

# The Window

JANUARY 2020

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 121

We hope you enjoy  
this issue of your  
Newsletter.

Come to our  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
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Read how Lutherans  
and Episcopalians  
came together in  
Maine, USA  
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to read  
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Some encouraging  
stories  
and much more

**Anglican-Lutheran Society 2020 Annual Meeting**

**SATURDAY 21 MARCH**  
**10AM-4PM**

**WITNESS THROUGH  
SERVICE & SACRIFICE**

**Martyrdom in the Church today**

**SPEAKERS**

The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani (Bishop of Loughborough)

Henrietta Blyth (CEO of Open Doors UK)

The Rev Katherine Hedderly of All Hallows

**TICKETS from**  
[angluthsociety@outlook.com](mailto:angluthsociety@outlook.com)

**All-Hallows-by-the-Tower**

Byward Street, London EC3 5BJ

**£20** including  
lunch

Our Annual Meetings are always stimulating affairs, providing an opportunity to meet old friends, make new ones and explore together issues of relevance to the Churches. This one will be no exception. We are told that Christians are the most persecuted faith community in the world today. So with the help of our panel of speakers we shall explore something of what that might mean in our own contexts. Email [angluthsociety@outlook.com](mailto:angluthsociety@outlook.com) to register or post to Glen View, Station Road, Trusham, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 0NL.

## OUR ANNUAL MEETING AT ALL HALLOWS-BY-THE-TOWER CHURCH

All Hallows by the Tower is the oldest church in the City of London. It was founded by the Abbey of Barking in 675AD, three hundred years before the Tower of London was built. There is an arch from the Saxon building that can still be seen today. Down in the crypt is a second century Roman pavement. This was discovered in 1926. It is a place where visitors are surrounded by evidence of city life stretching across almost two thousand years.

The church stands next to the Tower of London. The bodies of numerous people beheaded there were temporarily buried in the church after their execution on Tower Hill, among them Thomas More, Bishop John Fisher and Archbishop Laud.

Samuel Pepys watched the Great Fire of London from the church tower in 1666. Despite the fact that the fire started in Pudding Lane, not very far away, the church survived. It was not so fortunate in World War II when it suffered extensive bomb damage and only the tower and the walls remained. It was rebuilt after the war and was rededicated in 1957. The Vicar at the time was the Rev "Tubby" Clayton, founder of Toc H. He is only one of many famous characters associated with the church. Others include William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, who was baptised in the church and educated in the old schoolroom, and John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the USA, who was married here in 1797. The Marriage Register entry is on display in the Undercroft Museum along with a host of other fascinating exhibits.



There is a lot to see at All Hallows, and there will be plenty of time for you to look round and explore. And you will be assisted by the Vicar, the Rev Dr Katherine Hedderly, who will tell the story of the church during the morning.

Before her ordination Katherine worked in the film and television business, in script development and drama production, and was director of an independent production company. Upon her ordination in 2009 she joined the staff at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London as Associate Vicar for Ministry, and was responsible for liturgy and worship, communications, prayer and spirituality, and young people's ministry. In 2019 she was appointed Vicar of All Hallows Berkynchirche-by-the-Tower with St Dunstan-in-the-East, and also Area Dean of the City of London (London).

## THERE WILL BE TWO MAIN PRESENTATIONS

### I. OPEN DOORS

The ministry of "Open Doors" has its origins in one man and one journey. In 1955, a young Dutchman went to Warsaw and discovered the existence of a persecuted church. He soon became well-known as Brother Andrew, and from 1955 to 1967 travelled throughout Eastern Europe, delivering Scriptures, encouraging persecuted believers, and recruiting others to help him. It was the publication of "God's Smuggler" in 1967 that catapulted Andrew to worldwide renown. An entire generation caught the vision of supporting the persecuted church.

Henrietta Blyth is Chief Executive Officer of "Open Doors" in the UK and Ireland. She will describe the work they are doing and the ways in which through the provision of Bibles and Christian materials, training and livelihood skills, and the provision of advocacy, Christians in many tough situations know they are not forgotten, and are able to stand strong to serve their communities and give life to them. "Open Doors" seeks to mobilise the Church in many lands to serve their fellow Christians living under religious persecution and also to learn from them about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.





## 2. BLOOD OF MARTYRS AS SEED OF CHURCH

After lunch our topic will be *“The Blood of The Martyrs is The Seed of The Church: What Lessons might we Learn from the Persecuted Church?”* Our guide will be the Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Loughborough. Gulnar (Guli) Francis-Dehqani was born in 1966 in Iran where her father, the late Hassan Dehqani-Tafti, was the first Iranian Anglican bishop, and was the first President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Guli's family sought refuge in Britain, when she was a teenager, after the events of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when a failed assassination attempt was made against her father and her brother was murdered in Tehran. She completed her schooling in England before graduating with a Music degree from Nottingham University. Guli then worked at BBC World Service radio and Domestic Radio's Religious Department. Her PhD from Bristol University was awarded in 1999. Guli has written and spoken in particular on the areas of feminist theology and interfaith studies. She was ordained in 1998 and has served as Bishop of Loughborough since 2017. Guli is married to Lee, also ordained, and they have three teenage children.



## PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

### Theme : Witness through Service and Sacrifice: Martyrdom in the Church Today

- 10.00am **Arrival and refreshments** (please don't forget your £20 towards the cost of the day and your lunch)
- 10.30am **Welcome** by the Rev Dr Katherine Hedderly, Vicar of All Hallows
- 10.40am **Annual General Meeting**
- 11.20am **An Introduction to All Hallows** by Dr Hedderly
- 11.40am **“Open Doors”** : a presentation by Henrietta Blyth
- 1.15pm **Lunch** with opportunity to look round All Hallows
- 2.00pm **“The Blood of The Martyrs is The Seed of The Church: what lessons might we learn from the persecuted church?”** : a presentation by the Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Loughborough
- 3.00pm **Panel discussion with speakers**
- 3.35pm **Closing Eucharist**
- 4.15pm **Depart**

### HOW TO FIND ALL HALLOWS CHURCH

**Byward Street,  
London EC3R 5BJ**

**Nearest tube station:**  
Tower Hill

(District and Circle Lines)

**Nearest DLR:** Tower Gateway

**Local buses:** 15, 42, 78, 100

**River boat:** Tower Pier

**Please don't forget to tell us  
you are coming:  
[angluthsoc@outlook.com](mailto:angluthsoc@outlook.com)**



## SOCIETY HAS CHANGE OF TREASURER

Members of the Executive Committee were very sorry when Lisbeth Pedersen informed them that she would be relinquishing the role of Treasurer of our Society at the end of December 2019. Lisbeth has been a valued member of the committee and has been meticulous in managing our accounts. It has sometimes been a tricky task, especially during the years when we have held one of our conferences, but her reports and financial statements have always been a model of clarity. We are all very grateful for everything that she has contributed to the smooth running of our Society. Lisbeth has been unable to attend recent meetings so our Moderators have written to her and have enclosed a gift in appreciation of her work.



We are delighted to report that Patrick Litton has agreed to succeed Lisbeth as our Treasurer. He hopes to be able to attend the Annual Meeting in March where you will be able to meet him and will elect him during the Business Meeting to serve for the coming year.

## ALL CHANGE AT ST SAVIOUR'S CHURCH IN RIGA



Congratulations to Eliza Zikmane on her appointment as Chaplain of St Saviour's Anglican Church in Riga, Latvia. Eliza will be leaving her post as Pastor of St Anne's Lutheran Church in London but hopes to be able to continue to serve as a member of our Executive Committee.

The role in Riga is part-time so she will continue as Dean of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and we hope to be able to dovetail our committee meetings with the gatherings of LCiGB and the Council of Lutheran Churches on which she also serves.

Eliza takes over the role of Chaplain from Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, former Bishop of LCiGB. They are able to serve as Anglican Chaplains under the provisions of the Porvoo Agreement. You can read Bishop Jana's account of her time there elsewhere in this edition of The Window.

## NEW PRESIDING BISHOP FOR CHURCH OF NORWAY

The Bishops' Conference of the Church of Norway has nominated World Council of Churches general secretary the Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit (*right*) as its new Presiding Bishop.

'We are delighted and grateful that Dr Fykse Tveit has confirmed that he is accepting our nomination and is willing to make himself available to become a Bishop in our Church,' said the current Presiding Bishop, the Rt Rev Helga Haugland Byfuglien, (*pictured below*).



There is only one nominee for the position, which is being forwarded to the National Church Council, which meets in Trondheim on 30th-31st January, 2020.

Dr Tveit expressed his deep appreciation. 'I am grateful, humbled and honoured by the confidence expressed in me by the Bishops' Conference, being aware of the many dimensions and responsibilities of such a task,' he said. 'I have made myself available for this process and have accepted the nomination as a call to continue to serve the Church. I now wait for the final outcome of this process.'



## A VERY TIMELY TOPIC

*The Rev Augusty Gnana Gandhi is a member of our Society in Tamil Nadu, India. When he read in the last issue of The Window that the topic for our Annual Meeting will be 'Witness through Service and Sacrifice' he contacted the editor saying how relevant it is in his own context. His congregation is being harassed by fundamentalist Hindus. This is his account of what is happening.*

We have a small plot of land in the area named 'Semmampalayam', near Uthiyur in Tripur district. There is a small building which was our primary school as well as church. At present we have only one congregation in that area because so many people from our congregations have migrated and settled in different places.

Last August, on the 18th of the month, I was transferred to that place. I searched out the backsliding members of the churches and congregations and got to know the church well. Having gathered the names and addresses I called and invited them for worship. They were happy and accepted my invitation.

We planned to meet once a month for a Holy Communion service. Two of the people, one from Tripur and the other from Kangayam, helped me to clean the church area. Some of the people wanted to purchase vessels for the Holy Communion. We had three services without any hindrance, and on 19th May 2019 we had a 'Thanksgiving Festival' very peacefully. There were more than 40 families attending. We were very happy.

One day, during the service, a Hindu man, upper caste, burst into the church, shouted and asked me to stop the service. We were all very shocked. While we were negotiating with him he called the police. Two policemen came and they too requested me to stop the service. I replied gently and told them that we have a property document for this place. We have a right to worship, and our constitution provides for it. At length, the police officers insisted that I bring the documents along to the police

station next day. I refused, asking the police to insist that the Hindu neighbour also bring his documents.

Then I informed my bishop and asked for help. Our bishop asked the Clerical Secretary, Treasurer and the Diocesan Chairman to handle the issue. Negotiations are still going on.

Unfortunately our congregation does not have people of high authority, officials, or people in high ranking positions. All are daily wage earners. But my neighbouring pastorate, called 'Kundadam', does have some high officials and some persons with political influence. So in the meanwhile this pastorate has taken charge of the Semmampalayam church.

So this is the situation at the moment. As pastor I keep in frequent contact with the Semmampalayam congregation by phone and I also am visiting them in their houses. I hope this problem will soon be settled. Kindly uphold this in your prayers.



Augusty Gandhi (centre) with members of the Semmampalayam congregation in their church

## ANGLICANS AND ORTHODOX MEET

*The International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Canterbury, England from 10-17 October to continue consideration of ecology and end-of-life issues.*

In a communique issued at the close of its meeting the Commission stated that throughout the week its work had been undergirded by daily prayer and worship.

Visits were made to holy and historic sites, including a tour of St Augustine's Abbey and the ancient church of St Martin; to the Cathedral archives and library; and the Eastbridge Hospital. Members of the Commission said that one of the highlights of the meeting

was a meditative candlelit walk of prayer around Canterbury Cathedral, led by the Dean, which included the site of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket.

The Commission completed its work on issues surrounding the environment and ecology based on principles established in its statement, "In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology" which had been agreed in Buffalo in 2015.

The text of a statement, 'Stewards of Creation A Hope-Filled Ecology' was finalized and will be prepared for publication as part of a projected series.

Further consideration was then given to the proposed statement on the end of human life, now provisionally called 'Good Dying: the Christian Approach to Life and Death'. This work will be continued at the Commission's next meeting in October 2020, to be hosted by the Church of Greece.



## JOURNEY TO EMMANUEL

*The story of two churches in Augusta, Maine, USA, one Lutheran and one Episcopal, who have joined together to become a new interdenominational church that is fully Lutheran and fully Episcopalian, is told by Episcopalian Interim Priest Suzanne Colburn, a member of our Society.*

### The Background

On January 1st, 2001, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and The Episcopal Church finalized the terms of "Called to Common Mission", which achieved full communion between the two Churches, with the goal of strengthening fellowship and enabling common witness, life and service. Fourteen years later, this national document was the basis for the creation of a new interdenominational church, fully Lutheran, fully Episcopalian – Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church in Augusta, Maine, USA. Our story is one of faith and hope, a story that we can share with other faith communities to encourage everyone to seek God's vision for the future of the Christian Church.

Emmanuel's story began in 2015 in Kennebec County, Maine, where five Episcopal churches were actively discerning their futures. For two years they met regularly with officials from the Episcopal Diocese of Maine to create a sustainable path for the future. With dwindling membership, aging buildings and limited budgets, the path that made the most sense was to combine at least some of the five congregations. However, the group appeared to be at a standstill as to which congregations would give up their church building. That is, until the half-time Interim Pastor of the local Lutheran Church was invited to a meeting. He heard that St Mark's Episcopal Church in Augusta was about to close their historic granite church building for the winter and worship in their Parish Hall, so Pastor Erik Karas issued a simple invitation to worship at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, just across the river in Augusta. After a good deal of conversation, the St Mark's Vestry made the decision to join the Lutherans for the winter and the rest, as they say, is history.

### Early steps

Holding separate services was briefly considered, but the leaders of both congregations agreed to join both Lutherans and Episcopalians in one service. Soon, combining the two congregations seemed, on the whole, to be working, but aspects of administration were proving to be a bit cumbersome. For example, Prince of Peace offerings had to be dedicated to its budget to run the church property while St Mark's offerings were dedicated to the upkeep of their church and Parish Hall, where their own outreach ministries still resided. The Vestry and the Council combined their monthly leadership meetings, where separate votes were taken for matters relating to the individual churches. As for the congregation, hope began to dawn with an expanded choir, a revitalized coffee hour and fresh opportunities to serve the community through joint outreach ministries.

As spring approached, it became apparent that most people were happy with the new arrangement and the journey to become a new church began. Unfortunately, not everyone was interested in being part of "a new thing" - as both the Lutheran and Episcopal Bishops referred to us - and several people left the congregation and joined other Episcopal or Lutheran churches. Pastor Karas became full-time, being paid by both Prince of Peace and St Mark's. Work began to "federate" the two congregations, with the creation of a Federation Agreement jointly crafted by the New England Lutheran Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. The document included important aspects of worship, membership, clergy, leadership, governance, operations and other organizational matters. This document now serves as the Constitution of the new church.

The joint congregation, temporarily known as "The Church at 209" (referring to the address at 209 Eastern Avenue, Augusta, Maine), also had an opportunity for some input and several meetings were held to share information about our respective backgrounds, what we would like the future to look like, and selecting a new name for the church. Church leaders also worked to combine finances and create a Leadership Team that represented both the Lutherans and the Episcopalians.

While this was going on, the St Mark's property was put on the market and, when a buyer was found, a new challenge was created as to where to locate the outreach ministries still housed on the property. These consisted of a free clothing Bank, a free every day personal hygiene essentials pantry, a warming centre for the winter months and also a resource programme to help "guests" begin their journey to self-sufficiency. After much work scouting new locations and dealing with city government, the joint congregation voted unanimously to relocate the Bridging the Gap ministries to "The Church at 209", dedicating one-third of the building to outreach and moving church-related activities to other spaces.



*Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church as it is today.  
The bell in front came from St Mark's*



### Suzanne receives a call

Meanwhile, in the fall of 2017, I was in between calls in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts as an Interim priest. Since 1974, I have had ties to Boothbay Harbor, Maine, where my two children were born, and have kept a small condominium there. Whenever I can, I go to Maine and it was not unusual for me to check in with the Deployment Office at the Episcopal Diocese of Maine to see what openings they had.

I was intrigued by the joint call that was open from Prince of Peace Lutheran Church and St Mark's Episcopal Church in Augusta, Maine. This was a single church that was on the way to becoming a "Federated Interdenominational Church." It was a congregation that knew God was calling them to this unique union and who needed a second Interim Clergyperson to continue with them as they proceeded with the Federation Process.

Having an artistic background, and being a trained Episcopal Intentional Interim with almost 20 years parish experience under my stole, I was hopeful that my skills and creative nature would bring what Emmanuel (by this time Prince of Peace and St Mark's had decided to be Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church) needed from her pastor.

Both denominations called me to a part time position with three main foci:

- 1) To create blended worship (not either-or worship with Lutheran one Sunday, Episcopal the next).
- 2) To support the congregation, staff and leaders as we moved to complete the Federation Process, and
- 3) To tend to the pastoral needs of the congregation.

We agreed a three-year interim position but with discernment and renewal at the end of each year. We are all trying to stay faithful to God's call and to not project a human timeline on this wonderful journey.

### Becoming a "New Thing"

The Federation Process was a lengthy one. However, we had representatives from both the New England Synod and The Episcopal Diocese of Maine who worked tirelessly with us every step of the way. We were also blessed with two



incredibly talented and dedicated lay leaders, one from each denomination, who felt called to complete the Federation Process. In addition, we had the complete support of two Bishops: Bishop James Hazelwood on the Lutheran side and Bishop Stephen Lane on the Episcopal side. Our journey would not have been as successful as it has been if it were not for these gifted leaders who felt strongly that God was calling Prince of Peace Lutheran and St Mark's Episcopal to be "a new thing."



*It was a real battle to get permission to use the Episcopal and Lutheran emblems on the banner we use on all occasions*

In 2018, at the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church was voted a new congregation into the Diocese. Then the Annual Assembly of the New England Lutheran Synod accepted Emmanuel into the Synod in 2019. Now I, and all of us at Emmanuel, answer to both denominations, and we have a new Constitution and By-Laws according to both denominations' requirements.

The journey might not have been an easy one, but very open-minded members on

the governing bodies of both churches were brave enough to follow the Holy Spirit in creating "a new thing". Connie McDonald, former Senior Warden at St Mark's, and Betty Balderston, former President of the parish council at Prince of Peace deserve special mention for, along with the Rev Erik Karas, our Lutheran Interim Minister, and latterly with me, the Episcopal Interim Minister, they helped shepherd the whole journey from inception to the present.

Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal Church is continuing to grow and has a new Mission Statement and Worship that reflects aspects of both our Lutheran and Episcopal heritage. Many people stepped out in faith to make all this happen and God has richly blessed us as "a new thing", a church that's ready to share God's love with our community and the world.

### Lots to learn

By now it has become clear that our understanding of what God had, and continues to have, in mind for us has proved both correct and also way too narrow! It is true that my training and experience as interim is keeping me steady, grounded and aware of parish dynamics over time. It is equally true that my lack of knowledge about the history of the Lutheran Church in the United States in general and

➡ in New England specifically, the polity and practice of Lutheran governance, the subtle differences in music and hymn tunes, and the differences in liturgical emphasis concerning Confession and Forgiveness, The Word, Preaching, and the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist have been a very steep learning curve for me.

### Looking forward

Now, in this third year, a new Standing Committee has been established, that is merging finances under our new, legal name, Emmanuel, beginning to raise up and support new lay leaders and, very gently, creating some new programmes in education and formation. At the same time, we are just like any other parish family. Sunday comes around quickly, the people of the City of Augusta Maine are very much in need and our outreach ministries, the people running Bridging the Gap are doing their best to meet those needs as we both, Emmanuel Lutheran Episcopal and Bridging the Gap, strive toward financial sustainability by 2020.

We are now focusing on supporting our ministries, building up the next tier of lay leaders and creating a new, exciting Music Programme. Our focus is on 'Loving God and Serving our Neighbours' and everything we do flows from that. The church building is a bustling place every day! Addie's Attic and Everyday Basic Essentials are open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am - 2pm and on the first and third Saturdays, 10am - noon. The Warming Centre, providing a safe place and resources for people in the cold weather, is open seven days a week, 9am to 4pm, December 1st - March 31st. Emmanuel also supports the local community by regularly sharing meeting space with non-profit programmes that provide education on domestic violence, support for food addictions, support for immigrants, support for the blind, and rehearsal space for local singers.

It is "most certainly true" that I am blessed to be serving in this parish. It is also "most certainly true" that without the clear discernment that Emmanuel is doing God's will we would not be as blessed as we are. Yes, we have the same challenges as so many other parishes: not many families and few lay leaders who are willing to take over from those who have brought us thus far, but all in all we are extremely grateful that we have this opportunity in this place and at this time, to proclaim the Good News of God in Jesus Christ and to serve those who have so much less than we do.



The Sanctuary at Emmanuel, decked out for Advent and Christmas

## CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA IS A CHURCH FOR ALL

*Bishop Singh is Moderator of the Church of North India (CNI), and also President of the National Council of Churches in India.*



In October 2019 the Rev Dr P C Singh had discussions with the World Council of Churches' General Secretary, the Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, about the ecumenical movement. 'It's God's grace' is one of the Bishop's favourite sayings when describing his work. 'I am privileged to be the Moderator at this point in time because I am both witnessing and also celebrating 50 years of the CNI union,' he says. 'It truly is a uniting church.'

The Church of North India is the widest-spread church in India, covering 25 Indian States. Bishop Singh spoke of what it is like to be the leader of a minority faith. 'The Church of North India operates in a challenging context where the Christian population is very minimal,' he says. 'Although we cover 25 states, the CNI only has a membership of about two million.' But despite that he is encouraged by the work being done by churches in India.

### Helping neighbours

Bishop Singh is heavily involved in the ecumenical movement, and feels that being united is essential when helping those who are downtrodden and in need. 'The ministry of the Church of North India is carried out without any discrimination on the basis of caste, colour and ethnicity, with all people of faith and all walks of life.' He is also closely involved with the Ecumenical Church Loan Fund of India, a finance organisation giving business loans to people in need as a way to change their lives. 'The people we serve are downtrodden and they have no opportunity to start or to do business,' he explains. 'We provide people with loans to do business and through that loan their lives change.'

But it is not all plain sailing, and Bishop Singh does have some reservations about the ECLF. 'I think the rate of interest is too high. It is higher than some of the banks' interest rates in India - and, besides, they are charging high membership fees as well.'

The Bishop is grateful for the opportunities he enjoys to lead several ecumenical organisations in India today. 'I am happy that my people and my Church have bestowed their trust in my leadership,' he says.



## SHARING IN ECUMENICAL LINKS

*This year our Society is considering ways in which the official conversations between our two traditions, Lutheran and Anglican, and the Roman Catholic Church are progressing. Indeed, that is the focus of our conference later this year.*

*But at the grassroots level things have been going along nicely for a number of years.*

*The Rev Philip Johnson, Vicar of Sleaford in Lincolnshire, UK, reports on a parish pilgrimage to Brugge and the further strengthening of an ecumenical link and friendship between Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations.*

*His article first appeared in CrossLincs, the newsletter of Lincoln Diocese.*

Last summer a small group from St Denys' Church in Sleaford made the now bi-annual pilgrimage to Brugge (Bruges) in Belgium. We emerged from our air-conditioned minibus to feel the city heat, with the thermometer hitting 43 degrees Celsius. Fortunately, our hosts had laid on cooling refreshments (including chilled Belgian beer) for our comfort after the long journey. The welcome was as warm as the weather. It was as though we had travelled from home to home.



*'Bonds of friendship strengthening'*

More than 10 years ago a link was established between our St Denys' Church and the Parish of Sint Kruis (Holy Cross) in Brugge as part of an ecumenical link scheme involving our Diocese of Lincoln, the Catholic Diocese of Nottingham and the Catholic Diocese of Brugge. Since that link was established, a group from St Denys' Church has travelled to Brugge every other year, and in the intervening years we have been visited by a group from Sint Kruis. Great friendships have been forged over the years. The priests in both churches have changed – Sint Kruis has recently welcomed the third new parish priest since the link began – but the bond of friendship linking the two churches has continued to develop and be strengthened.

On this occasion our hosts had laid on a programme of visits for us, which included a trip to an art gallery, a Roman museum and the gardens of the old Bishop's Palace (in the case of the latter the hot weather had turned to warm rain – we got soaked!). But it was the opportunities to share food, fellowship, conversation and worship that made the visit so special.

Originally the plan had been that I would stay with the new parish priest, Fr Hugo. Unfortunately this was not possible as he was in a convalescence home, out of the city and close to the sea, following surgery. I did, however, have the opportunity to visit Fr Hugo there to make his acquaintance; the conversation flowed easily and I have no doubt that the link will continue to flourish.

As a result of the change of plan, I stayed with Wilfried, a permanent deacon, who is doing most of the parish work while Fr Hugo is out of action. We talked late into the night about the joys and challenges of parish ministry in our different contexts. Some issues are different but the similarities are huge. One big difference is that in Belgium the maintenance of church buildings is funded by the government, which sounds wonderful when I consider how much my parish has to raise to keep our building in good repair. As a result of our conversations, however, I began to realise that there are pros and cons to the maintenance being out of the church's control.

Although we have visited Brugge many times, this year was different. After the former parish priest, Fr Jeff, retired, Sint Kruis was told that it could not have its own priest. This means that it now shares a priest with the neighbouring parish of Sint Thomas. Many of the priests are aging and there are few ordinations (especially of younger priests), and ministry is often dependent upon the services of retired priests. Congregations rarely have many younger people. It seems that city life has increasingly turned its back on the Church. So the challenges that our brothers and sisters in Brugge face are not too dissimilar from our own challenges.

It is a great privilege to be part of this ecumenical link. We have learned so much from our friends: this has helped us to think about how we do mission and ministry in Sleaford, but the link also serves as a constant reminder that we are part of the worldwide Church of Christ.



*The beautiful church of Sint Kruis in Brugge*

## ROMAN CATHOLICS OFFER THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT A REAL GIFT

*The Roman Catholic Church has presented a formal response to "The Church: Towards a Common Vision," the fruit of three decades of international ecumenical conversation about what it means to be the Church*



*The Rev Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, director of WCC's Faith and Order Commission, with Paper 214. Photo: WCC*

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has worked hard to provide an official Catholic response to the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order paper 214, entitled "The Church: Towards a Common Vision", which was published in March 2013. 'This process has involved consultations with episcopal conferences around the world, as well as consideration of responses prepared by individual theologians, including both lay and ordained, academic study groups, and ecclesial movements,' reports the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 'After due study of these contributions by the members of the drafting team, several working sessions were organized in Rome and a draft of the response was prepared.'

After further improvements by experts and editors, the official Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith approved the response which 'shows that "The Church: Towards a Common Vision" synthesizes well the growing consensus in the field of ecclesiology in the current ecumenical dialogue.' But, the Pontifical Council goes on to say, 'At the same time it points out various aspects which need further reflection on the nature and the mission of the Church, as well as on the vision of its unity.'

### Received with joy

Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, thinks "The Church: Towards a Common Vision" is a landmark in the ecumenical movement and dialogues towards visible unity. 'Significant common ground has been established and many common features in our traditions have been identified. Many Churches have contributed to the reception process ... and the response from the Roman Catholic Church is another landmark in this process,' he says.

Dr Tveit appreciates the comprehensive process undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church. 'The response is a sign

of how we are walking, working and praying together,' he says. 'We have more to do, and more need to pray for the unity of the Church. But we are committed to make it a unity that can be sustainable both in diversity and in mutual accountability.'

### A real gift

The Rev Dr Susan Durber, Moderator of the WCC Faith and Order Commission, said that the response from the Roman Catholic Church has been received with great joy. 'It is encouraging to read a response that affirms how far we have come in common understanding, and that exhibits such strong commitment to continuing on the journey towards visible unity, promising to "spare no effort",' she says. 'There are some notes that might surprise some readers; a call for more on 'a personal encounter with Jesus Christ', an encouragement that a theology of priesthood needs to be related to a theology of baptism, an emphasis on the local church, and affirmation of the essential missionary nature of the church.'

There are important invitations too, she adds, 'including deeper exploring together of the meaning of sacramentality, reflecting on ecumenical spirituality, and seeing more fully how we have often been looking in different ways at the same reality. The Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, on which Roman Catholics serve as full members, is deeply grateful for the gift of this response, a gift to the ecumenical movement.'

## LUTHERANS AND ORTHODOX MEET

The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 18th Plenary Session of the International Joint Commission on the Theological Dialogue between The Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox Church was held in Tirana, Albania, from 24th September to 1st October. The theme was "The Place and the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church." There were presentations on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, the World, Baptism, Ministry as well as the Eucharist. A common paper was prepared, based on previous statements of the commission, on the works, role and place of the Holy Spirit.

The sessions began with prayers at the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women Chapel. There were visits to the Monastery of the Dormition of Theotokos at the ancient city of Apollonia, and the Tomb of the New Martyr Cosmas the Aetolian, near Fier. On Sunday 29th September, members attended the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Resurrection in Tirana. The next meeting will be held from 29th May to 4th June, 2020, in Germany.



## STUMBLING BLOCKS AND SPRINGBOARDS

### Working together for forgiveness and reconciliation

*The Very Rev Tom Bruch, chair of the Planning Group for our Conference Rome from 19th-23rd October 2020, gives this up-date.*

The Society's conference in 2020 is set to be an exciting and inspiring event. It will look at the ways in which Anglicans and Lutherans have drawn closer to the Roman Catholic Church in recent decades and explore some challenges and obstacles that remain on the road to full communion.

Rome provides an ideal setting for the conference, with meeting facilities and accommodation near the Vatican. The main venue for conference sessions will be the Anglican Centre in Rome and participants will be accommodated at two Roman Catholic facilities: Domus Internationalis Paulus VI and the guest-house of the Suore Teatine.

The German Lutheran congregation in Rome has offered to host a concert and to be involved in other ways.



Interest in the conference has been overwhelming. When members were invited to register in July, the places were filled within a few days and a waiting list is being maintained, as the number of participants is limited to 50.

Although the planning committee has

not finalised the programme of talks and activities, there are going to be presentations by leading ecumenical theologians on the dialogues between the Churches, on Mary as an ecumenical enabler, and on Apostolicity and the Church; and a panel will reflect on their experiences of local ecumenical initiatives.

There will be music, worship and a range of visits. It is intended that the programme of visits will include a Papal audience, the Vatican Archives, some of the ecumenical offices and various churches and sites in Rome.

The Society will contact registered participants in the coming months to ask them to confirm their booking and to provide information related to conference planning.

## SHARING ECUMENICAL EXPERTISE

*Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg hosts first seminar on basics of ecumenism (LWI)*



'Many ecumenical issues have been worked on and there have been a number of dialogues in the last decades,' says Prof Dr Jennifer Wasmuth, Director of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France. 'So we have set out to pass on our knowledge and experience to young theologians from the member Churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in a dedicated seminar here in Strasbourg.'

The Institute's staff are active participants in LWF dialogue processes, so they were also involved as lecturers in the seminar "Studying Ecumenism in Strasbourg" that took place from 2nd to 12th October. This was a first of its kind

and attended by theologians from different LWF member Churches. You can see them hard at work in the photo.

"We note that ecumenism does not draw as much attention as it did before, and that there are only a few universities and academies teaching it," Prof Wasmuth says. 'We want to counter this trend with a short course on the basics of ecumenism.' The programme included the history of the ecumenical movement and an introduction to the various denominations. It also allowed a lot of time for delving into the documents produced by LWF dialogues with Anglicans, Baptists, Mennonites, Methodists, Orthodox, Pentecostals, Reformed and Roman Catholics.

As participants came from Lutheran Churches around the world an integral part of the course was building community and sharing local practice and experience. Prof Wasmuth is convinced that the Institute staff also benefit greatly from these insights, explaining: 'We can listen to the questions, challenges and opportunities facing the local pastors in their respective environments. That roots our work here at the Institute and gives us valuable advice for our future activity.'

Since the seminar was a good experience and the feedback positive, more events of this type are planned, she says. The seminar was supported by generous donations from the Oscar Cullmann Foundation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg.



## PROF MOLTSMANN ON TRUTH IN A POST-TRUTH ERA...

'Truth creates trust and trust creates peace, and without peace, life is not possible,' he told his audience. 'The fight for truth against falsehood is a matter of life and death. It is the struggle for the survival of humankind.'

'Nationalist power politics is no longer interested in truth. They wage war under the guise of peace, a hybrid form of war with economic sanctions and cyber wars, fake news and lies,' Prof Jürgen Moltmann affirmed at the start of a lecture at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva. It was 2<sup>nd</sup> December and he was launching his latest book.

At the age of 93 Prof Moltmann is still busy and active. He is one of the most widely read theologians of our time, and in his latest book he turns to what he describes as a "post-truth era". It's a time, he says, 'in which objective truth no longer exists, in which any given claim can be substantiated and in which it is no longer possible to tell falsehood and truth apart.'

"*Hope in These Troubled Times*", which is published by WCC Publications in Europe and in North America by Westminster John Knox Press (ISBN for WCC edition: 978-2-8254-1713-3), is based on the supposition that in our times hope itself seems challenged, even naïve.

So Prof Moltmann offers a frank assessment of the dangers confronting humanity, finding the roots of our most challenging problems in the assumptions that underlie the modern worldview.

His book looks at the ecological crisis, encounters of world religions, terror and violence, social justice and compassion, and in the light of these challenges he asks fundamental philosophical and theological questions, particularly about God, creation, and being human. He explores the basis and character of Christian hope, and outlines the shape of a life-affirming spirituality, one that can both inform and enliven Christian faith in imperilled times.

Describing scientific knowledge as part of the scientific-technical civilization which has established itself worldwide, Prof Moltmann noted that 'every ten years, our scientific knowledge doubles, but we have no power over its power. Our research instinct and competition force us to progress. We are condemned to progress!'

He feels that the way out of such a self-destructive system is the adoption of 'a humane and ecological wisdom in order to deal with our immense knowledge in a way that is conducive to life so as not to make the earth uninhabitable.'

'In faith, we are grasped by the self-revelation of the eternal Truth, and then the Spirit of Truth drives us onward to search for Truth and chase after peace,' he concluded.

## ...AND ON PATRIOTISM AND ECOLOGY

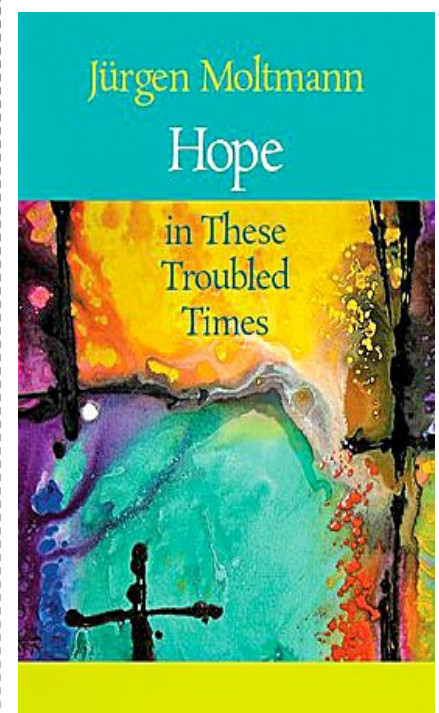
Two days later students sat entranced as Prof Moltmann, speaking on the topic of "The Ecumenical Church and Nationalism", told them how, after serving in the Hitler Youth and the German Army as a "patriot" in World War II, he turned his back on nationalism and the horrors of that conflict.

'The Church of Christ is present in all the people on earth and cannot become "a national religion",' he said. 'The Church of Christ ecumenically embraces the whole inhabited earth. She is not a tribal religion, nor a Western religion, nor a white religion, but the Church of all humanity,' he continued, to great applause.

He went on to say how concerned he was that a new wave of nationalism is taking root in the contemporary world. He described it as a 'setback for humanity'. It was after growing up under the Nazi yoke that he became convinced that 'humanity precedes nationality'.

Some of the students questioned Prof Moltmann, one from Indonesia saying that, as a minority in her country, Christians have to show their patriotism. Another asked, can humanity find a legitimate and healthy word for the love of one's nation? Prof Moltmann admitted that during World War II he had said, 'Hitler must not win this war'. But he had also said, 'A man must defend his fatherland.' He hadn't been able to solve this contradiction. 'My love of Germany is constitutional patriotism,' he concluded.

Turning to the question of a Christian understanding of ecology Prof Moltmann said, 'The Church worships Christ as the reconciler of the cosmos and is interested not only in peace on earth but peace with the earth. The ecological peace of creation matters to her [the Church] in times of climate change and the destruction of the earth.'





## REFLECTIONS ON RĪGA

*Bishop Jāna Jēruma Grīnberga, former Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and long-time member of our Society, reflects on her time at St Saviour's Anglican Church in Rīga, Latvia, seen here in the snow.*



Churches and chaplaincies in the Church of England Diocese in Europe tend to be unique, not to say mildly eccentric. They exist in places like the Balearic Islands, the Costa Blanca or the South of France; but also in Casablanca, Reykjavik, Moscow, Ankara. Each of these has communities of British expats, some of whom

have lived in their adopted countries for many years, while other English-speaking people, refugees, migrants, students, locals are looking for something different to their usual church setting. Maintaining the balance between the needs of these varying groups can be challenging, especially in contexts where the very idea of Anglicanism is unknown and mystifying. In quite a number of places, the chaplaincies are simply known as 'the English Church', though in most cases this is no longer true, if it ever was.

St Saviour's Church in Rīga, Latvia, is known locally as 'The Anglicans'. It was known as that quite widely even during the Soviet era, when it was deconsecrated and used as a

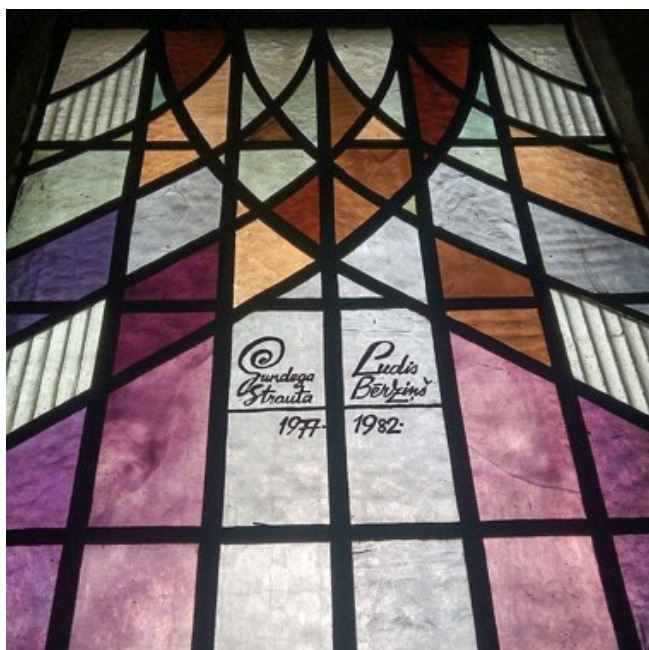
students' union club for the Rīga Polytechnic Institute. It was home to the usual student shenanigans, but also to some fairly radical musical and artistic events – radical, that is, in the prevailing atmosphere of censorship by the authoritarian state. This history has left its traces; most of the stained glass in the church dates to Soviet times, with no explicit religious imagery, but still rather beautiful. All the ecclesiastical furniture was stripped out but, by the grace of God it was not destroyed, but rather redistributed to other churches – congregations that were still functioning despite the official policy of discouraging religious worship. By the grace of God indeed – because in many cases altars, pulpits and so on were simply chopped up for firewood. Now it is slowly being reassembled; the lectern and pulpit have been returned, the font is being restored, and the altar will also return in the near future.

The church building was used again for worship in the early 1990's when an American-Norwegian Lutheran missionary, Arden Haug, began English language worship on a regular basis. Eventually, the building was reclaimed by the Diocese in Europe, and the legendary Lutheran Rev Dr Juris Cālītis, reordained by the Rt Rev John Hind in 1996, became the first to hold Anglican services in the building since 1939.

So it was with an acute sense of the weight of history that I came to St Saviour's in the autumn of 2014, only the second Chaplain since the restoration of the congregation. Not only that, but as an ordained Lutheran I was the first to benefit from the signing of the Porvoo Agreement back in September 2014 by both the Churches that ordained and consecrated me, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, which meant that I could serve as an Anglican clergy person while remaining true to my Lutheran roots.

As is the case for far too many congregations of all denominations worldwide, one of the main concerns is maintaining the building. St Saviour's was built as an Anglican church and consecrated as such in 1859; funds for this ambitious enterprise were supplied by British traders living in Latvia at the time. In fact, the Factory (the association binding British businessmen together) made it a condition of membership at the time that each trader had to contribute to the building fund (if only that were possible nowadays!). But that building, rather a beautiful one, was damaged during World War II, refurbished in the 1950's and 1960's in a fairly slipshod fashion, and pretty much neglected by the authorities after that. This all combines to make the upkeep of the building the greatest expense of the congregation by far.

It is to the credit of the community at St Saviour's that, despite this, and despite a constant battle to stop the ceiling falling down, the tower from dropping bricks on people's heads, or the heating bills from eating up the entire budget, it is a lively place, much beloved by worshippers, concert



*Most of the stained glass dates to Soviet times, with no explicit religious imagery, but still rather beautiful.*

➡ attenders, visitors and the 100-120 folk who are guests at the Soup Kitchen each Saturday. The congregation brings together British, American, Canadian and other diplomats, students from many countries who have chosen to study in Rīga, expats married to local people, the homeless, people passing by who have stepped off their floating hotels on Sunday and drop in for worship, or listen to the Lunchtime Concert on Wednesday. St Saviour's hosts many concerts each year (it has a beautifully pure acoustic), as well as groups of all kinds, including two Alcoholics Anonymous meetings each week.

It is also a church home to many locals, both ethnic Latvian and Russian, who find the welcoming ethos, relatively liberal theology (against a background of increasingly conservative Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches) and middle of the road Anglican worship congenial, and a good fit for their own spiritual journeys. Most of those involved at the church are not Anglican, and very few of them are English. St Saviour's is a member of the Inclusive Church network and is unique in the Diocese in that sense. Of course it is not always possible to accommodate all the many spiritualities and "churchmanships" within just one congregation, and this is something that many chaplaincies in the Diocese in Europe face. In England churchgoers have a choice: if the high Anglo-Catholic liturgies of All Saints don't ring your bells, then the Reformed character of All Souls will soothe your spirit. For most of us in Europe, there is no choice. The closest Anglican worshipping community to St Saviour's is Sts Timothy and Titus in Tallinn, Estonia, 300 km away. And if you're in Reykjavik, the next closest is probably Oslo, a two and a half hour flight away.

So each chaplaincy has to find a way of working, of carrying forward the mission of the Church Universal: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28). Each chaplaincy, then, has to find a way of remaining faithful to that Great Commission, while addressing the needs of its community and developing a language, verbal and liturgical, that communicates the Gospel to as many as possible, and alienates as few as possible.



*Wonderful Anglican hymns accompanied by one of St Saviour's highly talented organists,*

I enjoyed my time at St Saviour's so much, and am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve this Christian community. Perhaps my most vivid memories will be of Saturdays and Sundays – being alongside Christians of all ages and many nationalities on Sunday, singing wonderful Anglican hymns accompanied by one of our highly talented organists, and seeing boundaries of history and suspicion gradually dissolving. On Saturday, the community gathered around the vital diaconal work of the Soup Kitchen, feeding the hungry in body and soul, and affirming Christ's passionate love for the marginalised and outcast. This, in a very real sense, is the living Church, and I loved it.

Now I am moving on, and looking forward to learning what new journeys God has planned for me. Wonderfully, though, St Saviour's has called another active Anglican Lutheran Society member, the Very Rev Elīza Zikmane, Dean of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, to be their next Chaplain, and surely God will continue to bless them all.

## COMBATting RACISM IS ECUMENICAL TASK

At a commemoration of 400 years since the arrival of enslaved African peoples to Jamestown, Virginia, USA, World Council of Churches General Secretary, the Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit explored "Race, Repentance, and Reparation: An Ecumenical Opportunity." He told church leaders from various traditions who had gathered in Hampton, Virginia, last October, 'Racism in all its forms is the exact opposite of our values as Christians, as Churches and as an Ecumenical Movement. It is contrary to all aspects of our work as a World Council of Churches, especially to our work for unity of the church.'

Racism is a sin that must be combatted in all that we do, he added, and noted that it is 'an ongoing concern of the worldwide fellowship of churches, indeed of the whole ecumenical movement.'

Today, 30 years after the collapse of apartheid, we see a new phase and face of racism in movements and political trends and ideologies like the white supremacy movement in the USA, and in Europe. But, he said, new expressions of the same poison are found in every part of the world.

Nor are the Churches blameless, he insisted. 'Apartheid, we recall, was fundamentally a religious heresy,' he said. 'Even today Christian politics and practice often prove unhelpful in the fight against modern racism.'

WCC moderator Dr Agnes Abuom also attended the events in Hampton. She spoke about the trading of slaves and asked her audience, 'Which image of a God could be used to legitimate such things to happen?'

She went on to affirm that it was only their faith in the true God of justice and grace that helped the African slaves to survive this dark period of human history.



## NEW DANISH PRIEST IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*'I feel good that I can be a Pastor here with my Lutheran background. The Church here is at least as wide and diverse as the National Church,' says Nikolaj Christensen, newly ordained as deacon in the Oxford Diocese of the Church of England.*

The Anglican Church in England has made great efforts in recent years to recruit new clergy - and that seems to be yielding fruit. Numbers are increasing. Last year, figures showed that 33% more have been admitted to training colleges and courses compared with 2016.

One of the newly ordained clergy is actually a Dane, Nikolaj Christensen. Nicholas became fond of England when he studied at Oxford, and he settled in England. Therefore, it seemed obvious to him to seek office in the Church of England.

The National Church of Denmark is a member of the Porvoo Church Community, a fellowship between Lutheran, Anglican and Episcopal Churches in Europe. By virtue of this Porvoo Community, mutual recognition exists between the two Churches, the Danish Church and the Church of England. So Danish theologians like Nikolaj can quite easily seek a post in the Church of England, after a year or two at one of the Anglican colleges or courses. The same is also true for English theologians who would like to work in the National Church in Denmark.

'I feel good that I can be a pastor here with my Lutheran background. The Church is at least as wide and diverse as the Danish Church,' says Nikolaj, who can also point out some differences between the Danish Church and the Church of England.

'There is a greater breadth in terms of expression - sometimes the Church of England seems more Catholic than the Catholic Church, whereas at other times it resembles the Pentecostal Churches,' he says, adding, 'There is possibly a greater outlook on global Christianity, and the Church is probably better at reflecting what Christianity looks like globally than is the Danish People's Church.'



*The Rev Nikolaj Christensen with his father, Herluf Christensen, a Parish Priest in Denmark*

Another difference between the Danish Church and the Church of England is, according to Nikolaj, that the English Church places more emphasis on the spiritual and personal readiness and maturity of new priests. Care is taken of those who are newly in office in the form of supervision and guidance. Their faith has to be mature enough to cope with the challenges they are faced with in their pastoral ministry.

In addition to worship and ecclesiastical services, Nikolaj Christensen's work in Iffley parish also involves some outreach work and social projects. He lives in a social housing estate located in the parish. A church presence has been lacking in that area and residents have not been used to being in contact with the church.

But in both the Church of England and the Danish Church, the church is seen as omnipresent. It must be visible everywhere in the community. Last spring, a delegation from the Danish Church's Interfaith Council travelled to England to study the Presence and Engagement programme of the Church of England and found much inspiration from it, especially the ways in which the Church can be present throughout the community, including those areas the church does not constitute a majority.

Finally, another difference is in the sphere of economics. The Church of England does not have the kind of favorable financial conditions as the Church of Denmark, and churches in England need to spend more time on fundraising. 'We are more dependent on the congregation being proactive and contributing financially. Emphasis is placed on people being involved,' says Nikolaj.

We pray that Nikolaj will find his new ministry rewarding, and that he will be blessing to all the people he serves.

## 2021 TO BE GERMAN YEAR OF ECUMENISM

The Council of Christian Churches in Germany has declared the year 2021 as a "Year of Ecumenism". It will link the Ecumenical Kirchentag, due to take place in Frankfurt, 12th-16th May, and other ecumenical events to the World Council of Churches 11th Assembly, to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany in 2021.

In addition to those two big events, for the very first time the Council of

Churches in Germany will celebrate its annual Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation alongside the Swiss and Austrian Councils at the Bodensee.

The hope is that these ecumenical events will express the relevance of Christian life in society, and strengthen the unity among the Churches, both in Germany and worldwide.





## ROGER ASCHAM, TUDOR EDUCATIONALIST AND THEOLOGIAN

*Dr Roy Long, who until recently was a long-serving member of our Executive Committee, introduces us to an intriguing English character*

Roger Ascham (1515?-1568) is one of the most interesting and intriguing characters of the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. He was born and brought up in the North Riding of Yorkshire, but he is more closely associated with Cambridge, where he entered St John's College in or around 1530, and with London, where he played a part in Tudor court life. In Cambridge, he played a significant part in the teaching of the Classics, and was one of the earliest teachers of Greek in the university. He went on to become the university's Public Orator, a position that he held until 1554, when he married and had to give up his university responsibilities. In London, he came to be closely associated with the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII and his ill-fated wife, Anne Boleyn, acting as her tutor during the early years of the reign of Edward VI. Although a reformist, he survived the reign of Mary I (r.1553-1558), under whom he served as her Latin Secretary, and went on to serve Elizabeth I in that same capacity. He was Elizabeth's confidant until he died in 1568, and, on hearing of his death, she is reported to have said that she would rather have lost £10,000 than her beloved Ascham.

### THE SCHOLEMASTER

*Or plaine and perfitte way of teaching  
children, to understand, write, and speake, the  
Latin tongue, but specially purposed for the  
private brynging up of youth in gentlemen  
and Noble mens houses, and commodious asse  
for all such, as have forgot the Latin tongue,  
and would, by themselves, without a  
Scholemaster, in short tyme, and  
with small paines, recover  
a sufficient habilitie, to  
understand, write,  
and speake  
Latin.*

¶ By Roger Ascham.

¶ An. 1570.

AT LONDON.

Printed by John Daye, dwelling  
over Alderfgate.

¶ Cum Gratia & Privilegio Regie Majestatis,  
per Decennium.

At that time Latin was still the predominant language of literature, and Ascham was one of the first authors to write in English, and in this respect he stands somewhere between William Tyndale and William Shakespeare. He is best known for his *Toxophilus*, in which he extolled the value of skill with the long bow, which was on the decline in the mid-Tudor period, and for *The Scholemaster*, in which he laid out his ideas for the education of the young. The latter work is still hailed as a (for its day) progressive document which, among other things, showed Ascham's abhorrence of

physical punishment. A third writing in English was a Report of his time in Germany in the early 1550s as secretary to an embassy to the Holy Roman Empire led by Sir Richard Morrison. Each of these three works has recently been re-published (see below).

Less well known is that Ascham also dipped his toe into the waters of theology, which, in view of the chopping and

changing associated with the English Reformation, might be considered a dangerous thing to do. He wrote three theological works, all in Latin, of which one has recently been translated for the first time by Dr Lucy Nicholas of King's College, London, as part of her doctoral research. Written in the late 1540s – though not published until after his death – the *Apologia pro Caena Dominica* ("Defence of the Lord's Supper") which strongly reflects the work of Martin Luther, and, in particular, the reformer's *De abroganda missa privata Martini Lutheri sententia* ("The Misuse of the Mass") of 1521.

Although neither Luther nor Melancthon is actually named in the *Apologia*, Ascham clearly owes a lot of his thinking to their Eucharistic theology. Indeed, we know that Ascham greatly admired Melancthon's *Loci Communes*. As the Lady Elizabeth's tutor, he strongly recommended that she read this book.

In the early years of the reign of Edward VI, at a time when the English church was veering towards Swiss theology, it is interesting to note that Ascham's theological ideas are so markedly Lutheran. He attacks the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice, denies the validity of the contemporary Catholic understanding of priesthood, and instead affirms the priesthood of all believers. Sadly, the *Apologia* comes to an abrupt end, and it is uncertain whether the treatise was unfinished or that the ending was lost. This means that we do not know Ascham's thoughts on such matters as transubstantiation. However, what we suggest is that during what Dr Alec Ryrie has termed "the strange death of Lutheran England", there were some theological thinkers who held to something approaching Lutheran-Melancthonian beliefs.

Dr Nicholas's translation of the *Apologia* is published by Brill (Leiden, 2017. ISBN: 978-04-33003-0). Ascham's three main English works were re-printed by Cambridge University Press in 2010 (William A Wright, *Roger Ascham: English Works*, ISBN: 978-1-108-01536-3). Luther's "Misuse of the Mass" can be found in Volume 36 of the American Edition of Luther's Works (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1959. No ISBN).

[Readers of *The Window* who might like further information about Ascham and his theology can contact Roy at [roy.long485@btinternet.com](mailto:roy.long485@btinternet.com)]



*A sketch of Roger Ascham*



## NEW WINDOWS IN FLIEDEN – A REMARKABLE STORY

*The Rev Richard E. Olson is a member of our Society living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.  
Here he shares the story of a Jewish Synagogue, now a German Evangelische Kirche, and how it got its new windows*

### The Background

On 9-10th November, 1938, in an incident known as "Kristallnacht", Nazis in Germany torched synagogues and vandalized Jewish homes, schools and businesses. Since 1933, when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor, Jews in Germany had suffered repressive policies of all kinds, but the situation had largely been nonviolent. After "the Night of Broken Glass" the conditions for Jews in Germany got worse and worse, eventually leading to the so-called "Final Solution" to the "Jewish problem" and the systematic murder of some six million European Jews.

One of the synagogues targeted that night was in Flieden, north-east of Frankfurt. There had been a Jewish community in the town for more than 500 years. This, their second synagogue, had been built in 1875 but that night it was damaged and, though it was not destroyed, it could no longer be used as a synagogue. Then, having stood neglected for many years, the building was purchased by the Protestant Church Neuhof in 1951 and was converted into a church.



*Flieden Synagogue as it was in around 1925*



*The Evangelical Church as it is today, with belfry and extension added 1951*

Biehn. She told Pastor Biehn that her father's *bar mitzvah* had taken place in the Synagogue in 1899. Pastor Biehn told her that he and his congregation were all determined to honour the 500 years of Flieden's Jewish community. There is a memorial plaque in the church commemorating the Holocaust but there is nothing about the time between 1875 and 1933 when it was a synagogue.

Pastor Biehn pointed out to Marie that the church needed extensive renovation. He wanted help finding a Jewish artist to create stained glass windows as part of that restoration project. At once she told him about Barney Zeitz of Martha's Vineyard, USA, an artist who had for many decades created exceptional stained glass for churches and synagogues.

Mr Zeitz was invited to visit Flieden in July 2015 and for a week he and the church committee shared their ideas.

Back in Martha's Vineyard Barney Zeitz worked on his designs. The three windows on each side would show a glowing landscape on which will be written in Hebrew the Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6.24-26), "May the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." On one side this would be written in Hebrew, while on the other side the design would remain similar but the writing would be in German.

Inside the building everything is very simple. There are three tall, arched windows on each side of what is otherwise a bare interior.

The extension, with a window on either side, was added during its reconstruction into a church, as you can see in this photo, and it houses the altar sanctuary area. The building remains almost free of decoration, except for the windows which are a very new, and a very special feature.

### The Windows

The story of these windows begins with a meeting in 2013 between Marie Ariel, a lady from Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, and the Pastor of the Church, Holger



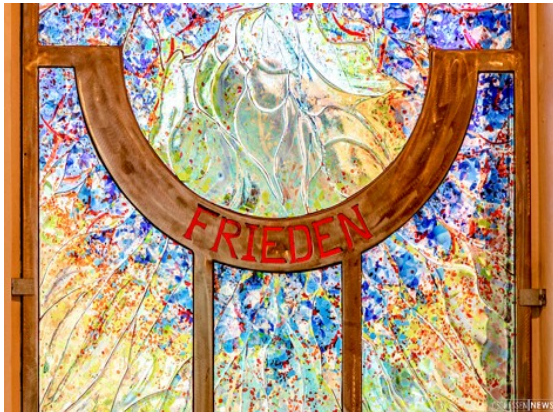
*New plaques showing the story of the building*





➡ Here you can see the two large windows with the Aaronic Blessing in German.

The two windows, one on either side of the altar, would be the most luminous and carry only the final word "peace" - on one side in Hebrew and on the other in German.



### Festive Service

At a wonderfully festive service on 22nd September, 2019, the church building was rededicated along with the new windows.

Preaching what was to be his last sermon before retirement, Bishop Dr Martin Hein (pictured here with Barney Zeitz) expressed his belief that only knowledge of history and working at it would prevent repeating the terrible errors of the past. 'History forgotten is history repeated,' he said. He expressed considerable regret that antisemitism is becoming 'socially acceptable' in Germany today.

The windows of the church and the commitment of the congregations were positive signs in difficult times, he said. 'In the windows of the sanctuary the blessing that unites us as Jews and Christians ends in the words "Frieden" and "Shalom". In God's Kingdom, in his shalom, his peace, we are all connected.'

'I believe in diversity,' Barney Zeitz affirmed. 'We should all respect each other, regardless of origin or religion. Nobody has to change: everyone has their faith.'



The service that day was a truly joyful one. Here is the Pastor of Frieden Church accompanying the singing on his guitar ... and our very own Pastor Richard E. Olson who thoroughly enjoyed sharing in such a wonderful story.





## EUROPEAN CHURCHES 30 YEARS AGO

*Robin Gurney is a Methodist Local Preacher in the United Kingdom.  
He was a staff member of the World Council of Churches from 1977 to 1985  
and of the Conference of European Churches from 1990 until retirement in 2002.  
Here he looks back at the Church of 1989.*



As we approach the end of 2019, I am conscious that during this year we have celebrated many 30-year anniversaries. Europe, in particular, was witness to so much change in 1989. In a sense, it was the final blast of World War II as it saw the end of the East-West divide which had begun with the armistice of 1945 and the end of the Nazi regime in Germany. The downfall of Ceauşescu in Romania, then the victory of Solidarity in the Polish elections and, above all, the breaking down of the infamous Berlin Wall and the eventual reunification of the two parts of Germany, are well documented events from that year.

In the years which followed, it emerged how important the Christian Churches were in those developments - Romania, Poland and East Germany in particular. But another momentous event, held over the 1989 Pentecost period 15th-21st May, presaged some of that year's later developments. For the first time in many hundreds of years the Churches of the continent in the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and in the European Roman Catholic Organisation (CCEE) held a joint assembly, with official participants and thousands of visiting Christians. The city of Basel was the venue and it often appeared that the Churches took over the city. The event also flourished in the media, with some 650 accredited journalists, including 17 television crews from many different countries.

Earlier this year, the then General Secretaries of the two organisations, Jean Fischer and Ivo Fürer, issued a letter recalling the memorable assembly and the message which emanated from it.

*"Thirty years ago we were part of an historical event when we attended and participated in the First European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, Switzerland. The city was awash with the 700 official delegates - 350 from the Roman Catholic CCEE and an equal number from CEC - an unprecedented number of Press representatives plus many hundreds of interested visitors. Who can forget that moment when Cardinal Martini and Metropolitan Alexy jointly lit the great candle to kick off the event?"*

*"A kaleidoscope of activities permeated the city - the tightrope walkers across the river, the march of witness passing through three countries without border checks, and the floating witness ships which bridged the mighty river Rhine. Basel 1989 created a sense that we were living through important and even prophetic days but we could not foresee the speed of political change throughout our continent which closely followed. For us, however, the common Christian witness created a new trust and a new sense of fellowship between denominations, individuals and groups."*

which to a large extent is still valid in Europe today. It was adopted by 95.4 per cent of the delegates following a detailed prior process of consultation and participation within the European Churches. Some would argue that it still represents the most comprehensive and inclusive statement of a European peace ethic.

Responding to the recent letter, the then CEC Vice-President, Dean John Arnold of the Church of England, the Anglican President of our Society now living in retirement in Canterbury, wrote:

*"The assembly was a profoundly spiritual experience for me personally, particularly the session at which the final document was accepted. I felt a kind of kenosis in which I was completely emptied of myself and could sense the Assembly flowing through me. When I called for silence before the vote I intended to say 'Veni, sancte Spiritus', but when I opened my mouth Someone or Something took over and I said, 'Veni, Creator Spiritus' instead - another gift of the Spirit".*

Without being too nostalgic it is good to recall the phrase "Our Common European Home". This phrase, although created by politicians, was enthusiastically taken up by the Basel Assembly. With the passing of years we can only pray that this common home might still be realised even through the dark and dangerous waters of today.



Care for our

Common Home

The work of the assembly was recorded in a final document

## RE-CONFIGURING THE PETRINE MINISTRY

David Carter, Methodist Observer on our Society's Executive Committee, offers this reflection on the Papacy of Pope Francis

Next October, our biennial conference will take place in Rome. We shall be looking at Anglican and Lutheran relationships with the Roman Catholic Church with the help of expert speakers from all three churches on the relevant dialogues. It will also be a time for us to get an informal feel for how Pope Francis' ministry as Pope is developing.



I think that for the first time in my life I can see a Pope who is totally in the mould of the Peter appointed by Jesus to lead his Church. When I look at the Peter of the early chapters of Acts, I see a man who leads boldly, who in his first sermon states the essentials of Christian faith in the risen Christ. I note that in Acts 9:32 we see Peter travelling throughout all the churches of Palestine (at this time, the Church was still confined to the

In many ways, he is re-configuring the whole way in which his ministry

is understood and practised. He has not issued any major theological document on the matter, that is not his style, but by his actions, his homilies and his meetings with other church leaders he has made the direction in which he is intending to go quite clear.

For Francis, his ministry is as much about listening and learning as it is about leadership and guidance. He uses the fruits of his learning from others to help guide and inspire the whole Church, not just his own denomination. His encyclicals, letters addressed to the entire Roman Catholic Church, show this. Whereas earlier Popes cited Scripture, the Tradition of the Church and the teaching of their predecessors, Francis also cites very widely the teaching of his brother bishops in their various national and regional conferences. He is listening, pastorally and reflectively, to what they tell him about the problems of the Church and Christian living in their particular communities.

He also commends what he calls *synodality*, the learning from each other at all levels in the Church. He insists that bishops must learn from their clergy and layfolk. They must address the human issues of the time and be clear as to what the Gospel, the teaching and the practical example of Jesus, says to us. He does this particularly in three of his letters. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel, he stresses the importance of evangelism and communication of God's joy in us (Zephaniah 3:17). He stresses the need for social justice, particularly the importance of positive action to rescue the poor and marginalised from their rejection. In *Laudato Si* (Praise Be!), he stresses the need to care for God's creation, of which God has made us responsible stewards. In *Amoris Laetitia* (the Joy of Love), he stresses the importance of marital love and argues strongly that there are times when the Church must be more merciful to those who have experienced marital failure and not always block divorced and remarried people from receiving holy communion.

Holy Land). Benjamin Gregory, a Methodist, writing in 1873, commented on what he described as 'Peter's itinerant superintendency of the Church.' The historical circumstances of the time meant Gregory could not apply this to the papacy of Pius IX. The very different circumstances of today make possible a far more positive connection.

Traditionally, both Orthodox and Protestant scholars have pointed to the historical and theological problems associated with seeing the later Bishops of Rome as successors of Peter and have questioned whether any succession to Peter, as such, was intended. From the eleventh century, in the case of the Orthodox, and the sixteenth, in the case of the Reformation Churches, there was a tendency, certainly up until the time of Vatican II, to regard the papacy as a sort of spiritual dictatorship.

Things have changed greatly since then. The ecumenical dialogues of Anglicans, Lutherans and Methodists with the Roman Catholics have all accepted that there is a case and a need for a universal ministry of leadership and guidance, particularly in a globalising world facing serious problems. Lutherans accept that Luther was not totally opposed to the Papacy - indeed he thought that, up to the time of Gregory the Great (590-604), the early Popes had given good leadership to the Church; it was only after that that some had gone astray and become dictatorial in approach. From their side Catholics had shown themselves willing to consider whether the Papal ministry might be exercised in ways more acceptable to other Churches; indeed Pope John Paul II offered to enter into dialogue with leaders and theologians of other churches on the subject. To some extent, this offer was rather forgotten after some initial welcome, but the style of Francis has revived interest in it.

He has a happy knack of summing up matters in ways no Christian could seriously disagree with. Thus in *Laudato Si*, he says that every Christian has three key relationships





## 'YOUNG AND VIBRANT' AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY NEEDS TO LISTEN TO WOMEN

*Kenyan theologian Esther Mombo was born into an ecumenical environment in East Africa. She has a transcontinental education. At the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey she told students that African Christianity may be "young and vibrant", but in her view it needs to listen to the "women in the pews".*



'My father was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and my mother was a member of the Religious Society of Friends. I was brought up by a Quaker grandmother, my first pastor, and theological educator,' Esther Mombo told the new intake of students for the 2019-2020 academic year at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey. After listening to her engaging and comprehensive talk on "Understanding World Christianity Today - The Case of Africa," students understood why she was chosen as the keynote speaker.

Introducing Dr Mombo, Fr Prof Dr Ioan Saucă, the WCC Deputy General Secretary and Director of the Bossey Institute, said that her topic had gained much recent attention. However, he said, it is not new. The late Rev John Mbiti, a Kenyan Anglican priest, had already written about it in 1975. But while the subject may not be new, Dr Mombo's approach is new 'because our faith ... takes root in different contexts in response to the different problems of the world.'

➡ that he or she must try to get right; the relationship with God, relationship with their fellow human beings, and their relationship with the rest of creation. This summary of Christian discipleship could not be more succinctly put.

Francis is very anxious to reach out to the whole world, particularly to the other churches and religions. He is anxious to help promote human flourishing and co-operation. He never meets leaders of any other Christian church without finding something positive and appreciative about the riches of their particular tradition. I will write more about his ecumenical approach next time.

Francis accepts the fundamental understanding of the Church as a communion, established by, and rooted in, the life of the Blessed Trinity. It is a communion of mutual respect and learning at all levels. I close with two quotations from the Finnish Lutheran dialogue report of 2016.

"The original and renewed Petrine office is to be seen in the context of unity in diversity, protecting both the unity of the Church and legitimate diversity of life in synodally and episcopally led churches. This gives expression to the apostolicity and catholicity of the Church of Christ, to the fullness and universality of the Christian faith."

The dialogue also specifically commends the stress on synodality. "It is precisely this path of synodality that God expects of the Church in the third millennium."

These quotations show how far the two Finnish Churches have been able to travel, helped by the "Francis effect".

### 'Emblematic figure'

Prof Saucă described Dr Mombo as 'an emblematic figure of the ecumenical movement'. She is an alumna of three schools. First, she attended St Paul's University, formerly St Paul's United Theological College, in Kenya. She then entered the Irish School of Ecumenics, an Institute of Trinity College, Dublin, and she has a PhD from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Dr Mombo told the students that Christianity in Africa had produced male and female leaders in different traditions of world Christianity. She rattled off some random names of theologians in African Christianity: Mercy Oduyoye, Isabel Phiri, Musa Dube, Nyambura Njoroge, John Mbiti, John Pobee, Kwame Bediako, Lamin Sanneh, Tinyiko Maluleke, Sarojin Nadar, James Amanze and others.

Africa has produced 'a Christianity that has produced a theology,' she affirmed, 'African Christian theology, black theology, circle theology. It is a Christianity that is young and vibrant. Most of the churches and church-related institutions are just one hundred years old.'

She sketched a link between ecumenism and nationalism in Africa that arose during the colonial era. 'The history of the ecumenical movement in Africa is integral not only to mission history but also to the rise of nationalism in most parts of the continent in the mid-1950s and 60s. Mercy Oduyoye argues that African nationalism played a role in the development of African ecumenism,' she explained. It was out of the missionary movement as well as the Pan-African movement that the early 1960s saw the birth of several ecumenical structures such as the inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches in 1963.

### Challenges for theological education

Dr Mombo said that in Africa the general understanding is that women are in the pews and men are at the pulpits. But this needs to be challenged. It is a church in which the ideology of patriarchy is alive and well in Church and in theological colleges and in society. There is a group in the Church in Africa called the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. In 2019 the circle celebrated 30 years.

'Over the last 50 years, the church in Africa has made great strides on women's leadership, providing leaders for international organizations, but it is still a drop in the ocean compared to the male counterparts,' she asserted. Their full role is 'not yet felt because the ideology of patriarchy is still at work. To understand African Christianity means listening to women in their work as they serve God and humanity in society.'

## THE ST SIGFRID PILGRIMAGE 2020: YORK, UK, TO VÄXJÖ, SWEDEN

*The Rev Dr Hugh White of St Sigfrid's Trust invites you to take part in a mammoth undertaking to celebrate the 850th anniversary of a Swedish Diocese and to help draw the Church of England and Church of Sweden closer together at a time when bonds between European nations seem to be slipping*



York Minster

The St Sigfrid's Trust, a body dedicated to supporting the relationship between the Swedish Church and the Church of England, is organising a pilgrimage from York to Växjö in southern Sweden for 2020. At some 500 miles, the English section will be the longest pilgrimage path in the country. The Swedish leg is about 300 miles long.

In 2020 Växjö Diocese celebrates the 850th anniversary of its formal foundation. Though 1170 is a century or more later than St Sigfrid's evangelising efforts in Sweden, Växjö diocese sees him as its first begetter. In truth, the relationship between the Legend of Sigfrid and historical fact is rather unclear.

No archival record exists of an Archbishop of York named Sigfrid, and King Mildred, who is said by the Legend to have sent Sigfrid on his mission, is otherwise unknown to history. It does seem likely, however, that a Sigfrid, with other English missionaries, was involved in the evangelisation of the south of Sweden in the 11th century.

It is certainly the case that the Swedish Church and the Church of England are members of the Porvoo Communion

which the latter decided to join 25 years ago. As a result, a number of Swedish and English dioceses have links, among them Växjö with Oxford.



One aim of the pilgrimage is to draw the Swedish Church and the Church of England closer together in friendship at a time when the bonds between European nations seem to be slipping.

It is not known how Sigfrid travelled from York to Sweden but the present link between Växjö and Oxford has helped determine the geographical shape of this anniversary pilgrimage. A number of already existing pilgrimage routes and long-distance paths have been used, but certain stretches have been specially devised.

As it makes its way from York to Birmingham, the pilgrimage will visit the cathedrals of Wakefield, Sheffield and Lichfield. Then the northern part of the new St John Henry Newman pilgrimage route, from Birmingham to Deddington via Baddesley Clinton, Stratford-upon-Avon and Banbury, will be inaugurated.

From Oxford the route follows the Thames into London and turns south-east towards Rochester, Canterbury, Ramsgate and Dover. It would have been good to take a ferry from Dover to Sweden but none now exists so, unless a boat can be specially chartered, we shall



Växjö Cathedral

go to Gothenburg by train from one of the ports linked to Dover, where the Swedish leg of the walk to Växjö begins.

Once in Göteborg (Swedish names from now on) the pilgrim route will call at Lödöse, Vänernborg, Grästorp, Lidköping, Husaby, Skara, Varnhem, Falköping, Jönköping, Nydala and finally Växjö.

The pilgrimage will leave York on St Sigfrid's day, 15th February, and end at Växjö Cathedral on 29th August. In England, it will be walked in stages with breaks of differing lengths between the stages, whilst in Sweden the walking will be essentially continuous over five weeks with single rest days during those weeks.

We invite individuals or groups to register with the Trust for certain stages or simply individual days; registration is not essential but it would be useful for the coordinators of the pilgrimage to know who might be coming and when.

The route and the timetable can be found and further enquiries and registration made at [www.stsigfridstrust.org](http://www.stsigfridstrust.org). Pilgrims will need to make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation.





## A VISIT FROM GOD'S HOUSE

*Sally Barnes describes for you a visit paid to her North London parish by a group of Swedish visitors*

At the end of October, for four days, a lively group of young people from Nacka, Fisksätra, a parish on the outskirts of Stockholm, came to visit London. They came with their pastor, Pia-Sophia Passmark, and youth leader, Tina Sundström. They wanted to visit several multi-faith communities and places of worship as well as doing some sight-seeing.

To put this visit into context, back in 2017 trustees from "Inclusive Church", of whom I was one,

hosted a group of Swedish pastors who had heard about our organisation and had asked to be taken to see churches in the UK who were working on Inclusion. We took them to congregations in Liverpool and Manchester who, along with the Bishop of Manchester, welcomed us warmly. The churches we visited talked compellingly and movingly about how they became Inclusive. After this visit four of us were then invited back to the Diocese of Stockholm to visit some of their churches and to speak at a conference on the subject of Inclusion. You may have read about these visits in previous issues of The Window.

While we were in Stockholm we visited the parish of Nacka, Fisksätra, and met Pia-Sophia and Tina, two amazing, dynamic women of Faith, part of a team who work in and support their widely diverse parish. What we experienced was a real lesson on how to work with diversity and to foster inclusion.

It is important to give you some idea of the context and cultural differences from which these young people, 12 year olds, came. Nacka parish is large, multi-faith and multi-denominational, of huge diversity in every sense, encompassing refugee families from many different countries, languages, faiths and not a little poverty. Because the area is so diverse faith leaders in the community felt it essential to look at what their various missions had in common, to have the courage to meet together with open minds, to seek to understand their differences and to work



*Sally Barnes, right of the three in the centre, with the Swedish visitors in church after the Sunday service with some of the church members*

together to lay the basis for trust and clarity both internally and externally.

So they gathered people of a variety of beliefs and understandings in order to collaborate with each other. Their aim was to be a unifying force in their community and a vital resource in the work for peace and human rights. They wanted to work against alienation, division and intolerance, and to inspire trust and joy in both cultural and religious diversity. So the

members of the Church of Sweden work together with Muslims and Roman Catholic leaders (there are no Jewish families in this particular area). Their Centre and church is called "Gud's Hus"; attached is "Källan", the "Advice and Support Centre", where support is provided for vulnerable and excluded people. Both provide a meeting place across religious, cultural and social borders, providing space where people can gather to take their faith and lives seriously. They follow the golden rule of treating each other as they themselves would wish to be treated to provide a concrete expression of peace through interfaith dialogue and action based on the belief that God is merciful, loving and the creator of heaven and earth.

The young people who came reflected that diversity. They are involved in a peace project and have participated in various events on several occasions in the parish and in 'Gud's Hus'. As Pia-Sophia and Tina said, 'They are our future and we are very proud of them.' So they should be, as these youngsters were a real joy and delight to host, bright and articulate, as well as a lot of fun.



*The young people inside the Central London Mosque*

They had an extremely packed itinerary visiting different faith communities and buildings to experience inter-religious dialogue and projects, and to see how young people of different nationalities and backgrounds are involved. They visited the Central London Mosque and Islamic Centre and the New London Synagogue and they were all made very welcome.

## PEOPLE WITH A DIFFERENT WAY OF BELIEVING CAN BE A CHALLENGE

*Following on from the previous article, two pastors, who have just been on a course on "The National Church of New Danes", share some reflections. How can the Danish National Church also be a Church for New Danes who come from different cultural and ecclesiastical backgrounds?*

Today, approximately 13% of Denmark's population is made up of immigrants or immigrant descendants, and the proportion is likely to increase in the coming years. Many of them have a Christian background or interest in Christianity, so Christianity in Denmark today is characterized by diversity. Last autumn a number of priests met for the "National Church of New Danes" course. In fact it is a series of courses held at the National Church Education and Knowledge Centre in

➡ They had a tour of London on the Saturday when it rained so hard that we saw the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London and the buildings along the Thames through a vertical river of water - soaked to the skin was putting it mildly!



*The soggy group at the Tower of London, Sally left and Pia-Sophia right*

On the Sunday, dried out, with the autumn sun shining just enough, they came to my parish church of Golder's Green where they took part in a service during which Rex, our vicar, interviewed Pia-Sophia who told the congregation about the aims, work and worship of their Parish. After the service our parishioners spent a lot of time talking with them. Many shared experiences from their own lives, as we too are a diverse community. Our Swedish visitors were welcomed to such an extent that everyone stayed for longer than usual! We then went to eat at a Turkish restaurant conveniently just over the road from the church where the proprietor and cook gave us a huge welcome not to mention a delicious lunch. (We are very well placed in Golder's Green for the world's cuisine!).

We exchanged gifts and, as if they were not at all weary, we went for an afternoon walk in Golder's Green Park, beautiful in its autumnal dress, looked at the animals - and then they insisted on going to Kings Cross Station to "go through" platform 9 ¾ in tribute to Harry Potter!

We enjoyed their lively visit a great deal. The discussions we had, the links we made and the thoughts we had shared gave us so much on which to ponder and to be challenged by. Contact and friendship with Pia-Sophia and Tina is so valuable and I know we shall be seeing them again in the future as well as hearing of the progress of the work being carried out in their parish. Thank you, dear friends, for making time to visit us.

Løgumkloster, where the topic this time was very telling: "Many cultures - many Christians". The central question asked by the course is whether the National Church will continue to be a Church for all the people in the future, including new Danes who come from different cultural and ecclesiastical backgrounds.

Two of the pastors taking part were David Warming Winsløv, Parish Priest in Ølsemagle Parish who is also priest for migrants in Køge Provsti and Roskilde Stift, and Ulla Elvira Hermann, Parish Priest at Christianskirken in Sønderborg.

'The course is beneficial because we can share experiences here and give each other insight into each other's work and thus try to put into words what the work is about and what opportunities and challenges we see in the cross-cultural work in the national church,' said Pastor Winsløv. 'We considered what it means to be a Church when the Church interfaces with the world, and how the Church might understand its mission. Is being Church primarily about inviting people to worship every Sunday, or is it about going out and meeting people where they are, taking with us the love we have met from God ourselves? I have even begun to go out and knock on doors where there are no old Danish names to be seen. The individual New Danes just need to be met and listened to. They want to share life stories and faith stories with us. This meeting with individuals helps shape what will happen next.'

Pastor Hermann explained that in Sønderborg there are many intercultural church initiatives in the National Church, including language school, family club, baptismal training and international services. Through these the church is able to be in contact with many different groups. There are also ecumenical meetings with people with Roman Catholic and Pentecostal backgrounds. There are cross-cultural events together with Christians with African background. In the family club there are many different cultures including a number of families from Syria with a Muslim background.

'Other cultures are an enrichment for our National Church,' she says. 'It's a gift to receive as a priest - but it can also be difficult at times.'

The course is ongoing and is offered to National Church pastors and church staff, as well as Free Church pastors and volunteers. It is organised by Jonas Adelin Jørgensen and Mogens Mogensen of the Danish National Church Council.



# CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN CHURCHES DISCUSS LUTHERAN IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND PNEUMATOLOGY

*Church Leadership Consultation for Central and Eastern Europe offers opportunities to reflect on contexts, opportunities, and hopes (LWI)*

Churches should make sure that believers and the Church itself are not pushed back into privacy behind church walls and away from the public space, said Urmas Viilma, who is the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) Vice-President for Central Eastern Europe and the Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church which hosted the event.



Participants in the conference in St Mary's Cathedral, Tallinn. Photo: EELC/Joel Siim

'A church leadership conference for Central and Eastern Europe is very important because the Churches don't have many possibilities to come together,' said the LWF's Area Secretary for Europe, the Rev Dr Ireneusz Lukas. 'The region might appear to be relatively homogeneous at first sight but the situation in each of the Churches and countries differs considerably,' he added.

The theme for the consultation was "Diversity and Identity – Different Kinds of Gifts, but the Same Spirit... (1 Corinthians 12, 4-6)". It took place from 28th to 30th October in Tallinn, Estonia, and offered space and time for reflection about the specific situation, challenges, hopes, and also the gifts the region could share with the rest of Europe and with the whole Communion.

## Lutheran identities

Presentations and discussions on Lutheran confessional identity, diversity and pneumatology (the study of the Holy Spirit) stood at the heart of the consultation. Taking up some of the ideas arising from the recent conference "We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities" in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Rev Anne Burghardt (of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran

Church and who is a member of our Society) summarized the consultation which many participants described as inspiring and dynamic.

She referred to the study document "Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion" (2015) which describes the communion of Churches in the LWF as both a gift and a task. Based on this the consultation adopted a pneumatological approach to the question "What does it mean to be Lutheran today?"

Relating the themes to the contexts in Central and Eastern Europe, Anne Burghardt said: 'The fact that our Churches have lived under Communism has given us a special legacy of being critical towards the usual ecumenical language about peace and justice.' So the challenge for the region was to overcome this scepticism in order to be able to actively transform society.

Concerning the interconnectedness of ecclesiology (the study of the Church) and pneumatology she said she felt that the Churches in Central and Eastern Europe emphasize individualistic piety, at the cost of creating a community of believers being *ekklesia* together.

She also considered the role of spiritual gifts (charisms) in Lutheran theology

and the role of the Holy Spirit. 'When we manage to develop a solid theology of charisms, we will be more profoundly able to live up to our Lutheran conviction of the priesthood of all believers,' she said.

## Being churches in the public space

The diversity of the LWF member Churches in Central and Eastern Europe became evident during a panel discussion about being Church in

the public space. Focusing on the situation in Poland, a predominantly Roman Catholic country, Bishop Jerzy Samiec of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland explained how a Lutheran minority Church raises its voice in the public debate. 'Poland is divided into two camps,' he said. On the one hand there are the conservatives, who are presently in power, and on the other a very diverse opposition. This opposition is convinced that several legal acts by the Sejm - the lower house of the Polish parliament - violate the constitutional order of Poland. This is a situation leading to violent disputes.

Bishop Samiec elaborated on the dilemma facing the Church: When should church leaders address such developments and when is the Church interfering with politics?

One approach is to protect the weak, often different minority groups. Another is to attempt to convince politicians that they should engage in political debate and not resort to quarrelling, insults and slander. The Bishop adopted such an approach when he appealed to the Polish President Andrzej Duda and said that politicians expressing

➡ mutual hate influence society negatively. The death of the Mayor of Gdańsk, Paweł Adamowicz, at the beginning of the year was one of the effects of this situation. A third approach is to state clearly that preaching the Gospel is preaching love. Bishop Samiec is convinced that aggression and speaking hate while defending the Church or Christ is not Christianity.

Dr Klára Tarr Cselovszky from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary spoke about the careful steps into the public space taken by that small Church after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. In the years prior to that, the Church did not have any presence in the public space whatsoever. 'We built our presence in social and educational areas, maintaining a critical solidarity with state and society,' she says. 'For to be credible and trustworthy is important.' Yet, problematic past issues must be dealt with, so a commission has been set up to unveil entanglements with authorities such as the secret police during the Communist era.

With 34% of the population, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia forms the largest religious community in that country. The basic question for Archbishop Jānis Vanags in this context is "How much should the Church be involved in the political life of a society?" His Church looks back on repression and persecution during Soviet times, resulting in up to 80% of the clergy being deported or killed. From 1987 a movement, "Rebirth and Renewal", to which Archbishop Vanags belonged, strove to liberate the Church from Soviet influence. Today, the Church enjoys access to the public space and high public recognition. This brings new challenges – up to the point that Archbishop Vanags refused to preach during a church service held on the annual Constituent Assembly Convocation in order to protest against corruption among government officials.

### Theological education and pastors' vocation

The training of pastors is a complicated yet urgent matter in a region without one connecting language, and with only small Churches and very diverse contextual settings. After visiting the Theological Institute in Tallinn and presentations on the topic by the Rev Dr Elfriede Dörr (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania), Dr Jerzy Sojka (Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland) and Anton Tikhomirov (Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia and Other States) participants discussed possibilities for closer cooperation in the region and with other partners, and new digital learning methods.

During the final session, summing up the meeting in Tallinn, Archbishop Viilma emphasised the need for Churches in the region to open up and use all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Speaking about the role of the Church in the public space, Bishop Dr Tamás Fabiny (The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary) said, 'Churches should be present all the time but speak only when needed.' He also emphasised the role and importance of communication networks for minority Churches: 'It remains an important tool to build bridges in totally different contexts.' Vera Tkach (Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia and Other States) felt this kind of consultation to be very important for the Churches of Central and Eastern Europe where issues concerning the region could be shared and discussed.

## CONVICTED NORWEGIAN BISHOP 'HAS NO REGRETS'



Bishop Gunnar Stålsett

Photo: Church of Norway

Like many across the world you may have been following the case of Retired Norwegian Bishop Gunnar Stålsett. He appeared before a court in Oslo accused of employing a refugee from Eritrea whose application to stay in Norway had been rejected. To employ such a person was made illegal in 2011, but ever since Bishop Stålsett has described himself as a conscientious objector to a law he views as simply wrong.

On 19th December he was convicted by the court for having offered work and income to a rejected refugee who could not be sent back to Eritrea. Bishop Stålsett's case attracted enormous media coverage in Norway and worldwide.

In court the Bishop declared himself guilty of violating the immigration law and was handed a sentence of 45 days in jail. However, the sentence was suspended so he will not actually have to spend any time in prison. But he was also ordered to pay a fine of NOK 10,000, just over £850, €1,005 or \$1,110.

The Bishop accepted both his conviction and the sentence, making it clear that he had never wanted his age (84) or his position as a retired bishop to accord him any special privileges in the case. Furthermore, he made it abundantly clear that he has 'no regrets', and he was applauded as he left the courtroom which was packed with people supporting his stand.

Bishop Stålsett has argued from the very beginning that this immigration law is not consistent with the Christian values and human rights as set out in the Norwegian Constitution. He believes that the law should properly secure the human rights and dignity of all, and especially the most vulnerable.

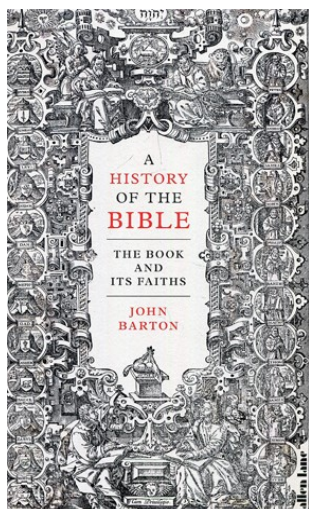
Members of our Society's Executive Committee are of the opinion that, for taking his stand, Bishop Stålsett deserves profound respect and thanks.



## TWO CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO SCRIPTURE

*Dr Roy Long offers his comments on books from authors who are both distinguished scholars in their own fields but who adopt contrasting approaches to faith communities' sacred writings*

John Barton is a well-known and distinguished biblical scholar whose academic career has been spent in and around the University of Oxford. He studied for his BA in theology at Keble College before going on to do postgraduate work at Merton College, and he was awarded his DPhil in 1974. The title of his doctoral thesis, *"The Relation of God to Ethics in the Eighth Century Prophets"*, prefigured his subsequent interest in Biblical theology and, in particular, his concern with the Old Testament. He has written numerous books, of which the most recent is ***A History of the Bible: The Book and its Faiths*** (London, Allen Lane/Penguin, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-241-00391-6). As well as being an academic, Dr Barton is an ordained priest in the Church of England, initially serving as Chaplain of St Cross College, and now assisting in Abingdon, the town in which he lives. There is, in the widest sense of the word, a "Lutheran" connection because Dr Barton is a Corresponding Fellow of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.



In the chapter entitled *The Reformation and its Readings*, Dr Barton describes himself as being among those who 'feel a great affinity to Lutheran theology' (p.398), and his section on *Luther's Reformation* (pp.391-398) demonstrates his sophisticated understanding of Luther's approach to the Bible. He emphasises Luther's Christocentric approach: "... the whole Bible is about Christ: not in the sense that Christ must be found in all the texts through an allegorical reading, but in the sense that

the whole of Scripture witnesses to the freely given salvation from the deserved judgement that Christ brings about." (p.391) He clearly understands the Biblical distinction between Law and Gospel, which is one of Luther's fundamental exegetical principles: "[God's] law reduces us to a near-death experience of hopelessness, but his gospel then raises us up to hope and joy" (p.391), but he also gives a succinct explanation of the debate around the so-called "Third Use" of the Law.

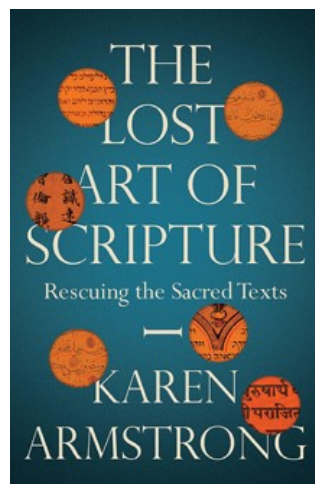
The book would be well worth buying if only for this brief chapter on Luther and the other Reformers, but taken as a whole it is full of information and reads well. My only criticism of an otherwise excellent book is that it is essentially "mainstream" and makes little reference to the wider area of developments in "evangelical" Biblical understanding that have been a feature of the last two centuries.

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Karen Armstrong is a prolific writer, and the "by the same author" page of her latest publication, ***The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts*** (London, The

Bodley Head, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-8479-2431-5) reveals that this is her fifteenth book to deal with different religious topics. Most of these books explore interfaith themes, several of them with an interest in the inter-relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. She is certainly a prolific author, but she is also controversial, and there will undoubtedly be those who will criticise ***The Lost Art of Scripture***.

Karen Armstrong's book is divided into three sections entitled, respectively, *Cosmos and Society*, *Mythos*, and *Logos*, with an additional chapter headed *Post-Scripture*. Its central thesis is that in modern times there has been a fundamental shift in how people regard the Scriptures of the world's major religions. In previous centuries they were regarded primarily as spiritual: "For hundreds of years these texts were ..... viewed as a means for the individual to connect with the divine, to transcend their physical existence, and to experience a higher level of consciousness." But this, she argues, contrasts markedly with the current view of the Scriptures, which sees them as the justification for such things as war, terrorism, and repression: 'The holy texts at the centre of all religious traditions are often employed selectively to underwrite arbitrary and subjective views. They are believed to be divinely ordained; they are claimed to contain eternal truths.'



I found this book at one and the same time interesting and informative, but also irritating. Like all Christian ministers, my theological education was firmly centred on the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as well as hefty chunks of Church history. In my case, I branched out during my doctoral studies, which focused more on Judaism and Islam. So, in reading Karen Armstrong's book, I felt very much at home in the sections dealing with the "Abrahamic" faiths, but less so when she writes about religion in China or the Indian Sub-continent.

Difficult though these sections are, they offer insights into phenomena of which I had no knowledge, but this is where the irritation comes in. The initial introduction to Chinese and Indian Scripture is fine with very fine, clear cut chapters on each subject. But then the author flits backwards and forwards between the major faiths and their geographical locations and I found it difficult to keep track. However, Karen Armstrong certainly seems to know her stuff and, read with discrimination (and, in my case, I think a second reading) this book is a good introduction to some new and esoteric areas of study.



### The Window

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The Anglican-Lutheran Society

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## NEW GENERAL SECRETARY FOR CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES



Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen has been appointed as the new General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). Born in Denmark 55 years ago, Dr Sørensen comes to CEC with a vast experience in theology, mission, ecumenism, leadership, communication and management. He took up the position in January 2020.

'We are confident that he will lead CEC in continuing its vision of encouraging its Member Churches and Organisations in Partnership to work together in hope and witness, to serve Europe, and to promote peace and Church unity,' said CEC President, the Rev Christian Krieger. 'We pray that he may succeed in supporting CEC's programmes, and strengthening CEC's role in Europe amidst all the challenges emerging today.'

Referring to times of great change in Europe Dr Sørensen responded, 'I believe Christianity has been defining for our continent as we know it and that our heritage will play a role in the shaping of our common future. CEC holds a unique position between Churches and the wider society which I look forward to exploring.'

Dr Sørensen received his PhD in Missiology, Ecumenics and in Systematic Theology from the University of Birmingham, UK, and M Phil in Ecumenical Theology from Aarhus University in Denmark. He has led the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (ELCD) in various capacities. He has carried out several academic assignments at Aarhus University and at the United College of the Ascension, UK, and held positions at the Danish Missionary Society and Danish Church Abroad - Hong Kong.

Dr Sørensen has written several articles and publications on international and ecumenical affairs. As well as Scandinavian languages, he speaks English, German, French and Mandarin Chinese.

The CEC Governing Board expressed its gratitude to its former General Secretary, Fr Heikki Huttunen, for his contribution and commitment to CEC.

CEC was founded in 1959 and is a fellowship of some 114 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all the countries of Europe, as well as 40 National Councils of Churches and Organisations in Partnership. It has offices in Brussels and Strasbourg.