenge for all of us to be genuine in our dialogue. As Christians and human beings living in the Church of Christ, we are bound together through the gospel and the sacraments. We are united inseparably with each other because we are united with Christ. This requires of us that we are sincere and committed in our discussion of difficult things. There is no way in which we can be triumphalist with one another...either way.

Those who affirm and those who deny the legitimacy of homosexual relations must be able to speak to each other as sisters and brothers with respect and empathy, really try to understand each other. This is constitutive for the life of the church. We cannot escape each other. This is what the sacrament is about. When I have received the bread and the wine,



*The Third Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) held its first meeting in Moshi, Tanzania, on 13-19 January 2006.*

I am inseparably united with Christ and with all the other people around me, with whom I may agree or disagree, but I know that I am one with them in Christ. And this has consequences for me. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday we are family members, we are sisters and brothers. That is what church is. It is an amazing institution. Where else in society are we united inseparably with each other?

JAE: What you present is the core of the Gospel, our connection, our relationship with the Creator. Church is not about political power or about excluding people. The unity you talk about is often lost in internal conflict. How can we challenge everyone to understand their basic unity in Christ?

SO: This is the message of the ecumenism that we practice. It is so important to look at ecumenism and the unity of the church from the perspective of gift – just like the Gospel and the Sacraments are gifts. The unity is also a gift. When you look at John 17 ... Jesus prays for the disciples that they may be one so that the world may believe. It is important to read this within its full context where Jesus is speaking of the unity of the disciples as a part of the unity between the Father and the Son. Christian unity is not a human product and it is not an addendum to the life of the church. It is at the core of the church's life and faith.

JAE: And the future of ecumenism?

SO: This is in God's hands. We do not see the shape of global Christian unity. We believe in it, we believe the church is one. We know that our friendship as Christians brings us more and more together in a world which is more and more divided. The fact that Christians are more and more united - and we are - is a miracle. We are serving the unity of humankind by our ability to connect across the barriers. I believe we will be able to find ways of 'differentiated consensus' or 'reconciled diversity'. In spite of differences we will not be separated at the table of Holy Communion. That is the symbol that we all hope we can reach...to share the same Table.

The only force that can truly bring us together is love. Fear mongering in the world will not bring us to unity. The more we can be friends and love each other the more we can counteract the powers of fear. And the more we are freed from fear we can bridge the gap to Islam and other faiths for the good of all humankind. *End.*



*The Rev'd Sven Oppegaard (LWF) and The Rev'd Canon Gregory Cameron (Deputy Secretary General and Director, Ecumenical Affairs, ACC), co-editors of Anglican-Lutheran Agreements: 1972–2002*

### **Anglican-Lutheran Agreements: 1972—2002**

All the agreements mentioned in this interview are available (along with other important reports and documents of recent years) in the compendium "Anglican-Lutheran Agreements:1972-2002" published jointly by the LWF and the ACC. This bound book is available in English on-line from:

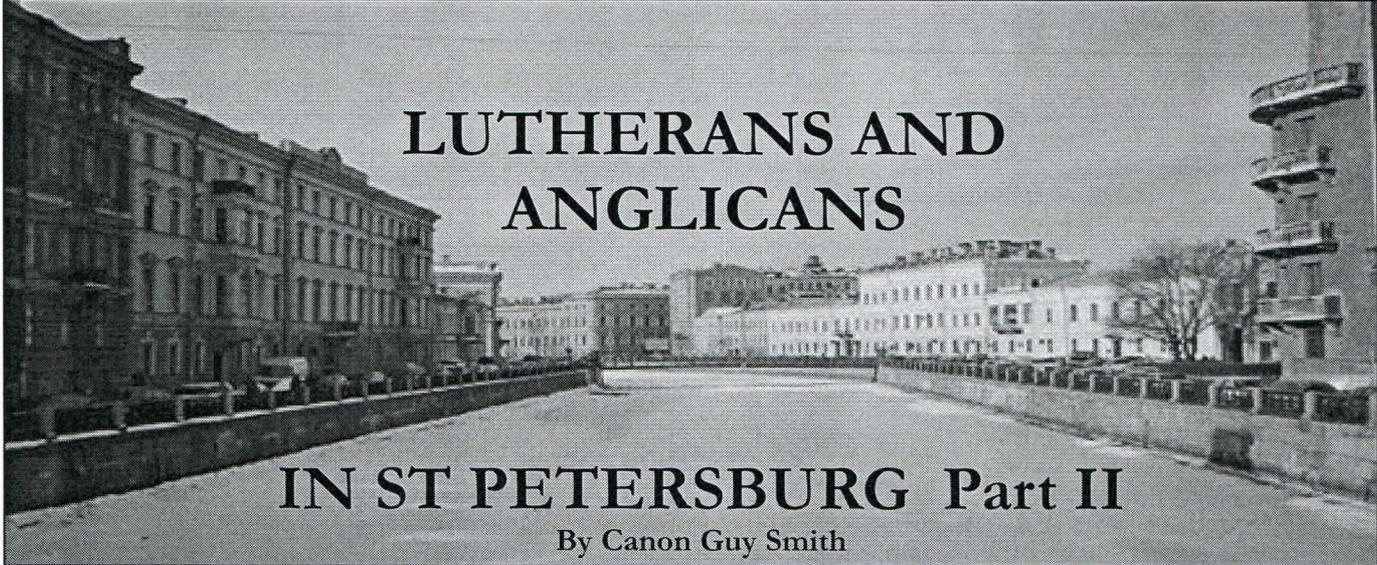
<https://secure.anglicancommunion.org/ebooks/>

Alternatively, order forms can be obtained from the ACC: [terrie.robinson@anglicancommunion.org](mailto:terrie.robinson@anglicancommunion.org). The English and a German version are also available from the LWF Ecumenical Office, 150, route de Ferney, PO Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.

### **Greetings at Christmastime**

to all readers of The Window, in the name of The One who has come into this world to create in Himself one new humanity, thus making peace reconciling us all to God in one body through the cross. We pray you will have a blessed and peaceful festival; restoring, strengthening and inspiring you to continue His ministry of reconciliation in the year of our Lord 2007. We look forward to seeing you in Dublin in September.

ALS Co-Moderators, Tom Bruch and Rupert Hoare



## LUTHERANS AND ANGLICANS

### IN ST PETERSBURG Part II

By Canon Guy Smith

Here we are, living in St Petersburg, one of the more beautiful cities in Russia. We grumble about our flat – our outlook is just rusty roofs with not a tree in sight, but when Russian friends visit they exclaim, “What a wonderful flat; how many rooms!” They have, perhaps, one room for their family, bed, table, shelves, with a kitchen shared with other families and maybe even a shared toilet and shower. The really poor are even worse off. Yet there was a television program the other night describing how the biggest purchasers of property, jewelry and *haute couture* in London are Russians. We don’t have any multi-millionaires in our congregation -- our local parishioners come from the flats I have described above.

On many Sundays we have people of twelve nationalities in the service. Only about ten percent of our parishioners have an Anglican background. In addition to Russian parishioners, our other worshippers are diplomats, business people from Britain or the USA on short-term contracts, students or teachers of English. The members are constantly coming and going, so financially the chaplaincy can be fine one month and the next on its beam ends.

At the moment we are trying to get ourselves registered with the city as a genuine religious organization. This process highlights all the troubles of the past. To begin with, every denomination other than the Orthodox is considered slightly risqué, because – and one understands why – the Russian Orthodox Church regards itself as the true church. After all, it has never had a reformation; its traditions go back almost to the beginning of the Christian era, its liturgy is redolent of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and it is now back alongside the State as part of the genuine Russian heritage.

However, within Orthodox worship there’s not a great deal of teaching, few sermons, and, as the language of worship is Old Slavonic, it would be to us

like attending a C of E service in Chaucerian English. Bible classes are rare and discussion minimal. We are great friends with a parish church in the city where this is not the case but it is very atypical. To have, as they do, a group for men and women together discussing “Men are from Mars, Women from Venus” was both unusual and very lively!

Mary, my wife, spent a whole afternoon trying to show a Russian member of our congregation (a very intelligent woman) how to read and use the Bible. Irena had been reading a book a week and that was all that was necessary. She was amazed that you could study it, pray with it, or even meditate on its contents.

To get registered we have to scabble through the most amazing bureaucratic labyrinth; complete forms in triplicate - written in the correct order and format with official stamps all over them; find ten founder members who must be Russian; present a constitution that is in accord with Russian law, not C of E rules... and so on. We are about one third through the process. We would not be that far except for a remarkable Lutheran pastor, an American who teaches at the Lutheran Seminary. He speaks fluent Russian and we go with him from one office to another, meeting the middle-aged ladies who staff desk after desk and kindly put all our papers in order. We may complete registration by the end of the year but then the monthly financial returns and quarterly council reports to the City authorities will begin!

The mobile phone culture in St Petersburg makes even the UK look backward. Mobile phones are the cheapest way of communicating and totally necessary. If I want to visit a family I must first fix date and time, often late in the evening. I set off, take the bus or metro for more than 40 minutes and at the outer gate of their apartment block I must remember the door code and, at the staircase to the flat, the second code. If that fails, out comes the mobile. Then up three

**The Window**

The purpose of this newsletter is to support each member 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](http://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org)

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flights of stone steps, as there is usually no lift. If the family is ex-pat, the rooms will be large, well furnished (the rent could easily be \$2000 a month); if local, then I end up sitting on the bed. The Russian family's rent could be as much as half of their meager salary.)

In the chaplaincy we have some Russian women married to foreign men. Very often the woman has been married before and had a bad time – the men's universal vodka consumption at any time of day and night often leads to marital violence and poverty. In the old days, divorce was just a question of going round to the right department and 'telling them so'. You can see the difference between the sexes as you walk down Nevsky Prospekt – the four kilometer main street of the city. Young women are upright, well dressed. The men often look a bit scruffy -even when a couple is going out for the evening. Our mixed marriages have their ups and downs and because the wives have been baptized Orthodox, they feel unable to receive Communion. Very few Russians change over to the Church of England and, even if they do, we can't confirm them, as babies are baptized, confirmed and given communion at baptism in the Orthodox Church. Reception into the Anglican Church has to be done very privately.

Most of the population who were brought up in the Communist era had little contact with the Orthodox Church and remain divorced from religion. Some were secretly taken by grandparents to church to be baptised, often without their parent's knowledge. Our friend Antonina, now in her 80s and a hero of the Leningrad siege, never goes to church, but will sometimes attend the immersion in the icy river ceremonies at Epiphany. For a large proportion of the population there appears to be only a hairsbreadth between the much casual visiting of icons, crossings in front of churches -- and superstition.

Those who have turned to religion are often attracted by the more fundamentalist traditions, of which the Missouri Synod variety of Lutheranism is one. This fundamentalism is evident in the students at the Lutheran Seminary where the teaching tends to be liberal and biblically critical. Recently the seminary held a study day on the ordination of women. The student contributions were all diametrically opposed to ordination, even though there are women among the students. God made the rules in the beginning and these rules are still extant, and that is that.

When you read this, winter will have come to St Petersburg's with less than its usual vengeance. The work of God at the Anglican chaplaincy will adjust to the weather and the constant changes of parishioners - and to a new chaplain, Canon Trevor Park, for we will have returned to the United Kingdom.



Canon Guy Smith and Father Alexander Diaghelev



Guy and Mary Smith with a teacher from Secondary School 386, St Petersburg.

*Guy Smith, Anglican Chaplain, St Petersburg*