

The Window

JANUARY 2024

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 135

We hope you enjoy this issue of your Newsletter.

News of our 2024 Annual Meeting pages 1 & 5

News of founder-member's death page 1

Bishops consecrated pages 5 & 25

What we can learn from our Moravian neighbours pages 18-19



News of our members activities in USA and in Southern Sudan pages 4 & 26-27

Women's ordination in Poland Pages 20-21

The importance of Ecumenical Dialogue page 6

A Lent resource on combatting modern slavery page 15

And much more

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Be sure to come to the meeting on **9th March**. It will be a very special occasion. A General Meeting, an exciting speaker and worship, all in a party atmosphere

Faced with an invitation to an Annual General Meeting most people search desperately for an excuse not to attend. Let's face it; listening to reports, receiving accounts and electing people to serve as officers and committee members is not many people's idea of fun! However, our Society's Annual Meetings are quite different. The business meeting is kept very short, there is worship, socialising and speakers to engage with, helping us explore topics that are relevant to us all. And this year it's our 40th Birthday. The first ever meeting took place in March, 1984. So we have a lot to celebrate. Do come and join in on **Saturday 9th March**. Further details on page 5 inside this issue of The Window, and you'll be sent an invitation early in February.

ANGLICAN CO-FOUNDER, THE REV DR IAN PHELPS, DIES

It is so sad that Ian will miss the 40th Anniversary celebration. The Very Rev Tom Bruch, the Lutheran Co-Founder, remembers him with great affection



A member of the Society from its beginning, in a sense Ian **was** the beginning of the ALS. I met him first in 1983, after he replied to a letter in the *Church Times* about developing relationships between Lutherans and Anglicans. This led to the two of us spending a few days together at Hothorpe Hall, then a Lutheran conference and retreat centre in Leicestershire. There Ian could experience Lutheran worship and learn more about the tradition generally. As vicar in a parish in Sussex, he had for a number of years had a particular interest in Orthodox Churches. However, he believed that prospects for closer ecumenical relationships with them were remote. He did not know much about Lutherans but had been studying some of Luther's writings and had found them very interesting.

We had very pleasant talks and walks in the lovely surroundings, drank a few beers and wondered what, if anything, might be done to encourage the growing understandings and relationships between Lutherans and Anglicans. Ian said that in Britain the normal thing would be to start a society to bring together persons with similar interests - so, how about an Anglican-Lutheran Society?

We agreed to test the waters by advertising an organisational meeting, which was held in 1984 at the International Lutheran Student Centre in London. To our astonishment, about 30 people turned up. We put together a basic constitution, Ian was elected as the chair. Soon we began producing a newsletter, called '*The Window*'; the title suggested a means of enabling Anglicans and Lutherans to look in and out and see one another.

In the early years Ian was a key leader as the society developed its self-understanding and objectives and was in the forefront of initiatives to internationalise the Society, helping to organise its first international conferences. He was a committed and helpful member for many years, and his wise and gentle ways will be very much missed.

Ian wrote this prayer which was used at every meeting of the Society in its early days: *O God our Father, whose blessed Son prayed that all His disciples might be one in you: grant to us, your servants in the Anglican-Lutheran Society, such faith and love that we may find our unity in the fellowship of your Church; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET ON BOARD

Bookings have been flowing steadily in but it's not too late to sign up for **our Conference in Edinburgh from Friday 13th to Tuesday 17th September** this year. If you've mislaid the flyer that was enclosed in the October issue of *The Window* you can find it and the registration form on the website, www.anglican-lutheran-society.org

Worship, learning and recreation in the heart of Edinburgh

Our Society's conferences are always worth attending. They provide a healthy mixture of prayer and worship, some exciting themes to explore, good food and a chance to meet old friends and make new ones, and all in a holiday atmosphere. As explained in the October issue, St John's Episcopal Church in Princes Street offers an ideal venue, and the Premier Inn is couple of minutes' walk away. Buses and trams stop right outside, and provide a direct link to the airport and railway station. What could be better?



Our host is the Rector of St John's, **the Rev Markus Duenzkofer**. A native of Germany, Markus first spent time abroad in his teens as a high school student in Evansville, Illinois, USA. He studied English and Social Science, and eventually theology at the *Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg* (Germany), the University of Edinburgh, and at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, USA. Originally a Roman Catholic, Markus spent some time as a Lutheran and was received into the Anglican Communion in the Diocese of Chicago. Ordained by the Episcopal Bishop of Chicago he served at St Matthew's Episcopal Church in Evanston as Associate Rector for five years. In 2004 he moved to Canada becoming Incumbent of St Paul's Anglican Church in Vancouver, BC, Canada, where he stayed until the end of 2012, when he moved to Edinburgh.

Our Presenters

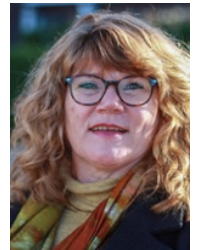
The theme of our conference is **'Church in a State'** which is deliberately ambiguous. Our Churches are situated within national states and communities; some are 'established' or national Churches, others are not. But all have to make their voices heard if they are to be true to Christ's Great Commission. At the same time, Churches face many perplexing issues and challenges. We are very delighted to have recruited a panel of presenters to assist us and to get us thinking.

The Rt Rev George Samiec is an Australian who was ordained in the Lutheran Church of Australia in 1986 and served there for 16 years, 8 years in parishes and 8 years as a Chaplain/teacher at a Lutheran College. He moved to England in November 2002 as the first pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church, Suffolk. A sessional lecturer in pastoral theology and education at Westfield House, Cambridge he oversees the fieldwork programme there. In 2019 he was elected Chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, and also serves a



number of ELCE congregations and missions as locum pastor. He will lead our thinking about Luther's teaching on **'The Two Kingdoms'** and its relevance for today.

The Rev Prof Dr Merete Thomassen is an Associate Professor of Liturgical Studies in Oslo University, Norway. She is especially interested in liturgical language. She approaches it from several theoretical perspectives: systematic theological, philological and linguistical, modernity critical, feminist theological, liturgy historical and ritual theoretical. Recently her research has focused on the language of contemporary Lutheran prayer and her ongoing research project is on theological anthropology in contemporary liturgical prayers in different denominations. Her topic will be **Liturgical renewal in a secular age** and how lay people engage in intercessory prayer.



The Rt Rev Paul Ferguson is our Society's Anglican Co-Moderator. He trained as an organist, studying music at Oxford University, and was a teacher before going to Westcott House, Cambridge, to prepare for ordination. He served in Westminster Abbey and York Minster before being appointed first Archdeacon of Cleveland and then Bishop of Whitby. In addition to playing the organ for us he will get us thinking about the **strengths and weaknesses of being an 'Established Church'** like the Church of England and some Lutheran State Churches,



Dr Kathryn Lohre is Assistant to the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment. She has been President of the National Council of Churches USA, Assistant Director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University and the ELCA's representative to the World Council of Churches Central Committee. The working title of her presentation is **'Signs of our Times: The Prophetic Church in Polarising Public Space.'**



The Rev Prof Dr Charlotte Methuen is an Anglican priest, historian, and academic. She has been Professor of Church History at the University of Glasgow, Scotland, since 2017, having served as a priest in the Church of England, Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Old Catholic Church in Germany. She taught in the Theology Faculty at Hamburg University and the Faculty of Protestant Theology

at the University of Bochum. In the Church of England's Diocese in Europe she worked in the benefice of East Netherlands (which covers Arnhem, Nijmegen and Twente) and the benefice of Bonn with Cologne. Her topic is **'State Churches, with particular reference to Germany, Scandinavia and the Netherlands'**



The Rev Canon Dr Jamie Hawkey is Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, a Chaplain to King Charles III. He, too, trained for the priesthood at Westcott House, Cambridge before serving in an inner city parish in Portsmouth. Then he went to Westminster Abbey where he became the Precentor, was then appointed Dean and Director of Studies in Theology at Clare College, Cambridge before returning to Westminster Abbey. He was closely involved in the Coronation of King Charles III and he has been asked to explain some of the **rituals and symbols in the Coronation Service.**



The Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama is our Lutheran Co-Moderator. He is from Finland but completed his doctorate at Cambridge University. He has served as Adjunct Professor at the University of Helsinki and is engaged in all kinds of ecumenical activity.



In a double presentation with

The Rev Dr David Bagnall, who is the Associate Rector at St John's Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh, some of the **Perplexing Issues that confront our Churches** will be explored. David is another who completed his doctoral studies at Cambridge and prepared for ordination at Westcott House there.



We shall worship together

Throughout the conference we shall experience Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed worship, sometimes in the conference setting and sometimes with local congregations.

We are delighted that the Society's Presidents, **The Rt Rev Jana Jeruma-Grinberga** and **The Rt Rev David Hamid**, will preside and preach at our closing Eucharist. **Bishop Jana** was Chaplain of St Saviour's Anglican Church in Riga until 2019, When she was made Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain she was the first woman to become a bishop in Britain.



Bishop David is Suffragan Bishop of the Church of England's Diocese in Europe. He is the longest-serving bishop in the Church of England having been consecrated in October 2002. Born in Scotland, he was ordained in the Anglican

Church of Canada and served in Niagara Diocese. He is a former Director of Ecumenical Affairs and Studies of the Anglican Communion and chairs the Church of England's Porvoo Panel.



Outings and Entertainment

On our first evening together we shall be entertained by members of the Iona Community who will tell us about that Community in the context of **'A Wee Sing!'** One session will be a **Celebration of Anglican and Lutheran Hymnody.** We shall visit the **Scottish Parliament** and meet our Reformed neighbours in the Church of Scotland at **St Giles Cathedral.** There will be time to explore the city and, for those who can extend their stay in Edinburgh, **two days of tours of this corner of Scotland** are being arranged.

If you are tempted to join the conference and have not yet registered you can find a registration form on the Society's website, www.anglican-lutheran-society.org

CHURCH LEADERS SHARE SIGNS OF HOPE

LWF retreat for newly elected heads of Churches offered space to share ideas that drive Church engagement, growth and unity.

Under the theme "Leadership and Episcopal Ministry in the LWF Communion," the new bishops and Church leaders explored different aspects of LWF's work, and engaged in spiritual renewal through daily prayer and worship. They met at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute and in the LWF Communion Office in Geneva from 19th-23rd November and at the LWF Centre in Wittenberg, Germany from 23rd -27th November. One shared concern was the shortage of ordained pastors, with some pastors assuming responsibility for up to six far-flung congregations. 'The reality is, many Churches do not have enough pastors, and lack capacity to strengthen theological education and encourage vocations to ordination,' one participant noted. Programmes for laity who are equipped to lead were discussed as an important approach to respond to this gap.

Leading minority Churches was another concern. Often congregations were declining, but Bishop Dr A Christian Samraj, of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, India, noted that despite the Hindu government's oppression of minority faith communities, especially Christians, the Church is growing, and it had ordained over 70 pastors in the last 10 months. One group discussion focused on key words that best describe a Church bishop or president: shepherd, guardian, servant, change agent, theologian, mid-wife, and gardener who protects, guides and teaches the people of God were among the suggestions.

In presentations in Bossey and in the Communion Office in Geneva, LWF staff held conversations with the Church leaders on climate justice, diakonia, communication, and the international humanitarian and development work in the Lutheran communion.

AN ORDINAND'S EXCHANGE WITH YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Rachel Sheppard is one of our Student Members. Here she tells of an enriching time she recently enjoyed in the USA.



In August 2023, I moved from Westcott House in Cambridge, where I am an ordinand in the Church of England, and joined an exchange programme at Yale Divinity School (YDS). The exchange, which has been running between Westcott and Yale for many years, took a brief hiatus during the pandemic, and was revived this year, with two students from Yale swapping places with two students from Westcott.

Yale Divinity School is based in New Haven, Connecticut, and is one of the 12 graduate schools at Yale University. With Congregationalist roots, YDS is now ecumenical and home to two seminaries, the Episcopal Berkeley Divinity School and Andover Newton (affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA and the United Church of Christ). The student body is hugely diverse, and students take certificates in different traditions such as Episcopal, Lutheran, Reformed, Black Church and Catholic Lay Ministerial studies.

The Divinity School, described as 'up the hill' from Yale College, the undergraduate institution of Yale, is in the neighbourhood of East Rock, and a stone's throw away from the beautiful East Rock Park. I was lucky to do the exchange in the autumn, allowing me to experience the beautiful colours of the New England Fall.

There were 118 new students starting the academic year. I was impressed to learn that, as of 2023, most of the students at YDS pay no tuition fees.

Having completed our orientation over a few days in late August, it was time to choose classes. With many world renown professors, and a wide

range of subjects from Biblical Studies and Homiletics to short modern fiction courses, Queer theology and Native Americans, and Christianity, it was a difficult choice! A highlight for me was taking an early modern history class, which allowed me to spend time studying the Reformation in depth. The final project for this course allowed for a flair of creativity and I worked on putting together a talk on Martin Luther's theology aimed at congregations in the Church of England. Around 40% of students at YDS are preparing for ministry, taking a Master of Divinity qualification, and I observed that in many of my courses, the practical application in ministry was often emphasised. My assessments were spread across the semester, with marks given for attendance and participation, which is different to my experience of higher education in the UK.

Prayer and worship lie at the heart of YDS, and throughout my time there, I was able to join in daily prayer and Eucharist at Berkeley Divinity School and the daily services at the Marquand Chapel at YDS. Services at Marquand are organised by groups of students, representing the diverse backgrounds



Orientation 2023 at YDS (photo: courtesy of Yale Divinity School Instagram).

and traditions of the students. We celebrated Reformation Day at the Marquand Chapel and were joined by guest preacher the Rev Dr R. Guy Erwin, President of United Lutheran Seminary, formerly Bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA. I found opportunities to worship outside YDS, and explored different Episcopal Churches in New Haven and New York City (only a two-hour train ride away). Sunday mornings, I usually attended Bethesda, a Lutheran Church, and I enjoyed exploring the liturgy and learning more about the ELCA.

Overall, I had a fantastic semester at Yale Divinity School, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to take part in this exchange programme. There is always so much to learn in a new context and YDS offers a diverse community, with many opportunities for ecumenism.

The context of Anglican-Lutheran relations is different in the US to the UK. It was interesting to experience this, and I made some great friends on the exchange, including some in training for ministry in the ELCA. I look forward to visiting the US again and reconnecting with them. I strongly encourage anyone training for ministry to take part in an exchange programme if the opportunity presents itself!



Rachel (right) having lunch with fellow exchange students from Heidelberg University in Germany and Divinity School of Chung Chi College at Chinese University, Hong Kong.

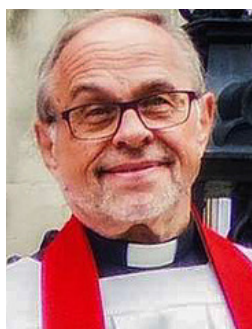
MORE ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Our Speaker will be the Rev Dr Robert Opala. Robert was born in Poland and was first ordained as a Lutheran pastor. During that time, he pursued doctoral research on the spiritual and pastoral history of Polish parishes during the 16th century. After a number of years, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and joined the Carmelite order, leading to a pastoral and teaching ministry, and conducting retreats in Ireland and England. He continued his academic interests, studying Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Carmelite saint, Raphael Kalinowski.



Robert's spiritual and ministerial journey led him to seek reception into the Church of England, which took place in 2016. He now serves as a parish priest in the Diocese of York. Robert's personal ecumenical story means that he is well placed to draw together the wealth of different traditions. He is a very engaging speaker and the topic he is inviting us to explore is *'THE SECRET STAIR : With Rowan Williams exploring the spirituality of Martin Luther and John of the Cross'*

IT'S A CELEBRATION Our Society is 40 years old!



There probably will be a Birthday Cake and The Very Rev Tom Bruch, who was the Lutheran Founder of the Society, has been asked to tell the story and flag up some of the high points and achievements. It is amazing how much has happened in the ecumenical world since 1984, how many agreements have been made between Church of our two traditions, and how membership of the Society has become truly world-wide.

Our members are engaged in all kinds of ecumenical activity as regular readers of The Window will know, and the Rev Rebecca Daniel, has been asked to share with us something about the work she does as a Student Chaplain in London, and she has promised to bring some of the students to the meeting,



WHERE ARE WE MEETING?

We shall meet in **ST MARY'S GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH** in **Sandwich Street, London WC1H 9PL**. It is very easy to find, and very close to Euston and Kings Cross Mainline Stations and Euston Square or Kings Cross Underground Stations.

The Church will be open from 10am and there will be tea and coffee to greet you! Lunch will be provided for all who request it.

Full information and a Registration Form will be sent to all members early in February. Please be sure to return yours as quickly as you can.

CONSECRATION OF NEW BISHOP OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GREAT BRITAIN

Preparations are well in hand for the upcoming Consecration of Bishop-elect Paulina Hławiczka-Trotman. The service will be on January 20, 2023 in Nottingham at 2pm at the historic St Mary's in the Lace Market, Nottingham.

Paulina is a member of our Society and was one of the keynote speakers at our Conference in Durham in 2020.



Paulina's background is very varied. She studied Theology & Ethics, and Opera with Acting, in Warsaw. Before her ordination as a pastor in the LCiGB, she was a Personal Assistant to a Major General and Military Bishop in the Polish Ministry of Defence and a projects' coordinator for the Polish Ecumenical Council. She is currently involved in pastoral work, serving as pastor for two English congregations: Trinity Leicester-Nottingham, St Paul's Corby, and the Polish congregation in London, Christ the King. A Trustee of the LCiGB, she is also a chaplain at the multi-faith student's chaplaincy at the University of Nottingham. She is co-chair of the LCiGB Racial Justice Core

Her consecration will be presided over by retiring Bishop Tor Berger Jørgensen. The term of office for the Bishop of the LCiGB is six years, after which she can stand for re-election. **Everyone is invited to attend the service** and please pray for Paulina as she prepares for this new role in God's Church.

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES DO MATTER

This article first appeared in Churches Together in England News, November 2023. The Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris, the Church of England's National Advisor for Ecumenical Relations, has been involved in ecumenical activity for many years, including dialogues involving Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Lutherans. His portfolio now includes oversight of all of the main ecumenical relationships the Church of England sustains in England, principally at the national level. He is a theologian and church historian. Here he explains why Ecumenical Dialogue is vitally relevant.

What is Ecumenical Dialogue?

A lot of old white men sitting in a room, burbling about things a million miles away from the realities of everyday Christian life. That's what a lot of people think ecumenical dialogue is like. Remote, obscure and incapable of communicating the basic elements of faith ... At its worst, ecumenical dialogue can sometimes seem like that. But the reality is mostly far, far different.



The Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris (at far right) with members of the Anglican-Pentecostal Steering Group Photo © Jeremy Morris

It's sometimes said, 'Why can't we just agree to be different, and get along with each other?' At a certain practical level, that sentiment is understandable. The world is riddled with problems – wars, oppression, poverty, sickness, suffering. What the world needs, from a Christian point of view, is love and service, and the healing which we believe comes from communities torn apart by suspicion and fear learning again to live in the light of the Gospel. So all the different people of Christ's Church, wherever they are, whatever their particular traditions, need to join together in that great pursuit.

And yet a moment's reflection surely makes it obvious that things aren't that simple. Christians aren't people sitting outside the world's problems who could bring their influence to bear on those problems for the good – they are part of the problem, and their own divisions, both in the past and actually even today, continue to be major contributors to the world's woes.

At its heart, ecumenical dialogue is not principally about producing long theological statements. It's a process of mutual study and mutual learning about each other's differences, so that we can begin to step outside our prejudices and preconceptions and see ourselves as others see us.

If we are indeed all, as Christians, ultimately part of the one Church, how is it that we have failed so dismally to express that in the past? Why have Christians called each other 'heretics' and persecuted each other? Why do people who in many cases at worship confess the same creed, actually continue to deny each other the sacrament, criticise each other's values and attitudes, and impose their own styles of worship and modes of belonging rather than sharing what they have and learning from others?

Christian division is bound up with complex histories of peoples, places, and cultures. If we really want to be closer together, and to work together and live together as Christians, we have to understand how and why we have come to be so different – and that's where the ecumenical dialogues come in.

So what are they? How are they set up, and how do they work?

Imagination and sensitivity

For a start, they are – in most cases – official. They have been sanctioned and supported at the highest level. That's because our Churches ... have recognised their need for each other, and their need therefore to learn from each other. So, when two Church traditions agree to meet and talk about their theological differences, it is almost always in the form of officially approved teams of people meeting together. That usually – but not always – means that the difficult or eccentric, wilfully controversial, even offensive, are not often appointed to these bodies. These bodies in a sense have to represent the *mainstream* of their traditions, and they have to be both robust in their own convictions, and at the same time have imagination and sensitivity enough to see how they might learn from others.

And then, second, for obvious reasons they have to include various kinds of experts. Churches generally seek to put their best scholars, historians, and theologians in the field, as well as representative Church leaders. It's not any good going a long way down the road of exploring some occasion of disagreement and difference, only to have someone later say 'That's not what we believe at all' (though it does sometimes happen). So it's inevitable that the dialogues will be theologically testing, and sometimes, I'm afraid, therefore obscure. That's their job, to explore the difficult by-ways of theological development, with a view, ultimately, to transcending division.

And then, third, the dialogues also have to be truly representative of their communities of belief. This is often a tough call, because realism demands that numbers are quite limited on each side. People need to get to know each other, to feel comfortable about talking about sometimes painful things, to have confidence that what they say will not be shouted down by others. So that's why these

⇒ teams can't be enormous. Generally speaking, somewhere around 15 to 20 people on each side of a bilateral dialogue is the maximum practical limit. But that's where the representative principle is often difficult, especially when the dialogue involves worldwide Christian traditions. Anglicans, for example, need women and men from the Global South as well as the 'West', and Evangelicals, Liberals, and Anglo-Catholics, and so on – and, of course, scholars. As you can imagine, selecting and appointing an adequately representative *and* expert team is extremely challenging.

Working systematically

So once appointed, how do these dialogues generally work? There is no common pattern. The participating traditions, of course, all vary widely in their histories and church structures. Catholics bring to the dialogues a highly organised bureaucracy in the form of Vatican machinery, representing the needs of the whole Roman Catholic world. Orthodox have no such mechanism. Anglicans do have some global institutions, but their diversity, as we all know, is considerable, and every province is technically autonomous. And so on. Anglicans and Catholics now have over 60 years of dialogue behind them, and although not everything they have discussed has been received with universal acclaim in their own Churches, nonetheless they have worked systematically through many of the main points of doctrinal and historical difference. But other dialogues have sometimes had to operate in a more oblique way, picking up what might seem less directly controversial points, whilst in the process working towards a common understanding of crucial elements of faith.

An agenda is drawn up, covering what the main subjects of the conversation might be. Usually, individual members are asked to write preparatory papers. Then, at the formal meetings, at some point the discussion will move on from consideration of these preparatory papers to the drafting of a statement or agreement. This might take many meetings, and in some cases many years. These meetings are very intense. Each side is careful not to be drawn too quickly into positions which will not be recognised or received well by their own tradition, though even then the reception of these texts is unpredictable and sometimes hostile.

Trying to reset centuries of misunderstanding

Why all the effort? Ecumenical dialogue is trying to reset centuries of mutual misunderstanding. Sometimes it seems as if a new vocabulary has to be found to express common agreement on what in the past have been seen as widely separated positions. A most striking example of this is the agreement reached by Roman Catholics and Lutherans in 1999 on the doctrine of justification, the most divisive theological issue of all for Churches of the Latin 'West'. By studying carefully what each tradition was trying to express in terms of its understanding of faith in the past, dialogue members were able to recognise the essentials of a common faith underlying very different theological languages and styles. It led to the removal of the mutual condemnations each side had made of the other in the sixteenth century. It was a major step, but still only a step, towards reconciliation and unity between Roman Catholics and Lutherans.

Dialogue is a process of learning. Getting to know another person properly is a crucial part of the whole business of building a relationship with them. It is the same with Churches. But of course, the work of theological dialogues is only part of the challenge of Christian unity. Theological work must be done, but there needs to be hard work also at the local level, between local communities of Christians learning to live, work and worship together. There needs to be common action to address the serious problems of poverty, illness, injustice, war, and environmental injustice faced by the world – what is sometimes called the 'ecumenism of action'. There needs to be a continual, intensifying growth in trust between the leaders at all levels of our Churches. Without all these things, and more, working in harmony, theological dialogue is likely to seem arcane and even irrelevant.

But to turn that last point around – if we do not do the hard work of understanding each other's theological traditions, and learning to see a common faith in them, then the problems that have bedevilled relations between our Churches will never be at an end. And, in my experience, there is always grace and hope to be found in fellow Christians of very different opinions. Christ is one, and his Church, ultimately, is one: what we need to do is to live that unity in conviction and in love.

STUDYING ECUMENISM IN STRASBOURG

In addition to research, something the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg provides is further education and training for Lutheran clergy and theologians in ecumenical issues. One way of doing this is by inviting pastors and advanced students to an annual webinar. It encourages them to reflect on the history and theology of ecumenism from a Lutheran point of view and to get familiar with the major dialogues between Lutherans and other denominations. In addition, the webinar aims to help participants to

own the Lutheran self-understanding : "To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical".

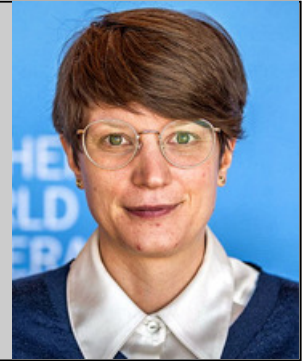
Presentations included the history of the Ecumenical Movement, dialogue with Orthodoxy and Roman Catholics paying particular attention to the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" (1999) and its origins. They looked at encounters with the Pentecostal Churches, a topic of growing importance, and on the dialogue with the Mennonites, in particular on the "Healing of Memories" (2010).

Each day, some participants were also asked to introduce themselves, their Church and ecumenical contexts. It became clear how diverse the various theological and ecumenical environments are. One participant summed the seminar up by saying, 'God is using the Institute as an instrument of peace in the world and the work it does is holy.'

The next webinar is in October 2024. Further information will be published soon. You are cordially invited to participate.

GREAT BRITAIN: THEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL ECUMENISM IN ACTION

*LWI publishes a regular series called "Voices from the Communion".
In November they featured German-born theologian Dr Anna Krauss
who shared details of her ecumenical work
at international, national and local level.*



The year 2023 was demanding yet fruitful for Dr Anna Krauss, a German-born theologian and ecumenist, who is currently serving as General Secretary of the Council of Lutheran Churches (CLC) in Great Britain. In March, she worked closely alongside the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB) to help organise the European Pre-Assembly in Oxford, ahead of the LWF's 13th Assembly in Krakow in Poland.

In May, she was appointed to head the so-called 'Fourth Presidency' group of Churches Together in England (CTE), the country's main ecumenical body bringing together over 50 different denominations and Christian communities.

Next, in September, at the Krakow Assembly, Anna was officially elected and inducted as a member of the new LWF Council and Executive Committee, representing the small but vibrant Lutheran Church in the British Isles. Then in October, she led celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of the CLC, which brings together nine Lutheran Churches of different national origins.

You have a passion for ecumenical work – where does this interest stem from?

I grew up in a mostly Lutheran family in Northern Bavaria where everyone was very involved in the church. A small part of the family was Roman Catholic but, for the most part, I was raised with a very strong Lutheran identity and sense of belonging.

During my school days, I had friends from different churches, but then I went to study for a year abroad at Aberdeen University in Scotland, where there are almost no Lutherans at all. I got very involved with both the (Reformed) Church of Scotland and the local Roman Catholic chaplaincy, which were challenging but very formative experiences for me and I have been involved in ecumenism ever since.

You are an Old Testament scholar and an expert in early Biblical manuscripts – how does this inform the work that you do today?

The Bible is something that we all share as Christians, but we come to it from different perspectives and with very different experiences.

My research focuses on early Biblical manuscripts and the origins of the Bible so I learn a lot about how people interacted with Scripture in their own contexts from those early days. This is really helpful when I try to understand how Christians from other traditions read and understand the Biblical texts today.

How does your broad ecumenical experience affect your daily life?

Many people see the theological agreements as the end of a very long process, but for those living in an ecumenical partnership, these agreements are really the beginning and the foundation of something very beautiful. The Lutherans in England have a very good relationship with the Church of England, which is the established Church here. Through the Porvoo Communion, Lutherans and Anglicans in Europe have very close relationships that foster trust, collaboration, and shared witness.

On Reformation Day, 2023, you led celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Council of Lutheran Churches in Britain – what stood out for you from the various events that you helped to organise?

Yes, it was a memorable occasion, with the participation of ecumenical delegates alongside the many past and present leaders of the CLC. We were delighted that the LWF Vice-President for Europe, Bishop Kristina Kühnbaum-Schmitt, sent us a message encouraging us to continue our work at both national and international level.

I was able to preach during a celebratory service at the Norwegian Church in London and to join in discussions about the past and future of the Council. Another moving moment was the blessing and dedication of many Bibles, as we had asked the Council's member Churches to provide a Bible for all of the different languages that we use in our worship and liturgies.

What does your role as a President of Churches Together in England involve?

It is quite an honour for me, a young, non-ordained woman, to be serving alongside other Presidents that include the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Archbishops. CTE is one of the widest national ecumenical networks, representing every tradition, from the Orthodox to the newest Christian groups that have been accepted as members after very significant theological scrutiny.

There are six family groups; the Anglicans, the Orthodox, the Roman Catholics, the Pentecostals and Charismatics, the Free Churches and our fourth group which includes Quakers and Reformed Churches alongside the Lutherans. With such a diversity of representation, it can be difficult to formulate action sometimes, but when we do issue shared statements on key issues, it can be very powerful to see all the Christian Churches speaking with one voice.



➡ **What are you looking forward to in your role as a member of the LWF's governance?**

At the Krakow Assembly, it was exciting to see and hear from people living in such different contexts, sharing their understanding of what it means to be a Lutheran in the world. The theme "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope" was such an important topic at a time when all global bodies seem to be struggling to maintain unity and asking the same questions around what is the hope that we are striving for.

At the European Pre-Assembly, we heard from Churches restructuring as their memberships decline. I hope I can share some insight from my experiences, both in a majority context in Germany and as a minority Church in the UK. As a member of a tiny Church with a powerful sense of identity and mission, I am both proud and hopeful that the Church is not a structure needing as many people as possible, but rather one that requires the right sort of people who are committed to working for the kingdom of God.

PATHWAYS TO PEACE: DO WE WANT TO GIVE OUR CHILDREN A WORLD OF WAR?

Naveen Quyyum, Communications Officer for the Council of European Churches (CEC), interviews CEC President His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain about the Churches' response to the war in Ukraine.

In what ways do you think the situation in Ukraine has affected the Churches, and how does it affect the discourse they have concerning the war?

I think that the war has affected not only the Churches, it's affected the entire world at all kinds of levels. It offers new challenges, but for every challenge and every problem there's a solution. And one of the solutions we find is through "Pathways to Peace". That's an initiative coming from CEC to try to offer once again hope to the world.

The war in Ukraine has caused the world in some ways to divide. But, as Christians, we believe in reconciliation – we believe in bridges. Remember that after the Resurrection, when Christ appeared to the disciples, the first thing he said was "Peace be with you."

And that's the message of CEC. It was the initial message following the Resurrection, and it's not the peace of the world, but the peace of Christ. Hopefully, not just through CEC and the efforts we have, but if everyone comes together we can find solutions to this problem of discord. It's a problem of territory, it's a problem of ideology and philosophy, and I would even say it's a problem of personalities and of people. Hopefully the Churches will be able to contribute to the solution and find some answers.

How do you think European Churches can resonate with the objectives of "Pathways to Peace"?

If we look at it from the Orthodox aspect, the Orthodox Churches are members of CEC and we can dialogue here amongst ourselves and also with other Churches. Hopefully we can find means that have been used by other Churches to find a pathway to peace and reconciliation. Look at Germany. Some years ago there was a divided Germany, and it's not that things are perfect right now between East and West, but they're on the road, they're on the pathway, and we want to continue that pathway in our own way for Russia and Ukraine and every problem and situation. And the problem isn't only there. Look at Armenia and Azerbaijan and the other conflicts in the world. The Churches have a contribution to make towards finding the solutions. It's not about me as an individual, or my Church, it's about the world, and we have all to remember that we have to present that world to our children. Do we want to give our children a world of war or do we want to give them a world of peace? That's the question.

What contribution do you think the Conference of European Churches can make through "Pathways to Peace" in a world that is marred with wars, divided and polarised?

Well, CEC tries to bring together not just religious leaders. If you read the contents, "Pathways to Peace" talks about political leaders, about people in the social sphere. It tries to bring together people of different personalities and perhaps of different status representing different aspects of life. And we can all contribute.

I often use the example of the hand. The fingers aren't all the same. And neither are the players, the actors, in finding peace. But if the hand and fingers all come together we can lift a glass and we can open a door. So, hopefully, we're going to use our hands and all the fingers together to open the door to finding peace.

Because of the war in Ukraine we see immense suffering and human loss. And amidst all this, as a Christian, where do you see the hope?

I see hope exists because we see a new day, and every new day brings us possibilities, and we see that the world is crying for peace. The world wants peace. Nobody wants to see children die, nobody wants to see people maimed – and not only in Ukraine and Russia. We have to be honest – there is blood on everyone's hands, including those people, those nations, who are supplying the arms.

We need to go back to that scriptural reference about making our swords into ploughshares, and really become people of peace. I'm not calling for everyone to become a peace activist going onto the streets, but I'm calling on the leaders and the people of the world, but we have to look first at ourselves and at our next-door neighbours. Can we live in harmony with them? Yes, of course we can! We can all have different ideologies and philosophies, we can have different religions, but we have the values of respect, understanding, acceptance – not tolerance, it has to be more than just tolerance.

A NEW REFORMATION

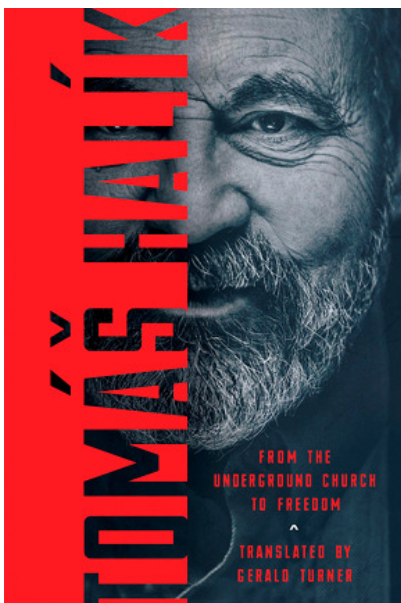
Fr Phillip Swingler, the Roman Catholic Observer on our Society's Committee, recommends recent books for reading round the idea that reform and renewal might be in the air

The message of the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Krakow in September 2023, pledged to serve the neighbour, “knowing that the centre is always Christ” – a vision and call to service and care of others which echoes the constantly repeated teaching of Pope Francis. It stressed that stronger responsible theology “builds inclusive communities” and “gives space for the renewing and reforming power of the one Spirit.”

Tomáš Halík is a Roman Catholic priest, philosopher, theologian and scholar, Professor of Sociology at Charles University in Prague, Pastor of the academic parish of St Salvator, President of the Czech Christian Academy, and also a winner of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

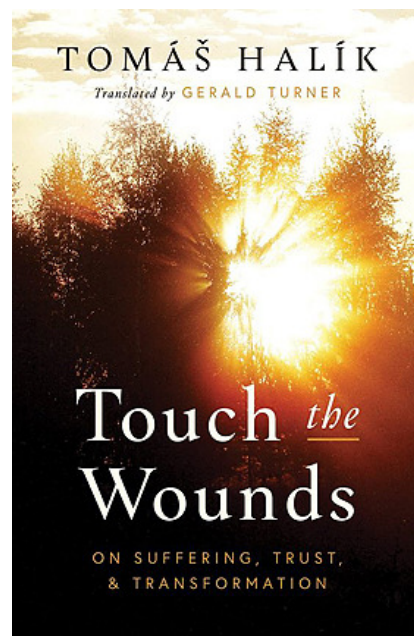
He was born in 1948 in Prague when the Czech nation was living under the totalitarian power of the communist regime. He was eventually ordained as a priest secretly (not even able to confide this to his parents who were not practising Catholics, had only a Civil Marriage and did not attend church. He was active in the “underground church” whilst working as a psychotherapist in the secular milieu.

He is a remarkable, stimulating and



challenging thinker and writer on Christian living today, and has addressed both the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Krakow and participants in Rome at the “Synod on Synodality” this year.

His books have been translated into nineteen languages, and I can strongly recommend them to encourage and strengthen our ecumenical development of faith, starting, I suggest, with his vivid, entertaining and personal story of his life and coming to faith and trust in God entitled “From the Underground Church to Freedom” (University of Notre Dame Press, 2019). For our more philosophically minded Society members his book entitled “I Want You to Be : On the Love of God” (University of Notre Dame Press, 2016 and 2019) should follow.



And his most recent work, “Touch the Wounds: On Suffering, Trust and Transformation” (University of Notre Dame Press, 2023) is a profound meditation on suffering from a Christian perspective.

It is personal, but masterfully written, a prophetic and readable book. It brings



Monsignor Tomáš Halík

to common ecumenical dialogue contemporary experience of life, the Biblical message, mystical tradition and modern criticism of religion. He shows how, in the world, as Christians we touch the wounds of God, not by turning away from the suffering but by confronting it. This shows that “Reformation” is needed where “form” inhibits the dynamism of the living core of Christianity so as to transform our human outward expression of faith – in harmony with Martin Luther’s stress on the risen, living Christ – living in the faith, hope and love of the men, women and children in the Church and beyond its visible boundaries.

Halík’s thesis is that “The painful wounds of our world are Christ’s wounds” so they are where we meet God. The truth of the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon’s dogma (AD451) about the relationship of Jesus Christ with us, and to us, and with the Father, “is glimpsed through Jesus’ wounds.”

In giving the Son to birth, God gave up the Son to death, and his death is not only “our death”, as the Mother of Christ, the God-bearer, felt, but, as with Mary, it is our birth into life, and our salvation. As our common Christian affirmation at Chalcedon proclaims, Mary the ‘Mother of God’ or ‘God-bearer’ was not just the bearer of the human life of Jesus but the bearer of divine life itself (Godself) in human form – and “through his wounds you have been healed.” (cf I Peter 2.21-24).

MARRIED YET SINGLE : SOME BACKGROUND TO THE FORMATION OF THE WCC

This article by Odair Pedrosa Mateus will be of interest to our student members and to others who are not familiar with the events leading to the establishment of a World Council of Churches. Prof Mateus is the former Director of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order (2015-2022), WCC Deputy General Secretary (2020-2022) and Professor of Ecumenical Theology at the WCC Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland (2004-2021).

He has dedicated his text to Anne-Emmanuelle Tankam-Tene, WCC Archives, in recognition of her service to ecumenical research.

There were no holidays for William Temple, Archbishop of York, early in August 1937. The ecumenical movement for the social responsibility of the Churches, known as “Life and Work”, had just held its world conference in Oxford from 12th-26th July, with the Churches struggle against emerging totalitarian states at the heart of its theme and work. Archbishop Temple had drafted the final message of the conference, known for the motto “let the Church be the Church.”



A group of American delegates at the World Conference on Faith and Order, Edinburgh, 1937 (Bishop Heard left in the front row) Photo: WCC

A few days later the Archbishop was in Edinburgh for the Second World Conference of the ecumenical “Movement on Faith and Order”, an amazing constellation of Eastern Orthodox hierarchs and western Protestant and Anglican professors engaged in theological work for reconciliation between Christian Churches. As the leader of “Faith and Order” he was busy supervising the final preparations for the conference, thinking about a sermon and presidential address he had to deliver in the following days, as well as welcoming 443 delegates from 122 Christian Churches or Denominations in 43 countries.

On 3rd August, the Archbishop preached at the conference opening service at the “Presbyterian Cathedral” of Saint Giles. No rest after that. In the following days, an incident with racial connotations, involving his African-American colleague, Bishop William Heard, required an immediate response. And on top of all that, he was concerned with mounting fear and resistance within the “Movement on Faith and Order” to the proposal to bring “Life and Work” and “Faith and Order” under the roof of a future World Council of Churches.

“We could not seek union if we did not already possess unity”

William Temple’s sermon on 3rd August, on Ephesians 4.13, could have been read as an outline of the emerging ecumen-

ical vision. Seen in hindsight, the choice of Ephesians was no surprise. That letter, with its future-oriented vision of unity centred on the cosmic, reconciling power of Christ’s cross, would become a kind of “canon within the canon” in future “Faith and Order” work right up to the recent *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*.

The unity of the Church, the Archbishop launched at the outset, ‘is grounded in the unity of God and the uniqueness of His redeeming act in Jesus Christ.’ Our task is not to create it. ‘We could not seek union if we did not already possess unity.’ However, the Church, in its present state of division in history, is like a lantern covered with a dark veil. It is truly a lantern, yet ‘the world may see the sin of Christians more clearly than the holiness of the Church, and the divisions which that sin has caused more clearly than the unity which endures in spite of them,’ he said.

And he asked: How can the Church claim to bridge the divisions in human society ‘if when men are drawn into it they find another division has been added to the old ones – a division of Catholic from Evangelical, of Episcopalian from Presbyterian or Independent?’ Through division we have obscured our witness to the gospel and lost ‘some spiritual treasure’ given to others.

After celebrating the ecumenical achievements following the 1927 World Conference, the Archbishop of York concluded by challenging the conference participants to open themselves to the Spirit and grow to full perfection in Christ: ‘It is only by coming closer to him that we can come nearer to one another.’

Hotel accommodation refused to black American Bishop William Heard

It was time to address the incident involving his “Faith and Order” friend William Heard. Born into slavery in 1850, the young William fell in love with education at Sunday School. Restrictions imposed on black people’s access to education did not break his resolve to learn. He studied at the University of South Carolina and later in Philadelphia. He was elected to the Senate of South Carolina in the late 1870s and in the 1890s he was the US Consul General in Liberia. The African Methodist Episcopal Church ordained him in 1883 and elected him Bishop in 1908. William Heard was a delegate to the First World Conference on Faith and

Order, held in Lausanne in 1927, and subsequently a member of its Continuation Committee until 1937.



Miss Caldwell (the Bishop's niece), and Bishop Heard of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, at the World Conference on Faith and Order, Edinburgh, 1937 Photo: WCC

Aged 88, and the most senior delegate at the "Faith and Order" conference, Bishop Heard had registered for the conference and rooms had been reserved for him and his grand-niece, the lawyer Valerie Caldwell, at the Edinburgh Hotel. They learned on arrival that the reserved rooms were no longer available due, according to the hotel, to overbooking. The incident made the news; "The Scotsman" newspaper of 9th August headlining it "Alleged 'Colour Bar'". Chancellor John Simon, British Minister of Finances, and his wife, who had written a book supporting the abolition of slavery, met Bishop Heard and his niece to express their sympathy. Archbishop Temple offered them accommodation at Cowan House, where he was staying during the conference.

Archbishop Temple was in the chair when the conference convened in plenary session on 4th August at 10 am. The first point in the agenda was the adoption of the rules of procedure for the conference. That was easily done. The second was the proposal to bring the movements on "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order" under the same roof of a global fellowship of Churches. The time had come.

Between economic crisis and National Socialism: the long and winding road that led to the World Council of Churches

Archbishop Temple may have recalled for a brief moment the day in 1933 when, encouraged by William Adams Brown from Union Theological Seminary and the Life and Work Movement, he had hosted at Bishopthorpe, his home south of York, an informal consultation of leaders of different ecumenical movements to brainstorm on the pressing issue of a viable future for them and, particularly, for the movements on "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order".

The two movements had been hit by the global economic crisis of the early 1930s. "Faith and Order" was based in Boston and had opened an office in Geneva in 1930. But it was forced to close it in 1933. Its Continuation Committee cancelled its 1932 and 1933 meetings because of budget problems. Its theological committee was unable to start a


planned study on the sacraments and the publication of the Churches' responses to the 1927 Conference was postponed *sine die*. Ralph W. Brown, the movement's General Secretary, resigned early in 1933. Leonard Hodgson, the Theological Secretary, added Brown's work to his own and his house in Winchester became the new official address of the "Faith and Order" Secretariat. How would "Faith and Order" pursue its ecumenical theological mission?

Other reasons spoke in favour of greater institutional co-ordination in the work of the two movements. For example, unlike other ecumenical movements, both were Church-based and shared a similar constituency. Both had realised in recent years that they were increasingly complementary. After 1925, "Life and Work" felt the need to give greater theological depth to its practical agenda while during the 1930s, "Faith and Order" gained progressively the awareness that the origin of Church divisions and the search for Church unity could not be confined to issues of doctrine and ordained ministry alone as there was also a matter of "non-theological factors".

In the two years since the 1933 Bishopthorpe consultation, the project of establishing a World Council of Churches gained momentum as the Confessing Church in Germany struggled against the attempts of the Nazi regime to submit the Church to its nationalist, racial and totalitarian agenda. This struggle raised radical questions about the spiritual and ecclesial self-understanding of the two ecumenical movements. If they understood themselves as Church of Christ, they had to struggle with the fundamental question of being the Church in times of paganism and with crucial questions such as the distinction between true and false Church and solidarity with persecuted minorities.

In the northern summer of 1936, meeting near Montreux, on the picture-postcard shores of the Lake of Geneva, the Continuation Committee of "Faith and Order" received a series of reports and resolutions from a United States meeting of ecumenical leaders and from "Life and Work" on possible steps to be taken towards the urgent reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement. "Considerable discussion took place on the questions raised by these reports and resolutions" noted the minute taker at the meeting, suggesting hesitation, if not opposition, to the idea of launching "Faith and Order" on an institutional adventure with a movement ("Life and Work") whose members believed that "doctrine divides, but service unites," and increasingly aligned themselves with the German Confessing Church in opposition to the official German Evangelical Church, whose leadership opposed the growing influence of "Life and Work" on the ecumenical movement.

The Continuation Committee finally agreed with the other ecumenical movements on "the appointment of a committee to review the work of ecumenical cooperation since the Stockholm and the Lausanne Conference, and to report to the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences regarding the future of the ecumenical movement."

Concerned with its autonomy and relations with official Churches, "Faith and Order" noted diplomatically that after its upcoming 1937 World Conference, the future 

⇒ of the movement would rest entirely “in the hands of the officially appointed representatives of Churches there assembled” (meaning: and not in the hands of any another ecumenical organisation ...).

A race against time was launched. The committee in charge of proposing a reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement - later known as the Committee of the Thirty-Five - had to be appointed in the following months through a complex process of consultation with Churches and Councils of Churches, “Faith and Order”, “Life and Work”, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches, the International Missionary Council, the World Student Christian Federation, the Young Women’s and the Young Men’s Christian Associations. It would have to meet and develop a detailed proposal to be submitted the latest by mid-July 1937 to the Oxford World Conference on Life and Work and early in August to the World Conference on Faith and Order.

The Committee of the Thirty-Five finally met in London from 8th-10th July 1937, just a few days before the Oxford World Conference. Three of its members - the Germans Hanns Lilje, Reinold von Thadden, and Wilhelm Zoellner, were refused permission to attend the meeting. The committee managed in two-and-a-half-days to accomplish its mission. The Life and Work World Conference, meeting under the anti-totalitarian theme “Church, Community and State,” approved the committee’s report and the proposal to form a World Council of Churches, and forwarded it and its decision to “Faith and Order” in Edinburgh.

Faith and Order “intends to be married and with equal determination to remain single.”

William Temple, as you may remember from a number of paragraphs ago, was in the chair on 4th August at 10am. He introduced the report from the Committee of Thirty-Five but did not open a discussion on its proposals. He referred it immediately to a special committee made up of 60 members, appointed to consider it and report in plenary one week later. On 11th August at 8.30pm, this special committee reported. Its recommendations concerning the next steps towards placing “Faith and Order” and “Life and Work” under a World Council of Churches were a “yes, but ...”

Yes, “Faith and Order” and “Life and Work” should move to appoint a Constituent Committee to complete the plans for a World Council of Churches and to convene the first Assembly when plans would be approved by the Churches.

But the Continuation Committee would only give its final approval to the complete plan in 1938 “if the following guarantees be incorporated:” that the future WCC “Commission on Faith and Order” will be the Continuation Committee appointed by the Edinburgh World Conference; any further WCC appointments to the Commission on Faith and Order shall be of persons from Churches “which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.” The Faith and Order Secretariat will be appointed by the commission “in consultation with the Council;” the World Council “shall consist of *official* representatives of the Churches participating.”

Discussion followed. J. Ross Stevenson had introduced the report by warning that ‘we are facing a world situation quite different from that in which the Faith and Order movement began.’ “Faith and Order” ‘is no longer a unique and interesting new venture for which financial and other support can easily be secured ... it must adjust itself to the changed situation.’ Archbishop Temple noted that the proposals being discussed had two main objects: to make it easier to interest the public in the world movement of the Churches and to associate the Churches more closely together so that they would be drawn into unity.

Archdeacon Alfred E. Monahan, of the Church in Wales, was initially afraid that “Faith and Order” would abandon its Trinitarian theological basis and adopt the Unitarian basis of some members of “Life and Work”. He did not see the need for a WCC. However, ‘as so many better men are in favour of it and no vital principles are involved, I intend to vote for the approval of this report. Liu Tingfang (T. T. Lew), representing the “younger Churches,” noted that in China people often asked him about closer cooperation between “Faith and Order” and “Life and Work”: ‘If this report is approved, it will lead to a great increase of interest in Faith and Order in China,’ he said. So the report was approved with one voice in opposition.

Three days later the proposal to establish a World Council of Churches was back in plenary, concerning Section IV of the Report, “The Church’s Unity in Life and Worship.” The Anglican Arthur C. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, asked for the floor. ‘I am sorry, but I wish to record my opposition to the proposal for the creation of a World Council of Churches in the last paragraph of the Report. I do not know how many there are who are opposed to it, but there is a definite body of members of the Conference who are opposed to this idea, and many opposed to any definite connection with the “Life and Work” Movement. If such a Council were to exist, and if it passed resolutions on public affairs, it might do a considerable amount of harm.’

Bishop Headlam’s views were aligned with those of the leadership of the German Evangelical Church and with those of Methodist J. W. E. Sommer and the Old Catholic Bishop Erwin Kreuzer, who declared in plenary on 6th August: ‘We do not believe that modes of life growing up on the basis of the totalitarian state as it actually exists, and which have brought to our country and nation [Germany] new courage, unity and strength, are necessarily opposed to the gospel.’

The Faith and Order Continuation Committee met one year after those 30 days that had changed the modern ecumenical movement. A new round of discussions yielded an agreement with the new draft of the WCC Constitution, which protected the autonomy of “Faith and Order”. Once again, Bishop Headlam voted against, foreseeing the end of “Faith and Order”. He wrote to Bishop Theodor Heckel, Head of the Foreign Office of the German Evangelical Church: “We have not been successful in preventing the World Council...” Joseph Oldham wrote to W. A. Visser ‘t Hoof, the first General Secretary of the WCC: “the Faith and Order movement intends to be married and with equal determination to remain single.”

AFRICA : 9th THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE WAS EYE-OPENING

As an important precursor to the 12th General Assembly of The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) the second Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute took place from 7th-16th November, 2023, in Abuja, Nigeria. It was organised by AACC and the World Council of Churches (WCC), and it attracted about 50 young people from all over Africa.



Photo: AACC

The Rev Felix Cornelius Agyei, a Pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, said that the Institute had been eye-opening. 'For me, knowledge and awareness that ecumenism is not only about different denominations meeting for prayer and programmes but also concerns Faith and Order, Life and Work, and missiological issues are so inspiring,' he said. 'This is because, in my context, the issues of faith and order, and the call for missions are not emphasised strongly in ecumenical gatherings.'

Pastor Agyei intends to organise conferences and seminars, in consultation with his Church leadership, on topics such as creation care, servant leadership, and ecumenism so as to inform both the clergy and lay leadership of the Church. 'This will lead to a joint declaration and action insofar as those issues are concerned,' he said. 'Secondly, as a resident pastor, I am going to make sure these issues are well-addressed in my congregation. He intends to publish some articles designed to raise critical issues for those in academia.'

He considers the Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute a life-transforming experience. 'It makes you rethink your theology and interpretations carefully, makes you consider the different African perspectives,' he said. 'Not only does it offer theological responses to existential questions which the Church has not emphasised but, more importantly, it offers practical ways of addressing those issues in various African contexts.'

Another participant, the Rev Sandrine Motio who comes from Cameroon, said that the Institute had made a great impact on her. 'Many of us, especially me, reconsidered our theological orientation,' she said. 'The themes developed helped us to grow in our knowledge regarding care for creation and intercultural ecumenism.' She had also valued the opportunity to clear up misconceptions people had towards others from different countries.

'I intend, when I return to my country, to immediately start sharing,' she said. 'Therefore, with the knowledge acquired

through the Institute, I will begin to organise a network especially for young men and women in the village where my congregation is located.' She also plans to include the themes from the Institute in Bible study sessions in her church. 'If I have an opportunity in my university, I would like to share during conferences something of the importance of ecumenism and peace-building - these are crucial in Cameroon and for Cameroonians,' she added.

Sandrine Motio also said the Institute helped build her capacity to be a leader. 'The Regional Ecumenical Theological Institute is not just a benefit for theologians but also for all those who seek peace, love, reconciliation, and freedom, because it gives both spiritual and secular knowledge in this contemporary world.'

The Rev Prof Dr Benjamin Simon, who is WCC programme executive for Ecumenical Theological Education, said: 'At such an event as this students of many different denominations and Church families gather together to learn from each other, nobody has to give up their identity; on the contrary, I have realised that the young colleagues are strengthening their views, but at the same time opening up for a respectful togetherness.'

He added: 'Ecumenical and intercultural encounters through theological education and formation are the seedbed for the ecumenical movement; hence, programmes like these are a significant and lasting investment for the ecumenical movement and also for each single Church.'

New President Elected

During the 12th Assembly of AACC a new President was elected. She is the Rt Rev Chituku-Neshangwe, a leader in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA).



The General Secretary of WCC, the Rev Prof Dr Jerry Pillay, congratulated her on her election. 'The WCC and the AACC share a long history of collaboration, trust, and mutual strengthening, not only through the reciprocal participation at our respective spaces of work and dialogue, but also through addressing challenging issues. May this historic election of the first woman president of the AACC be a light of hope and justice at our present times marked by

LENT RESOURCE TO HELP COMBAT MODERN SLAVERY

The World Council of Churches (WCC), in partnership with the Church of England's The Clewer Initiative (TCI), is launching a groundbreaking Lent resource addressing modern slavery. This resource aligns with WCC Churches' Commitment to Children, supporting Churches and partners in their efforts to strengthen protection against exploitation.

The Lent resource helps communities respond to modern slavery, which affects around 50 million people world-wide. According to Anti-Slavery International, the number of children in modern slavery is over 12 million, with an increase of 2 million in 2022. Climate-induced disasters such as flooding and droughts all increase children's vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.

'This resource is an important contribution from the WCC in partnership with The Clewer Initiative in addressing the challenge of modern slavery,' stresses the Rev Dr Kenneth Mtata, the WCC's Programme Director for Public Witness and Diakonia, who was involved in the conceptualisation of the resource.

Structured around Galatians, there are weekly explorations with Bible reflections, discussion questions, facts about modern slavery, global case studies, and actionable points that can be tailored to national and regional contexts worldwide.

Bishop Alastair Redfern, Chair of The Clewer Initiative, explains: 'Modern slavery is an example of a crime which requires a united but also a contextu-

alised response, and because modern slavery and child exploitation is present in every community across our globe, the Church has a huge opportunity and responsibility to be on the frontline, identifying and protecting vulnerable people who are at risk of exploitation and caring for victims.

'The Clewer Initiative has been developing resources for the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, and for partner Churches for a number of years. It is an enormous privilege for us to collaborate with the World Council of Churches and make this act of witness together.'

The idea for this project came up in January 2023 during a conversation between WCC's General Secretary the Dr Jerry Pillay and Bishop Alastair Redfern. It expands on the partnership between WCC and TCI, which started in 2020 as part of Churches' Commitments to Children.

The project is inspired by successful pilot runs in Ghana, Tanzania, and Italy in collaboration with the national Councils of Churches.



'The resource deepens awareness of the responsibilities of Christians to address the root causes of the injustices and vulnerabilities which push people into modern slavery. For churches, congregations, and individuals, it is important to understand how the prevalence of modern slavery is also increasing as a result of global warming,' said Frederique Seidel, WCC's Programme Executive for Child Rights, who was directly involved in facilitating the work on the resource.

You can find the resource at <https://www.truefreedom24.com/>

⇒ major challenges and a degree of complexity that make it vital to pray and act together in order to make visible Christ's healing presence.'

Message to AACC 12th General Assembly

Addressing the whole AACC on 19th November, 2023, Prof Pillay told them, 'We are called to be salt and light in the world. We are called to love like Jesus and live like Jesus. This love is not passive but active, dynamic, and transformative. This love equips us to advocate for justice, to seek reconciliation in the midst of conflict, and to extend a hand of compassion to the marginalised.'

Noting that the world looks to the Christians for hope, healing, and inspiration, he continued, 'In the continent of Africa we see both the beauty of unity in diversity and the challenges of division and discord. Here, on this continent, we have to demonstrate to the world the transformative

power of reconciliation, the healing balm of unity, and the unwavering commitment to justice.'

We must recommit ourselves to this ecumenism of the heart, Prof Pillay urged. 'Christ's love compels us to work together as brothers and sisters in Christian unity to heal and reconcile a broken and suffering world. Yet Churches continue to divide because of theological and ethical issues, personalities and material matters. We cannot preach love and yet perpetuate hatred, disunity and discord.'

Churches must practice what they preach rather than send contradictory messages to the world. 'We are called to be agents of change, to challenge the status quo, to confront injustice, and to champion the cause of the marginalised,' he said. 'In the power of God's Spirit and love, let us transform the world to make it a better place for all its peoples and for the whole of creation.'

A TRULY EASTER FAITH

It is in engaging with suffering that Christians are able to say 'My Lord and my God'.

This review by Luke Bell, OSB, of Tomáš Halík's book, "Touch the Wounds: On Suffering, Trust and Transformation" (University of Notre Dame Press, 170pp, £21.99) first appeared in The Tablet on 3rd April 2023.

It was drawn to our attention by our Roman Catholic Observer, Fr Phillip Swingler, who thinks it will interest you.



Tomáš Halík is a priest, university professor and pastor in Prague, and President of the Czech Christian Academy. A veteran of the underground Church in his country, he is a thinker with a record of engagement in both public and ecclesiastical life. In this work, translated into English by Gerald Turner, he meditates on the encounter of his namesake, the Apostle, with Christ, resurrected and wounded.

His thesis is, "The painful wounds of our world are Christ's wounds." In other words, they are where we meet God. It follows from the words of Jesus, "Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me", that "people on the fringes (and on the fringes of the Church), the needy (not only socially), and wounded (not only physically), are the sure and only path to the Father that cannot be relativised or circumvented". And, he adds, "We can encounter him even in the depths of our own pain." Wounds can violate trust, but they can also take us on "the path to a deeper understanding of meaning".

The juxtaposition of Pilate's "Behold the Man" and St Thomas' "My Lord and my God" shows us "the oneness of the crucified and resurrected Jesus", the manifestation of "relationship with us and to us" and "relationship with the Father". His "wounds seen from two points of view elicit two reactions, clothed in two words – man and God". The truth of the Chalcedonian dogma about him being true God and true man "is glimpsed through Jesus' wounds". It is important to keep this in our mind's eye. If we remove the crucifix from the public domain, it is liable to be replaced with something more horrific.

Fr Tomáš recounts how an exhibition came to his city of human bodies stripped of their skin, "faceless and nameless", the "total depersonalisation of the human being". There death, which is "perhaps the last island of mystery", was absorbed into "the ubiquitous industry of cheap entertainment". The person of the wounded Christ stands against this. And against untruth. Sharing the weakness of Christ, Fr Tomáš had the courage to tell a politician with whom he had just been debating on television: "You do realise, don't you, that what you have been declaring to the camera the whole time just isn't the truth?" The mocking response he got, dishonouring the word "truth" and echoing Pilate's question "What is truth?", was not the last word because "Jesus returned after the night of the Cross and the tomb", bearing truth "entirely outside the realm of power and violence".

The author is right to equate "the atheistic denial of God and the theistic straitjacketing of mystery into unequivocal

definitions" and also to eschew the attempt "to grasp the essence of God as an abstraction", but he is, too, ready to follow Luther in jettisoning metaphysics. Deep thought can orientate us to the mystery beyond the limitations of mind and matter and give us "openness to the Incomprehensible" by clearing away conceptual obstacles to faith, whatever the academic fashion of the day. It is simply not enough to say (in the context of atheistic criticism) that "contemporary theology has understood that the mental models of classical metaphysics are really no longer viable", as though our epoch had a corner on wisdom.

Strangely, too, he is apparently reluctant to confront the errors of Nietzsche, unlike, for example, Pope Benedict XVI. Yet his timely and outspoken book does point us to the truth, that is to the One who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life". And it helps to discern imposters, as St Martin did when (according to Sulpicius Severus), he confronted Satan in the guise of Christ. "Where," he asked, "are your wounds?" Above all, it leads us to "a truly Easter faith", one that is "crucified and resurrected". This is faith "in spite of everything" and "regardless". Fr Tomáš characterises it as "wounded, pierced, yet constantly questioning and seeking" and sees its exemplification in the cry of Jesus from the Cross, "Why have you abandoned me?", arguing that the continuation of Jesus' dialogue "with the Father when, in his death throes, he can no longer expect any answer, is in human terms a portent of the Resurrection".

The "dawn of the Easter morning" is within "that moment before which, according to the gospels, even the sun hid its face". St John the Evangelist, we are reminded, "rightly portrays the Cross also as a victory, Christ's humiliation as 'exaltation' and, instead of the dreadful question of the Abandoned One, he hears the peace and reconciliation (shalom) of the victorious morning that is approaching: It is finished!" This is reminiscent of St Thérèse of Lisieux's experience of the dark night of the spirit when fog invaded her soul and the sweet image of her heavenly homeland completely disappeared, the darkness seeming to mock her with the taunt that nothing awaited her but the night of nothingness. In that experience she was united in faith with her crucified Lord, and so with the wounds of the whole world. And here was hidden the ecstasy that came in the last seconds of her life. Fr Tomáš points us to faith of this order.

USA: LAY PREACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME TO EXPAND

Recently the Episcopal Preaching Foundation (EPF) has received a new \$100,000 grant from Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York, to support the national expansion of the Lay Preacher Training Initiative (LPTI) to all Episcopal dioceses in 2024.

With support from an earlier grant from Trinity Church, Wall Street, EPF developed a curriculum for lay preacher candidates which will have been delivered to 30 new lay preachers in six partner dioceses during 2023 and 2024. This has provided a positive experience that now forms the basis of the LPTI programme that has now been finalised into a robust one-year format designed for hybrid delivery at the diocesan level.

From April 2024 the one-year LPTI curriculum will be offered for adoption by any Episcopal diocese in the USA which is looking to enhance and encourage the role of lay preaching.

The participant-friendly course combines online self-study components with webinars delivered by EPF faculty and face-to-face training at the diocesan level. During 2024 EPF will offer “train-the-trainer” programmes for support staff in the participating dioceses.

Early participants in the expansion will be the 35 dioceses already supporting the Iona Collaborative curricula for local formation at the diocesan level. [The Iona School of Formation is a three-year education and formation programme that includes academic work, and dedicated fieldwork. The students in the Iona School of Formation share the cost of the programme with their sponsoring congregation and the Diocese - Ed.] The Rev Dr Nandra Perry, Director of the Iona Collaborative, Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, commented: ‘The Iona Collaborative is excited to support the expansion of this important project throughout our network of 35 dioceses. The Church of the future needs strong lay leaders; and EPF’s curriculum is equipping them to preach the Gospel with confidence and skill.’

Dioceses interested in learning more about the programme are being invited to attend one of two webinars to be held on April 9th and April 17th, 2024.

Meanwhile, the first cohort of 30 newly-minted lay preachers representing the Dioceses of Central Gulf Coast, East Tennessee, Lexington, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Carolina, celebrated the completion of their formal training at a noon Eucharist held at Washington National Cathedral on November 11th, 2023.

The Founder of the Episcopal Preaching Foundation, Dr A Gary Shilling, congratulated the newly-minted lay preachers: ‘Your thoughtful and authentic voices in the pulpit will play an important role in anchoring the churches in your com-



Trainers and preachers-in-training in the Diocese of North Carolina.

munities and in the real-life needs of your congregations,’ he commented.

About the Episcopal Preaching Foundation

The EPF Foundation encourages excellent preaching in the Episcopal Church, strongly believing in the foundational role of preaching to energise and build church membership and attendance in today’s challenging environment, as documented by Gallup and the Pew Research Centre studies.

Founded in 1987, the Foundation immediately began its programmes in earnest. More than 2,000 seminarians have passed through its Preaching Excellence Program (“PEP”), including numerous bishops and one Presiding Bishop. In addition to lay preaching, EPF programmes are opened to practicing parish clergy through the annual conference (“PEP-II”) and ad hoc diocesan and deacons’ conferences.

About Trinity Church Wall Street, New York

Now in its fourth century, Trinity Church Wall Street is a growing and inclusive Episcopal parish of more than 1,200 members. Their aim is to serve and heal the world by building neighbourhoods that live Gospel truths. They seek to generate faithful leaders and sustainable communities.

The parish is guided by their core values: faith, integrity, inclusiveness, compassion, social justice, and stewardship.

Members come from the five boroughs of New York City and surrounding areas to form a racially, ethnically, and a very economically diverse congregation.

More than 20 worship services are offered every week at its historic sanctuaries, Trinity Church and St Paul’s Chapel, the cornerstones of the parish’s community life, worship, and mission, and online at trinitywallstreet.org. The parish welcomes approximately 2 million visitors every year.

Find out more about EPF at www.preachingfoundation.org

ANGLICANS CAN LEARN FROM MORAVIANS ABOUT NURTURING COMMUNITY

In the October issue of The Window we reported that Anglicans and Lutherans in Canada had voted for full communion with the Canadian Moravian Church. This article by Matthew Puddister appeared in the November issue of the Anglican Journal, the newspaper of the Anglican Church in Canada.

A signature Moravian custom made its debut in an Anglican parish in Edmonton this November when Holy Trinity Anglican Church held its first “Lovefeast”. Originating in the Agape (“love,” in New Testament Greek) Feasts of early Christian gatherings, and revived by the Moravian Church in the 17th century, the “Lovefeast” is a simple meal served during a *Singstunde*, or singing service. It involves serving food, usually a bun and coffee, to the congregation. Worshipers may listen to the choir sing hymns or speak quietly with their neighbours. The point of it is fellowship. The Moravian Music Foundation, an organisation dedicated to the Moravian musical culture, says the “Lovefeast” is ‘not a sacrament, nor a substitute for Communion.’



Moravians serve drinks to each other during a lovefeast. Photo: Mike Riess, iboc

Participating in working group discussions that paved the way for full communion between the Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Moravian Church in Canada during the summer of 2023, the Rev Danielle Key was inspired to bring the “Lovefeast” to Holy Trinity Church, where she serves as Rector. Her parish has planned to adapt the concept of a “Lovefeast” during worship, she says, so as to ‘show the community what it means actually to come together as one people.’

‘Every church does community a little differently ... The actual physical, tangible demonstration that Moravians do during a “Lovefeast” is what I think has been missing for Anglicans,’ she says. ‘In the Anglican Church, we have a lot of beautiful words and liturgies, but not a lot [that] shows togetherness ... The Moravians ... come together in a physical, tangible way to share community.’ Anglicans, she says, ‘can learn a lot from the Moravians about what it means to do community versus talk about community.’

Under the provisions of the “One Flock, One Shepherd” declaration Anglicans, Lutherans and Moravians are learning more from each other’s traditions and experiences following the establishment of their full communion, which allows them to share each other’s sacraments, ministry and clergy. The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and Special Convention of the ELCIC, which have been in full communion with one another since 2001, voted on Canada Day weekend 2023 to add the Moravian Church in Canada to their family, approving the declaration “One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans and Moravians called to Walk Together in Full Communion”. The Moravian Church had voted unanimously in favour of the declaration on June 23rd.

“One Flock, One Shepherd” outlines common aspects of

history, theology, and worship across the three traditions. Each church, the declaration says, was “shaped in many ways by the reforming impulses of 15th and 16th century Europe.” It identifies shared beliefs of reformers like John Wycliffe, Jan Hus and Martin Luther, who all saw the need to “root out corruption in the Church and renew its evangelistic witness”.

The Church of England also supported exiled Moravians who sought refuge from persecution. Today, all three denominations are global, with, the declaration says, their greatest concentrations in Tanzania, South Africa, parts of Central America, England and North America.

Danielle Key says that the working group drew upon the Waterloo Declaration, which established full communion between the Anglican Church of Canada and ELCIC, as an example of what a similar document might look like that included the Moravians. In their discussions the working group quickly agreed on the two sacraments each of the Churches holds in common: Baptism and the Eucharist.

‘We also talked about how all three of our Churches are based on faith, tradition and reason,’ she says. ‘None of us requires blind faith from our parishioners. We actually are all able to have – and we encourage – open dialogues about where our Churches came from, where our beliefs stem from, what is said in the Bible. All three Churches at the end of the day, with the Moravians leading the pack, are very missional in what they want to do.’

The Rev Matt Gillard, a Moravian pastor who previously served at Heimtal Moravian Church in Edmonton and is now at Hanna Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hanna, Alta., also participated in these discussions. He says the working group made a conscious effort not to dwell on differences in theology and organisation. On the contrary, he says,



⇒ ‘We actively sought to say that each tradition has innate beauty and history behind it and that we were going to celebrate that rather than purposely look at any of the differences ... We are not the people to debate those things. That’s for bishops and worldwide unity groups to figure out.’



The Rev Matt Gillard

Danielle Key points out that disagreements persist even within each of the traditions, which she describes as “big-tent churches.” Both the Anglican and Moravian worldwide Churches, Matt Gillard says, are facing divisions between provinces in the global North and South. ‘The global North has money, the global South has people, and somewhere theology is debated in between those two things,’ he says.

The Moravian church in the global South has two or three times the members it has in the global North, and while its membership is in decline in North America and Europe, it’s ‘growing by leaps and bounds’ in Africa and India, he says.

Danielle Key says Anglicans and Lutherans have much to learn from the Moravians, whom she says exemplify their motto: “In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things love.”

‘I think the Moravian Church has been able to say, “We may not agree with you, but we still love you”,’ she says. Often in the Anglican and Lutheran traditions, she adds, ‘We’ve lost what it means to [agree] to disagree ... whereas the Moravian Church, I find, is very open to having a lot of different individuals coming together. In the Anglican Church across the world, I feel like we want everyone to come together, but to just “do it our way”.’

Meanwhile, Matt Gillard commends Anglicans in Canada for ‘taking ownership of the past’ by acknowledging their Church’s role in the Indian residential school system. The Moravian Church there, he says, is beginning to grapple with similar issues. In 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Labrador to apologise to students who had suffered harm in boarding schools run by the Moravian Church. Thousands of Indigenous students attended these schools, which were left out of the national truth and reconciliation process that began in 2008. At that time the Federal Government argued that it was not accountable for these boarding schools, since they opened before Newfoundland and Labrador became part of Canada.

In 2020, a Memorial University scholar Andrea Proctor published “A Long Journey: Residential Schools in Labrador

and Newfoundland”, which detailed trauma suffered by the students at schools including those run by Moravians. Until that book was published, Matt Gillard says, Moravians might have said they had not run any residential schools. ‘But we do have a lot of Moravians who want to be fully Canadian and say, even if we didn’t personally participate in this ... we want to be a part of the reconciliation that happens. I think that is an honest faith-based response to have,’ he adds. ‘You [in the Anglican Church of Canada] are leaders in that and are going to be hopefully giving us the strength to figure out how we respond.’

Prospects for joint ministry

Each of the Churches are also continuing to draw upon liturgies and resources from their full communion partners. Matt Gillard said Moravians often incorporate liturgies and resources from different traditions. ‘I have the ability to take something that I like from a Southern Baptist preacher if it seems good and right for me in my context and use it,’ he says.

Danielle Key recalls the use of Moravian worship materials at her own parish in Advent 2022. ‘The Moravians have these amazing Advent calls and responses in their Worship Book,’ she says. ‘We threw [them] in the beginning of our service in Advent at the Anglican church and congregations said, “That’s absolutely beautiful. Why haven’t we been using that forever?” I said, “It’s from the Moravians.” They replied, “Well, they have some nice stuff!”’



The Rev Danielle Key, Rector at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Edmonton.

‘The ability to be able to share resources openly back and forth now is so much more fun.’

Matt Gillard sees more possibilities for shared ministry among Anglicans, Moravians and Lutherans. Now it’s up to leaders in each Church to take the initiative, he says. Full communion ‘provides us with so many opportunities for joint ministry, being able to share clergy, do pulpit swaps, to host hospitality events, to do all kinds of mission work ... We just need to have leaders that are willing to work with people outside of their specific Church,’ he says.

If any readers in Anglican and Lutheran Churches in different parts of the world have experiences of working with Moravians we would love you to share your stories. You can email them to our Editor, Dick Lewis at angluthsociety@outlook.com

POLAND: SERVING GOD AND THE CHURCH WITHOUT LIMITATIONS

In this interview, the Rev Halina Radacz talks about her journey to become a pastor, her Lutheran identity as a person belonging to a minority group in Polish society, and her Church's long process to ordain women. (LWI)

After her theological studies at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, and having passed the First Theological Examination, Halina Radacz was installed as a catechist in the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (ECACP) in 1987. Her male counterparts were ordained as pastors. Then, in May 2022, after 35 years of service in her Church, she became one of the first women to be ordained as pastor in her Church. In this interview, she talks about her journey into ordained ministry and the challenges of serving the Church and people in the Polish context.

Please tell us something about your childhood and background.

On my father's side, our family has been Lutheran since the Reformation. Dad was proud of this centuries-old family tradition. My mother became a Protestant by choice. It was a well-thought-through decision on her part: she was convinced that, as a Protestant, she could ask questions quite freely and look for answers.

When classmates teased me at school because of my religion, she gave me valid arguments I could use to defend myself. Once, in 7th grade, verbal arguments didn't suffice, and I got into a physical fight with a classmate. I talk about this because, on the one hand, it was not easy to be Protestant in a Catholic society. On the other hand, it helped to strengthen my identity – that sense of being different and the awareness of being Protestant! My parents were open-minded, especially my father, who disagreed with simple generalisations and stereotypes.

My mother died when I was 16. I was a rebellious teenager, arguing with God and accusing Him of being unjust and insensitive. I asked: why and for what? At the same time, the parish and the parish youth group were the places where I felt safe and received support.



The Rev Halina Radacz with fellow woman pastors on a panel presenting the story of how their Polish Church came to include women in the ordained ministry. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

Over time, my rebellion and questions led to trust and an awareness that God has plans for us and for me, and never leaves us alone and disappoints us.

You are among the first women ordained in your church. When did you study theology, and what motivated you to do so?

I did not want a job sitting at a desk. I wanted to work with children and young people. I thought about being a history teacher because I was very interested in the subject. But it was the 1970s. In communist Poland, it was impossible to talk about critical points of history; for example, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact with its Additional Protocol of 1939 or the Katyn massacre in which thousands of Polish officers, clergy and intellectuals – the elite of my country – were murdered.

I wanted to know the truth. I believe in truth, so I chose theology. I was convinced that one did not need to be a pastor to serve the Church. My father tried to dissuade me. He tried to convince me that, as a woman, I would always be fighting for equality.

And he was right, although I did not believe him then, because I saw the Church as a safe and just place of truth and love.

How did you serve your church as a non-ordained theologian?

I completed my theological studies and passed the First Theological Exam of my Church – like the men. Then, my colleagues were ordained as pastors, while I was installed as a catechist for church education.

I spent the first year of my ministry in Sopot, in my home parish. I worked as a catechist. At the same time, I regularly organised and held church services – without Holy Communion. After that, I worked in Działdowo and Olsztynek in Masuria. My supervisor lived 30km away, and I ran the congregation. He came once every three months to celebrate the Communion service.

At that time, I began once again to ask myself: Why can't I be a pastor? Why can't I serve God and the Church without limitations? Why can't I take Holy Communion to the sick and to the elderly parishioners I visited? ➡

➔ **What has changed in your Church since the introduction of women's ordination?**

After a 70-year process, my Church has joined the Churches where the ordained ministry builds on the priesthood of all baptised and perceives God's gifts regardless of gender. With time, that will transform the Church into a family of sisters and brothers with equal rights of participation and responsibility.

I am convinced that through this process, we will become more credible in proclaiming the Gospel and the reconciling mission of Jesus Christ. He gave his life for all people, regardless of gender, sexuality, or background.

International relationships and meetings have played an important role for many women.

What experiences and insights have you drawn from them?

During my theology studies, we had no access to feminist theology and literature in Poland. On the one hand, that was due to language barriers; on the other hand, our professors had no interest in passing such material on to the students. If information reached us, it was only in the form of below the belt jokes.

Nevertheless, personal contacts with theologians and committed women from Western Europe helped us to gain a different perspective on our role in the Church and also different interpretations of well-known texts. At the same time, they gave us the courage to say out loud that we have rights, and that the dignity of women must be restored because Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God, gave it to us in his person, work, and life two thousand years ago.

Within Poland, we have built a strong women's network. We meet for discussions and to carry forward issues that are important to all of us. That strengthens our community and what we can achieve together. I remember a meeting in Bielsko-Biała on the theme of anointing and thus about the vocation to ministry. I think it was then that I felt for the first time that I was called to the ordained ministry. That it was not just my desire but a spiritual imperative. That the one

who had called me was Jesus Christ, and no one should take that calling away from me.

Is there a particular Biblical text whose interpretation from a woman's perspective is especially important to you?

I have three favourite texts:

Martha and Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42). Traditionally, Martha is the one who serves – diakonia. Mary is the one who listens and prays – prayer. For me, Martha is the one who adheres to the established rules of society – a woman's place is serving. Mary is the one to whom Jesus gave the right to learn – she chose the better part.

Mary Magdalene – the apostle to the apostles (John 20:1-18). There were no coincidences in Jesus' actions, in God's plan of salvation. Why was she the first to meet the risen Jesus? Why was she the first to proclaim His resurrection?

Lydia (Acts 16:14f). Because of her faith, her entire house was baptised, that is, all who lived in it. Who led the church planted in Lydia's house?

There are many other important texts of course, (and also in the Old Testament), but these have fundamentally



The Rev Halina Radacz preaching at the opening service of the Women's Pre-Assembly held in Wroclaw, Poland. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

changed my thinking about the role of women in the Church.

Your Church hosted the Thirteenth Assembly and the Pre-Assemblies, including a Women's Pre-Assembly. What did it mean to you to preach at this event?

When I was asked to preach at the opening service of the women's pre-assembly in Wroclaw, I felt honoured and happy. Then came fear and a sense of responsibility.

In the end, however, it was an opportunity to share what I consider one of the most important messages of the Gospel: "In Christ Jesus, you are one."

That means we are obliged to build a community without exclusion, humiliation, or condemnation. We are all children of God, and God calls all of us to reconciliation in Jesus Christ with the Father and the brothers and sisters around us.

What message do you have for young women and men on their way to the ordained ministry or another Church-related profession today?

In Luther's theology, there is the concept of the "Visible Church" and the "Invisible Church."

The Visible Church is the one we know. It is made up of us as imperfect human beings. It stands and falls with us, our ordinances and regulations, and our administration. It is not a perfect organisation – because we are not perfect. Sometimes, young people give up because they are afraid of this imperfection.

But there is also an Invisible Church, seen by God, which I would like to reflect on with Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

We seek the kingdom of God and at the same time we help to build it. I wish for young women and men not to give up when they recognise the imperfection of their Church but to try again and again to change it so that it comes closer to the image of the kingdom of God.



WEBINAR EXPLORES HOW CHURCHES CAN SEEK TRUTH AMID MISINFORMATION

A webinar on 5th December hosted by the World Council of Churches and World Association for Christian Communication explored how churches have been involved in disinformation or misinformation, and what they can do to prevent these cases.

Speakers offered an overview of the state of disinformation as well as case studies from various parts of the world. The World Association for Christian Communication's Deputy General Secretary, Sara Speicher, who moderated the discussion, opened by offering a definition of information. 'Information itself is the basis on which all of our decisions are made, individually and collectively,' she said. 'The better the information, the more complete, relevant, accurate, and understandable it is, the better our decisions can be.'

Elliott Higgins, founder and Creative Director of investigative journalism platform Bellingcat, offered remarks on the roots of disinformation. 'Often, if you actually look at where disinformation is coming from, and the misinformation that also goes along with it, you find the kinds of forces behind them are very similar,' he said. 'They basically have social, technological, psychological, and emotional factors involved.'

While fact-checking and efforts to help people identify false information is 'a noble effort,' Mr Higgins stated, it addresses more 'the symptoms of a far more fundamental problem that we have with society at the moment.' He continued by saying the problem 'can only be resolved by engaging people from a young age with the issues, and not just saying, "Hey! You are all going to be fact checkers now!" but empower them with the investigative tools ... to investigate issues in their own areas as well as understanding the issues around algorithms, social media and artificial intelligence that impact their lives.'

The roots of misinformation

Kathleen Keefer is national Vice-

Moderator of Presbyterian Women in the USA. She described the situation of disinformation in her country. 'We've become very partisan and separated from each other,' she said. She noted that misinformation has come a lot from outlets such as Fox News. "'News" is a term used loosely,' she said, 'nowadays it's more commentary or opinion.' The disinformation and misinformation that comes from such outlets such as Fox or Breitbart are combined with the ability of social media to spread misinformation. 'We have lots of conspiracy theories, and people in the US really like those and spread them on social media.'

Vaughn Geusppe Alviar, a communicator with the Philippine Independent Church, spoke on how "red-tagging" has been aimed at pastors and activists in that nation. 'There's a tendency to call us terrorists or to call us rebels, state enemies, subversives, and a lot more,' he said. 'A lot of us have been troubled, and a lot of us have faced endless judgment, vilification, harassment, and insecurity in our lives.'

The Rev Dr Lesmore Ezekiel, Director of Programmes at the All Africa Conference of Churches, reflected on how "the truth" is seen in Africa. 'I am confronted with the question of what is the truth - and who defines and determines what truth is in a world that is equally driven by this notion of consumerism, where people think that we can just consume whatever is produced somewhere else,' he said. 'It is often a challenge to spend time to do a background check to investigate the veracity of such information before it is even circulated, because it is moved from one WhatsApp to another.'

Prof Dr Magali Cunha, a researcher on communication and religion at the

Institute of Religious Studies in Brazil, spoke of the unique role of churches in an age overflowing with both information and disinformation. 'Research has shown that religious environments are highly vulnerable to the circulation of disinformation,' she said. 'Yet the social media accounts of church groups and their leaders are accredited as sources of truth.'

Churches as "super-spreaders"

Speakers pointed out cases of churches themselves becoming "super-spreaders" of misinformation largely because they are seen as trusted sources. One example, Dr Ezekiel pointed to, was what he called 'church merchants' who 'want to make money from miracles' and spread conspiracies around COVID vaccines. Dr Cunha called for education and 'prophetic denunciation' of lies that circulate in Christian environments. She pointed to work she is involved in to educate and generate an 'attitude of distrust' to lies and encourage people not be used as 'traffickers of false content.'

Mr Alviar underlined that 'we need to listen to people who are vulnerable to misinformation, in conversations that are richer and that bring greater experience from the grassroots.'

Kathleen Keefer said, 'I would like to see a curriculum for all ages that addresses what fake news is, how to recognise it and how to investigate it ... and what the truth of it is. If people know that, they are more likely to have a way to look at the news they are getting.'

Dr Ezekiel called on Churches to form a community of meaning. 'All the expertise and competencies we need are in the Church. We use them to fact check. If we do that, we can counter disinformation.'

SHARE THE VISION

A group of twenty Anglican Ecumenical Officers met online to discuss local ecumenism in England last October. They were greeted by Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, who thanked them for the work they do, and reminded them of the theological importance of Christian Unity.

Much of what the Archbishop had to say to the Ecumenical Officers could have been addressed to members of our Society. Here are some extracts to both encourage us, and to challenge us to greater commitment to the cause of Christian Unity wherever we are.



‘When the people of God walk together as pilgrims, amazing things happen!’ he began. ‘Jesus prayed for the unity of the Church because he knew that we would need each other and his heart rejoices when our adversity is glued together in love.’

Whilst Christians need each other for mutual support and prayer when facing challenges and when celebrating God’s many blessings. But we also need each other as partners in mission. ‘We can only fulfil our call to serve God in each community when we do so as part of the Body of Christ,’ he explained, ‘not just our own individual bits.’

The work done by Ecumenical Officers is rarely visible but it has a deep impact. He offered some examples. ‘You give advice,’ he said, ‘You solve problems. You help Churches and congregations to find new ways to work together with local partners in mission and evangelism.’ And all those things, surely, should apply to us as members of our Society

as we seek to fulfil its aim which is to bring Lutherans and Anglicans [and other Christians] closer together in common cause for the unity of Christ’s Church.

The Archbishop underlined what is probably the main task for his Ecumenical Officers and also for our Society. ‘Most of all,’ he said, ‘you remind the rest of the Church that unity and Christian reconciliation is essential to our role as Jesus’ disciples.’ It’s tempting for all church communities to turn inwards because they are faced with all kinds of internal challenges. ‘But **you** call us to look outwards,’ he told his Ecumenical Officers, ‘to see the bigger picture.’

After thanking his Ecumenical Officers for all that they do for the Church, and promising to pray for them, he offered them a brief theological reflection.

The “Farewell Discourses” in John’s Gospel, chapters 14 to 17, suggest three problems with Christian disunity. ‘First, it hinders our prayers – God hears us when we’re united,’ he said. ‘Second, it reduces our knowledge and assurance of God’s love. Third, it absolutely damages our mission.’

The Archbishop ended with these words of encouragement. ‘Love one another, give us the vision afresh and let us be before God as he calls us to be.’ It was addressed to his Ecumenical Officers but it could so easily have been addressed to us. Let’s offer the vision in our congregations, our church meetings and in the worlds we inhabit, to the glory of God.

LATVIA : PORVOO AGREEMENT – A WAY FORWARD

In November, 2023, a book bringing together papers read during “*Porvoo Agreement: A Way Forward*”, which was an international seminar organised in 2021 by the Faculty of Theology (University of Latvia), was published containing additional papers related to the theme. The authors are from several countries – Estonia, Germany, Latvia, the United Kingdom.

Dr Valdis Tēraudkalns who edited and contributed to the book writes, “We hope that these articles, written by theologians who are not only academicians but also practising Christians, will be read as a sympathetic critique that beckons us further along the way.”

“The Porvoo Communion carries

within it a huge, and as yet partially untapped, potential for the development of ecumenical ministries and theologies,” writes Bishop Jana Jeruma -Grinberga, our Society’s Lutheran President, in her Introduction. “Just imagine the positive influence that Churches working together in close cooperation, in mutual respect, love and harmony could have on the major issues of today ... The great advantage that Churches have is that we hold a longer-term view of the world than politicians are able to manage, since our perspective is a Kingdom view, a view bounded by eternity, rather than the need to win votes at the next election.” She concludes, “We have debated and discussed, written perceptive and innovative documents and we have made huge progress in break-

ing down the walls that divide us; but the next steps need to be practical, far-reaching and risky – leaps of faith, in truth, bringing us all closer to a full, visible, joyful unity.”

The authors, Prof Riho Altnurme (Tartu), Prof Dace Balo (Latvia), Prof Mark Chapman (Oxford), Prof Laima Geikina (Latvia), Dr Tilmann Haberer (Germany) & Dr Linards Rozentāls (Latvia), Prof Martyn Percy (Oxford) and Prof Valdis Tēraudkalns (Latvia) offer papers that are all interesting and valuable.

“Porvoo Agreement : A Way Forward” can be downloaded at https://www.tf.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/LU.LV/Apaksvietnes/Fakultates/www.tf.lu.lv/Porvoo_Agreement.pdf

NEW STUDY ADVOCATES “REFORMED CATHOLICITY” TO PROMOTE CHRISTIANITY UNITY

A new study published by a pioneering ecumenical group based in France is advocating a vision of “reformed catholicity” that will promote full communion between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

“Catholicity must not be understood simply as a mark of uniformity, but rather as implying a dynamic of communion in diversity,” the study affirms. “It calls for ongoing reform so that the church may rediscover, in each era, its vocation to unity and universality, properly understood.”

“*De toutes les nations: Pour la catholicité des Églises*” (“*Of all nations: For the catholicity of the Churches*”), was published in November by the *Groupe des Dombes*, a 40-member group of Catholic and Protestant theologians with equal numbers of French, Swiss and Belgians which takes its name from the Abbey of Notre-Dame des Dombes in eastern France where its meetings took place from the 1930s to the 1990s.

The group is known for a series of pioneering studies on how issues often seen as divisive by Christians of different Church traditions can become a source of mutual enrichment. This publication advocates a “reformed catholicity” through the conversion of the Churches, where catholicity is not seen as the exclusive property of the Roman Catholic faithful, but describes the entire Christian Church. Pointing to “universality” as one aspect of catholicity, the study’s title comes from the injunction of the risen Christ to his disciples to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28.19).

Presenting the study on 17th November, 2023, the Group’s Protestant Co-President, the Rev Prof Dr Elisabeth Parmenier, Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Geneva, noted that Protestants have often been reticent about using the word “catholic.” However, she said, the idea of catholicity ‘touches on all the questions linked to ecumenism, and especially the question of unity.’

The study explores how the idea of catholicity has been used in church history, in the ecumenical movement, from a Biblical standpoint, and in relation to unity, synodality, the sacraments, prayer and liturgy, and the world more widely. Roman Catholics and Protestants, it says, need an understanding of a “reformed catholicity” in which they learn from each other the importance of universality on the one hand, and of diversity and plurality in the Church, on the other.

It concludes that the Catholic Church and the Churches of the Protestant Reformation ‘form a single Church, albeit in imperfect communion,’ said the Group’s Catholic Co-President, the Rev Prof Dr Joseph Famerée, former Dean of the Theology Faculty of the Catholic University of Louvain. ‘It may not seem all that new, but it is,’ he said. ‘From a Catholic point of view at least, it is new to dare to say that we, the Catholic Church and the Churches of the Reformation, already form a single Church.’

Nevertheless, he continued, ‘there are certain differences that have not yet been completely overcome,’ which means

that the ecumenical work of conversion must continue toward full communion.

The *Groupe des Dombes* was founded in 1937 by Abbé Paul Couturier, a Roman Catholic priest in Lyon, France, known as a pioneer of Christian unity, along with the Swiss Reformed Pastor Richard Bäumlín of Basel, with the aim of exploring mutual understanding between Roman Catholics and Protestants.



Photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC

The book is available from <https://www.editionsducerf.fr/librairie/livre/20402/De-toutes-les-nations>

GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM PROVIDES OPEN SPACE

The International Committee of the Global Christian Forum (GCF) held its annual meeting from 4th-5th November 2023 at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, in Switzerland. The Catholic Church was represented by the Rev Andrzej Choromanski, staff member of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity for multilateral relations. Planning took place for the 4th Global Gathering of the GCF, scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana, from 15th-20th April, 2024, on the theme “That the World May Know” (John 17, 23).

The GCF is not an organisation that puts on programmes, but conceives itself as an “open space”, a forum, where Christian leaders from a wide range of traditions can meet regularly to deepen relationships, broaden conversations, foster mutual respect and promote Christian unity. One distinctive feature is the practice of sharing personal and ecclesial faith stories during the meetings. Founders of GCF were the Roman Catholic Dicastery, the World Council of Church, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

85 YEARS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND ESTONIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Most Rev Urmas Viilma, Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, writes

From 1936 to 1938, at the invitation of Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang of Canterbury, an ecumenical dialogue took place between the Church of England and two Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Estonia and Latvia. In 1938, the three parties signed an agreement in Tallinn, which covered pulpit and altar communion. Following the signing, all three Churches approved the agreement, but due to the outbreak of World War II, its final adoption was delayed to 1948 at the Anglican Church's Lambeth Conference. At that time, however, it was no longer possible to exercise a living and full communion, because the Soviet Union had occupied the independent Republic of Estonia in 1940. However, the Church of England welcomed and helped Estonian refugees who fled Estonia to Great Britain.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, dialogue resumed, and with the signing of the Porvoo Declaration in 1996, the four Anglican Churches of the United Kingdom and Ireland (Church of England, Church of Ireland, Church in Wales and Scottish Episcopal Church) recognized full communion with the Lutheran churches of the Nordic and Baltic states (Church of Norway, Church of Sweden, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church).

Following the establishment of the Porvoo Communion, the Diocese of Rochester in the Church of England and the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church forged ties with the aim of deepening their fellowship. Since then, experiences and delegations have been exchanged, delegations from the Church of England Diocese of Rochester have participated

in clergy conferences of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, and delegations from the Estonian Theological Institute and the Seminary of the Clergy have visited England. Partnerships have also been set up between several congregations in Estonia and in the Diocese of Rochester.



Mutual visits have also been organised by bishops, and in September, 2023, as Archbishop of the Estonian Lutherans, I attended a service at All Saints' Church in Snodland, Kent dedicated to the Partnership of the Diocese of Rochester and Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. I served at this service together with Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Rochester, and Simon Burton-Jones, Area Bishop of Rochester. It was a great pleasure at this service to hand to Bishop James Langstaff the First Rank of the Order of Merit with which the Consistory of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church had decided to honour him as early as 2020, when he was still serving as Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester.

In January 2024 a delegation from Rochester, led by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, is expected to attend a conference of clergy in Estonia. Hopefully, relations between the Diocese of Rochester and the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church will continue and will deepen.

ESTONIA HAS THREE NEW BISHOPS THIS SPRING



In November, 2023, the Episcopal Council of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELK) elected three new bishops. Ove Sander, Anti Toplaane and Marko Tiitus will begin their new roles in the Spring. The election became necessary because two of the current bishops are due to move to emeritus status, and the Archbishop has a heavy workload. Anti Toplaane said his job would not change too much. 'The work will change a bit, but some things will stay the same. We bishops will continue to serve the congregations in the places where they live,' he said. Ove Sander is delighted to have been elected. 'This election is something that gives me great joy, but of course there is also a lot of fear in my heart about how everything will turn out,' he said. Marko Tiitus said that while a parish minister deals with a single congregation, a bishop serves the entire Church and so has to keep an eye on the bigger picture.

Their roles have already been more or less planned in advance by Archbishop Viilma. 'It is only after their installation, when the new members of the Church Council are elected to replace them, that their responsibilities will be confirmed. However, for now, the general outline is clear,' he explained. 'Anti Toplaane is expected to remain in charge of media and community relations. Marko Tiitus will co-ordinate areas related to clerical ministry, and Ove Sander's role will be with the diaspora, community work and chaplaincies.'

A BETTER TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY: University Education as Mission in South Sudan

Dr Eeva John is a member of our Society and in September 2023 she was appointed Vice-Chancellor of The Episcopal University, which is an exciting new venture. Here she shares the story of its foundation and her vision for its future.



Throughout its history the Episcopal Church of South Sudan has understood mission holistically: the Church has been at the forefront of education and peacebuilding, running primary and secondary schools across the country over many decades and playing an active part in the nation's peacebuilding efforts, initially in the conflict between north

and south, and now in internal tribal conflicts that continue to plague the nation. Today the Episcopal Church runs 288 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and 12 colleges.

It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that back in 2011 the Church had a vision to establish a multi-campus university by bringing together its various theological and vocational colleges around the country. More often than not, international development efforts in South Sudan focus on the need for primary and secondary education in a country with shockingly high rates of illiteracy. But as the numbers of secondary school leavers rise, shortage of higher education places constitutes a looming crisis: this year over 5,000 young people eligible to enter university had nowhere to go. Young people from the select few families who can afford it may access university education in neighbouring countries, but the vast majority are left frustrated and thereby vulnerable to criminality and perpetuating tribal conflicts.

Higher Education is vital for the country's future

Higher education is both a catalyst for recovery from conflict and also a necessary building block for long-term civic

development. Without investment in higher education to produce the leaders and professionals of tomorrow, South Sudan will not be able to build economic stability, national infrastructure and civic society. This is a country that needs engineers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers and business leaders who are willing to lead the nation into a prosperous and peaceful future. It also needs a Church led by educated pastors to help the growing Church to play its part in bringing the light of Christ into a nation that is struggling with corruption, a failing economy, and with chronic poverty exacerbated by the ravages of climate change.

The University is created

The idea of a university became a reality in 2015 when The Episcopal University (TEU) was formed, bringing together Bishop Gwynne College and four other colleges around the country. In November 2022, after years of negotiations and bureaucratic assessment processes, the Ministry of Higher Education finally granted TEU the status of a Private University, accrediting programmes in Law and Theology on the Bishop Gwynne Campus in Juba. So in September 2023, the University admitted 32 students studying law and 18 doing theology – in addition to the theology students who have been pursuing locally-accredited programmes at the former Bishop Gwynne College. Over time, theology programmes in other colleges around the country will be added to the University – and Schools of Education, Business Studies and Peacebuilding are in development for accreditation by the Ministry of Higher Education.

A challenging environment

Building a university – even from existing colleges – is a big undertaking! TEU is determined to stick fast to its principle of providing higher education rooted in Christian values and ethos, while being open to students of all faiths and none. It is also committed to the highest possible standards – in a context where standards may be compromised in the desperation to simply 'get a degree'. A consequences of clinging on to high standards is the realisation that secondary school leavers – even those with high grades – do not have the English language, or study or critical thinking skills needed for study at university level. That is why TEU is developing a 'foundation curriculum' to make sure students have a solid foundation for their studies.

Another challenge is finding the funds for the salaries of properly qualified and motivated staff to teach at and to administer the University. In its development phase, student fees are not sufficient to cover salaries and



The University's Bishop Gwynne Campus in Juba

⇒ running costs, so the University has to look to partners to fill the funding gap.

Providing a quality learning environment is also a challenge in a country where basic services such as water, electricity and access to the internet are patchy at best. TEU's central campus is currently located in Juba, and there is an ambitious building programme to develop a campus that is both attractive and fit for purpose. The outlying colleges around the country face similar challenges.

Moving forward

A major step forward for the University was the acquisition of a large plot of land outside the town of Rokon – 50 miles northwest of Juba.



An architects drawing of what the Rokon Campus will be like

The development of this into a large campus that serves the community as well as the university is firmly in TEU's sights. A partnership with Engineering Ministries International has enabled a detailed site plan to be developed, and a grant from the Community of St Denys has enabled a fence around the site to be built – an essential first step!

Learning requires resources: while the Juba campus and the other colleges have small libraries, they have a long way to go before they provide the books, journals and e-resources that a thriving university needs. Again, TEU is looking to partners to help gather these resources.

A committed staff

The staff members of the University are remarkable in their tenacious commitment to bringing to fruition the vision of



TEU Staff working together



TEU Students relaxing

TEU. Working under tough conditions and often with difficult personal circumstances, this is a group of people fuelled by the fire of Christian faith in their service to the Church and the nation. And ... among its membership is one South Sudanese Lutheran theologian, Augustine Ladu! So with the Vice Chancellor also a Lutheran, even here, Anglican-Lutheran collaboration is alive and well!

In September 2023, at the invitation of Archbishop Justin Badi, the Episcopal Primate of the province of South Sudan, I accepted the role of Vice Chancellor. While undertaking this in a hybrid mode – that is, spending month-long periods in South Sudan while being based at home in the UK – my first months in this role have been a privilege. The staff – from cooks, guards and cleaners to deans and lecturers – met over five days in early December to consider what it will look like to be a reconciled community, to work towards a sustainable and accountable University, to develop excellence in teaching and learning, and to spread the good news about TEU in the Church, the nation and beyond.

Every morning, the staff was led in worship and the study of Philippians by one of the teaching staff. The sessions saw staff becoming more united and, committed to serving together in building up the University knowing that “a better tomorrow begins today”.

TEU is always looking for partners

Please get in touch if you would like to find out more about how to support this kingdom and nation-building venture! Email eva.john@gmail.com.

Note about the author:

Dr Eeva John is a Lutheran from Finland. She has worked in Ethiopia and Sudan, and received her university education in the UK. She has worked for the Church of England (most recently in relation to the Church's Living in Love and Faith project on human identity, relationships and sexuality) and taught in various UK theological colleges. In 2014 she was a founding member of a UK charity, the Episcopal Churches of South Sudan and Sudan University Partnership (ECSSSUP) and was its chair until 2023, when she took up the role of Vice Chancellor of The Episcopal University. ECSSSUP is the most long-standing of TEU's partners and its sole purpose of ECSSSUP is to support the development of TEU.

WEST AFRICA: JOINING HANDS IN CELEBRATION OF GOD'S GRACE

The Lutheran Churches in Cameroon and the Central African Republic celebrated 100 years of work and witness to the gospel last year. Here, their Church Leaders reflect on their contribution to development through health care, education and serving people in need.

Committed to "evangelisation in word and deed"

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (EELC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (EEL-RCA) have shared the same roots since 1923 and they maintain close ties today and recently they celebrated their 100th anniversary with festivities in Cameroon from 8th-15th October and from 9th to 12th November in the Central African Republic. Several former missionaries from the United States and Norway, as well as partner representatives, joined the occasions.

Contributing to the development of the people in Cameroon

During the opening worship of the centenary, the National Bishop of the EELC, the Rt Rev Dr Jean Baiguélé, stated that the Church celebrated the grace of God that came through the works of sacrifice by the missionaries to whom he paid tribute. '100 years of evangelism and development is a grace,' he said.

During that time, the EELC has grown to more than 700,000 members, Dr Baiguélé said. 'The Church has contributed to the development of the people through the construction of a network of hospitals, schools, colleges and specialised Non-Governmental Organisations.'

Today, the challenge for the new generation is empowering each institution and each branch of the Church to be strong and to continue God's mission, Dr Baiguélé added.

Striving for reconciliation and social justice in the Central African Republic

The slogan "Evangelisation in Word and Deed" expresses the vision and mission of the EEL-RCA, said its Presi-



The Rt Rev Joseph Ngoe, celebrates the Church's centenary together with local and international guests. Photo: EEL-RCA

dent, the Rt Rev Joseph Ngoe, during celebrations in Bouar, Central African Republic. His Church currently has about 125,000 members.

Being Church in a country devastated by civil war is challenging, President Ngoe said. 'There is no hospital to treat the sick in the seven synodal regions of the EEL-RCA. Food insecurity resulting from the armed conflicts that the country has experienced is far from over.' That has also negatively affected the construction of places of worship as well as the appointment of pastors, evangelists, and catechists in charge of congregations, parishes and pastoral districts.

Shared history and close ties

The EELC traces its beginnings to the work of the Sudan Mission from the USA, led by Adolphus Gunderson, and the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), led by Jens Nikolaisen, in the 1920s. The Sudan Mission began working among the Gbaya people, while the NMS worked among the Mbum people in the Adamawa Region. By their collaboration, in 1925, these mission societies worked to establish a hospital in Ngaoundéré and also a seminary in Meiganga, Cameroon.

With that framework of collaboration firmly in place, discussions started in 1950 to establish a National Church in Cameroon. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon and the Central

African Republic (L'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun et de la République Centrafricaine) was established in 1960 and registered as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon in 1965. Then, in 1973, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic formally separated as an independent National Church across the border.

Today, the two sister Churches still have close ties.

Among others, they jointly run a radio station and collaborate to train pastors. The Rev Dr Samuel Dawai, LWF's Regional Secretary for Africa, commended Presiding Bishop Ngoe's engagement for reconciliation and the Church's efforts to improve education and social services. 'I wish both Churches God's blessing in their task of evangelisation, reconciliation, advocacy for justice and work of holistic development,' he said.

A GOOD READ

*says the Rev Dr Roy Long
about a book on the classics*

Ten years of Latin (seven in school and three in university), and five years of Greek, might be thought to have provided me with a solid foundation in the Classics, but, sadly, it did not give me an overall framework in which to view classical civilisation.

So, I have been happy to read a book by Caroline Taggart:

A Classical Education: The Stuff you wish you had been taught at School (London, Michael O'Mara Books, Limited. ISBN: 978-1-78243-010-0).

Divided into ten chapters, Dr Taggart covers a wide range of topics relating to the Greek and Roman worlds, with frequent sections dealing with specialist areas. It's a good read.

ETHIOPIAN CHURCHES COMMIT TO ESTABLISHING NATIONAL COUNCIL

With an historic show of unity, Ethiopian Churches leaders meeting at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey made the decision to establish a Council of Churches in their country.

High-level delegations from the three largest Ethiopian Churches moved to strengthen ecumenical cooperation “in responding to humanitarian needs and in promoting peace and social cohesion in Ethiopia,” according to a minute released by the gathering.

Leaders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and the Ethiopian Catholic Church shared extensively about the dire humanitarian situation in their nation. Currently around 20 million people require food aid, many millions are internally displaced, various parts of the country face severe droughts or floods and recent malaria outbreaks have worsened the situation. They also expressed a desire for closer ecumenical collaboration in advocacy for human rights.

The minute released by the meeting also describes the nature of the new Council of Churches. “The new structure that is to be created cannot be an exclusive club, as it would otherwise become an institutionalised division in the body of Christ,” reads the text. “At the same time it cannot be open to all without clear criteria and expectations.” A task force was appointed to take the next steps.

Historic breakthrough

‘In the context of discussion about the humanitarian crisis and the ongoing conflict situation in Ethiopia, the Churches realised that they must strengthen their unity and today they commit themselves to establishing a National Council of Churches,’ said the Rev Dr Kenneth Mtata, World Council of Churches Programme Director for Public Witness and Diakonia. ‘It’s huge for ecumenism, and for witness and *diakonia*, and it’s something that the WCC and the ecumenical movement as a whole must celebrate.’

The Church delegations in the meeting were led by Archbishop Petros,

General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church; the Rev Dr Yonas Yigezu Dibisa, President of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus; and His Excellency Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

As they signed a resolution document showing their commitment to the new process and structure, Dr Dibissa reflected that, for several years, discussions on how to form a new structure and reactivate the vision of ecumenical unity have been going on.

He paid tribute to Church leaders who, decades ago, formed partnerships and coalitions to address the needs of the people.

‘So that we can be a strong voice for peace, justice, and reconciliation and, at the same time, face up to the humanitarian crisis, we are happy to journey as a National Council of Churches,’ he said, and those gathered broke into applause. ‘The signing of this document is a sign of our commitment to making this a reality,’ he added. ‘The Churches have now committed to addressing the situation in Ethiopia together.’

Peter Prove, Director of the WCC Commission on International Affairs, said how honoured they were to host such high-level representatives of these three Churches.

‘Together they have taken some important steps toward systemising ecumenical cooperation in Ethiopia,’ he said, noting that the new commitments also envisage reviving a previous ecumenical partnership for humanitarian response. ‘I think this is an historic moment, sending a signal to the entire population of Ethiopia about the importance of unity in confronting adversity.’



Ethiopian Church leaders light a candle - symbol of common unity in Christ. Rev. Dr Yonas Yigezu Dibisa, President of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, His Grace. Archbishop Petros, General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church; and His Excellency Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

In a closing prayer at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, those gathered gave thanks for the gift of reconciliation and unity in Christ. ‘How wonderful it is, and how pleasant, to know the many efforts have been made for building peace and realising reconciliation in Ethiopia,’ they prayed together. ‘How wonderful it is, how pleasant, to live in a reconciled community, where repentance and forgiveness become our common language, where our neighbour’s laughter becomes our joy, and their sorrow becomes ours.’

PORVOO NEWS

The Porvoo Communion unites the Anglican Churches in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Iberian Peninsula and the Lutheran Churches in Nordic countries, the Baltic, and Great Britain. At a consultation on “Life in the Eucharist” in Madrid in October 2023 delegates felt that sharing sacramental life in secular contexts requires meeting communities where they are, and therefore being open to changes in sacramental practice. Monsignor Francisco Cerro Chaves, Roman Catholic Primate of Spain, welcomed the group and blessings and messages of friendship were exchanged.



BISHOPS' CONSECRATIONS IN NORWAY

Our Anglican Moderator, Bishop Paul Ferguson, reflects on events of great national and diocesan significance in Norway

It has been for me a great honour to represent the Church of England at three bishops' consecrations in the Church of Norway over the last couple of years. This short article is a response to a

request to give you some impressions.

The first, and most important and joyful thing, is that the visits have happened. The invitation to bishops from around the Porvoo Communion is a visible and active sign of what we are able to share, and that is something that I wish was more widely known and celebrated in Anglican Churches.

The second is that a consecration is an event of national and diocesan significance in Norway, and as I will explain further that is shown in the way that it is organised and conducted.

Whilst there are local variations of detail, the pattern always comprises a two-day programme. On the day before the consecration, there is a full rehearsal, led meticulously by Norway's Presiding Bishop, with all the participants (including those who are to lay on hands) present. Everything - not only the act of consecration, but processions, readings, music, perhaps dance, and hymns - is run through in 'real time'.

Late in the afternoon there is a *skriftemåls gudstjeneste*, a 'confession service', either in the cathedral or in another church nearby. In many ways it deliberately contrasts with the mood of the next day, signalled by the liturgical colour being penitential violet. The service includes a sermon on vocation, an opportunity for all in the congregation to come forward to the sanctuary rail to receive absolution with words said over each individual (a moving experience), and Holy Communion. The programme for the eve ends with a dinner, at which official greetings may be given to the bishop-elect.

On the day of the consecration, in the diocesan cathedral, the timetable begins early, largely because the King attends consecrations in person, with all the necessary security arrangements. The congregation gathers, which immediately creates a visual sense of nationhood and occasion: a large number wear national dress, the women's *bunad* consisting of a long skirt, white blouse and waistcoat, with colours and patterns that may be distinctive to their region. The men may wear breeches and a decorated jacket. The northern culture is represented by traditional Sámi dress, with jackets and trousers in bright colours. There is, I have to say, something particularly evocative about the tradition around national costume, a sign of pride in identity that in (especially) England we simply do not have.

The consecration rite includes the presentation of the candidate, and a series of scripture readings (in Norwegian,

possibly one of the Sámi languages, other Scandinavian languages and English) that are particularly relevant to ministry and oversight, interspersed with verses from *Veni creator* (*Kom, Hellig Ånd*). The Presiding Bishop gives a charge. The laying-on of hands follows, gathering around the candidate, in a way that many Anglicans would recognise, but with the co-consecrating bishops joined by other representatives, clergy and lay. The Nicene Creed follows, and a sermon by the new bishop, who then proceeds to preside over the Eucharist.

At the end of the service, those in procession line the exit of the cathedral, as the King leaves first. There is a lunch gathering in a local venue, again with speeches of welcome, and typically with musical entertainment. There may be a sung grace, and a concluding hymn.

Reflecting, then, the consecration is an event of real substance for the diocese and country. It comes at the end of an election process, and there is a sense of the diocese owning this concluding part. Norway has no suffragan or assistant bishops, so there is a strong bond between each bishop and their diocese. Holding the consecration in the cathedral means that there is no separation between ordination and installation, and the new bishop begins his or her work immediately.



King Harald of Norway greeting the Rt Rev Ragnhild Jepsen at her consecration as Bishop of Bjørgvin in the Cathedral in Bergen on Sunday, 16th April, 2023. Bishop Jepsen is the first woman to be made Bishop in the Diocese of Bjørgvin. Behind the King is the Presiding Bishop, the Rt Rev Olav Fykse Tveit. Photo: Sven Gj. Gjeruldsen, The Royal Court

The musical culture of the Church of Norway comes to the fore in these services. Considerable cross-fertilisation has taken place between Scandinavia and Britain, and many church musicians in Norway have British roots. Our hymn repertoires have many tunes in common, as well as texts that have been translated in one or other direction, and translations of the same Latin or German originals. ➡

LWF AND UNHCR REBUILD HOMES IN UKRAINE

Kharkiv's Saltivka district was one of the first and hardest-hit parts of Ukraine since the start of the war.

Over 10,000 apartments were damaged or burnt down completely following missile strikes.

LWF together with UNHCR is focused on rebuilding Kharkiv, one family at a time. But now Kharkiv has been under attack again.

A new beginning in an old home: in Kharkiv's Saltivka district, the LWF has rehabilitated 525 apartments that were destroyed by the Ukraine war. The last apartments were handed over just before Christmas to allow families to be in their own four walls as winter starts.

Many had been living with relatives or in community shelters in the past year. 'On 22nd March, fire destroyed everything, all the photos, all the memories,' says Tamara Belyk, a 77 year-old woman. While she talks, she scrolls through images of burned-out rooms on her mobile phone. 'There is nothing left of my parents, my husband and my son.'

Collaboration with city and local partners

'When you look around, you see thousands of apartments damaged by the war,' explains Mark Mullan, LWF's team leader in Ukraine. He points to apartment buildings that are black from fire and smoke, with burnt out balconies and windows with plywood instead of windowpanes.

LWF rebuilt Tamara Belyk's flat, so she could move back into her old neighbourhood. People are selected for inclusion in the project in close collaboration with the city of Kharkiv and local organisation "Spilna sprava dla liudey", the repairs are done by local enterprises and with funding



LWF Ukraine team leader Mark Mullan on his first visit to Saltivka, to meet families and inspect apartments destroyed by the war. Photo: LWF/ Anatoliy Nazarenko

from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ACT Appeal and LWF partners and member Churches. By December, 2023, 525 families could move back to their newly renovated apartments.

'We had lost all hope,' Iryna Haiduk said. After her apartment was damaged, she and her two young children moved to her grandmother's place. 'And then I got a phone call, and we heard: we want to help you.' LWF replaced the front door and windows, and the family moved back just before Christmas.

LWF takes a holistic community-based approach, looking not only at technical repairs, but also the family situation.

LWF community mobilisers connect the families with local administration, where they can receive support. 'We are not just rehabilitating homes, but families,' Mark Mullan says. LWF now plans to expand the project to 1,500 housing units in the entire Kharkiv Oblast. 'This is not just about electricity and plumbing. For the families, their homes hold memories and give them strength,' he says.

In a 13-minute film, Mark Mullan and his team have documented the project and they met some of the families in Saltivka. Their joy and gratitude is very evident. 'We could not think about tomorrow, but now we can. We can think about the future, thanks to you,' Iryna Haiduk concludes.

⇒ Many choirs sing choral music that is Anglican in origin: at the last service I attended, in Bodø, the cathedral choir sang the *Gloria* to a setting by Francis Jackson, who was for many years organist of York Minster.

There are some pieces of congregational liturgical music that are known and used in all Norway's churches, for example *Kyrie eleison*; *Hellig, hellig* (*Sanctus*); *Du Guds lam* (*Agnus Dei*); and responses at the final blessing. Again, here is a unifying influence, for there seems to be greater uniformity in Eucharistic texts, and the accompanying congregational music, throughout the Church of Norway than would be found in (say) English Anglicanism. The balance between liturgical consistency and variety is a question with deep spiritual and pastoral implications, and each of our Churches addresses it in its own way.

A major difference between Britain and Norway comes from the public resourcing of the Church and of music in the community, both at parish and cathedral level. Funding for the Church in general is nowhere near as dependent on individual, voluntary giving or historic endowments as it is in Britain. Choirs and music groups, people of all ages, singing and playing in many different styles, are very much part of the Norwegian music scene, and they all contribute to these celebrations.

It is a privilege to take part in these events. There is joy, hospitality, a proper sense of pride, and (especially at the confession service on the eve of the consecration) focused and humble preparation for what it is that we shall all do together the following day. There is much we can learn from one another.



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 together God's love and justice in the world

www.anglican-lutheran-society.org
USA www.alsocietyusa.org

The Window © 2024
The Anglican-Lutheran Society

The Anglican-Lutheran Society

10 Sandwich Street, London WC1H 9PL
Tel: +44(0)1626852677
Email: angluthsociety@outlook.com
Registered Charity No.1015153

Patrons

The President of the Lutheran World Federation
(who has been invited)
The Archbishop of Canterbury
supported by the Archbishop of Dublin

Presidents

The Rt Rev Jana Jeruma-Grinberga - Lutheran
The Rt Rev David Hamid - Anglican

Co-Moderators

The Rt Rev Paul Ferguson - Anglican
The Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama - Lutheran

Secretary

The Rev Canon Dick Lewis - Anglican
dick@ccwatford.u-net.com

Treasurer

Mr Patrick Litton - Anglican
treasurer.als@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Mrs Helen Harding - Anglican
angluthsociety@outlook.com

Committee Members

The Ven Christine Allsopp - Anglican
The Very Rev Tom Bruch - Lutheran
The Rev Jonathan Collis - Anglican
The Rev Rebecca Daniel - Lutheran
Mrs Helen Harding - Anglican
Dr Richard Stephenson - Lutheran
The Very Rev Eliza Zikmane - Lutheran

Co-opted Members/Observers

Mr David Carter - Methodist
The Rev Fr Phillip Swingler - Roman Catholic

National Coordinators

The Rev Susanne Skovhus, Denmark
sus@km.dk
The Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama, Finland
jaakko.rusama@helsinki.fi
The Rev Dr Miriam Haar, Germany
miriam.haar@ki-eb.de
The Rev Fredrik Ulseth, Norway
fredrik.ulseth@icloud.com
Vacant, Sweden
Mr Tom VanPoole, USA
anglicanlutheran@gmail.com

Editor of The Window

Canon Dick Lewis
Email : angluthsociety@outlook.com

STUDYING LUTHER IN WITTENBERG

The Lutheran World Federation's 25th International Theological Seminar for Pastors on "Basics of Lutheran Theology" took place From 4th to 18th November, 2023.

Dr Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, visiting adjunct professor of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Wittenberg, and Prof Dr Theodor Dieter both taught Luther's theology to 21 Lutheran pastors from around the world in November. In the first week, the topics ranged from Luther's theological biography to his Reformation discovery of the sacramental word of God ("promissio"), as shown first in the disputation "On the Investigation of Truth and the Consolation of Terrified Consciences" (1518), to the distinction between law and gospel and the treatise "On the Freedom of a Christian".

In the second week, the sacraments of baptism (together with the question of rebaptism) and the Lord's Supper (both in the book "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" and in the "Large Catechism") as well as questions of discipline in the Church were the topics.

The theological teaching was supplemented by a rich supporting programme (including workshops on preaching the Law and the Gospel, the liturgy of the Lord's Supper, Church Music, a visit to the Luther House and to the Reformation Library, a visit to a village congregation and an excursion to Leipzig).

The pastors were very open-minded, interested and receptive. For many of them, their training in the seminaries had not provided them with enough information on some of the theological questions that arise in the work with the congregations; so they were very committed when it came to clarifying basic theological questions and practical problems.

As always, it was a wonderful experience to spend 14 days living, working theologically and praying together with people from a great many different countries and contexts. The days were liturgically structured by the three liturgical hours (morning and evening in St. Catherine's Chapel, midday in the seminar room); the devotions were prepared by the participants with much love and care. Communion services were celebrated in the middle and at the end of the seminar.

As in previous years, the collaboration with the team at the LWF Centre (Director Inken Wöhlbrand and Dr Samuel Nánási) was very trusting and cooperative. Everyone involved has very fond memories of the seminar.

