

ELCE News

News from the Executive Council and around the ELCE

February 2020

Today – the 29th February

Yes, today is an unusual day – required to keep our travel around the Sun and the way we count time with our calendars aligned. I hope it is a blessed day to you! (And if you are having a birthday – enjoy it – happy birthday! – and sorry about all the jokes and comments about your age we make on the other years!)

Today I also write about blessings and happening in the ELCE. I will concentrate not on 29 days but on 8 days where three things happened in the ELCE.

14th – 15th February @ St Columba, East Kilbride

The Executive Council visited Scotland for business, for fellowship, and for the installation of Pastor Wade Bellesbach as Assistant Pastor. Pastor Wade is a PhD student at St Andrew's, a student of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, and also Westfield House, he is pursuing further studies. The LC-MS has altered its own practice regarding ordinations and installations and this made Wade's ordination in the United States possible while he is studying in Scotland. Wade was ordained on the Saturday of our last Synod and now on Saturday 15th February was installed at St Columba as assistant to Pastor Jon Ehlers (who continues to be the locum pastor). Wade will visit St Columba once per month and will look to hold a worship service at St Andrew also once per month. Pastor Jon continues to visit Scotland a minimum of once per month for a Divine Service on a Thursday evening and for visits to the members and the increasing number of contacts and enquirers.

The Executive Council meeting considered in particular – the state of the transition work, the state of the finances, the state of the Chairman's desk (!) and the work that goes across it, and some important 'nuts and bolts' that need doing (in this case Health and Safety and GDPR). Things are moving along and there's more work still to be done. (The minutes of the December and January meetings are now available – please see your pastor for a copy).

18th and 19th February @ Redeemer, Harlow

The ELCE pastors met for their Barnes Conference. It is a good time of study, fellowship, worship, and business. The usual agenda was changed to give much more time for the transition work which is

the discussion on the Church Order documents about how we are church together in the new ELCE. A lot of work had been prepared (thank you to Pastor Jon and Pastor Tapani) for the paperwork and there was a lot of discussion. But not enough discussion! The pastors didn't get through even half the number of pages presented. So the document has been amended based on their feedback and more discussion is happening. The pastors are having an extension of the Barnes Conference on Monday 2nd March at Luther-Tyndale, 10:30am – 4:30pm.

Ever wondered what the pastors study at Barnes Conference? They have a Confessional Study each time and they are working through the Augsburg Confession. Last week they considered Article 27. Not sure about it? Go on, look it up and have a read! It still speaks to today.

22nd February @ St Andrew, Ruislip

The ELCE Treasurers' Conference sat around the table with papers and laptops and even skyped in the treasurer from St Peter, Plymouth and discussed matters relating to the year end (since we have extended this financial year by 2 months) and transition issues (which can affect the treasurers' work going forward – and we all want to work smart and not waste people's time). It was a good day and many thanks to ELCE Treasurer, Dr Cyndy Lumley, for all the materials and leading the day. And thank you to all who attended!

Into March we go ...

We are now in Lent and we have wiped the ash from our foreheads but, I trust, not the daily repentance from our hearts. I am sure you are busy in your paddock of the ELCE. (Thank you!) The next Executive Council meeting is Saturday 28th March. Please pray for your congregation, for those you know in need of God's care, and for the ELCE. While our synodical and congregational focus might be dominated by the future let us remember the truth that Jesus is walking with us each day ... now! Today is the day we have to rejoice in God's love and to live to his glory – even when it is 29th February! – and so let's rejoice that the Lord of the Church builds his Church – even us.

Thanks for reading!

God's blessings to us all.

Pastor George Samiec