

# ELCE News

*News from the Executive Council and around the ELCE*

*17<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

## **It is a good place to be**

Hello! I wasn't exactly sitting by the seaside looking at a vast expanse of ocean but I was in a bit of a reverie about the ELCE and in my mind's eye flying over the UK and the ELCE congregations. I don't know all the details of each place but I know something and yes, there are issues and concerns, joys and sorrows – so I know things aren't 'perfect' – but I did smile because there is care evident – congregations care for their pastors and pastors care for their congregations and I thought that is something worth smiling at and being thankful for. I hope you are too – as we all roll our sleeves back up and get back to work! 😊 What a fascinating little Church God has drawn together! It is a good place to be.

## **News from the Executive Council**

The Executive Council met Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October for another full meeting. Thank you, Executive Councillors, for your time at the meeting but also for all the time doing things between meetings.

We discussed ...

- **The next Synod (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December)** – yes, it is happening online. More details are coming. But for now a reiteration from last month ...  
**Would all the committees, boards, and commissions who regularly send reports to Synod, please do so by 31<sup>st</sup> October? Please send them to me for the Book of Reports. Thank you.**
- **Updating the ELCE COVID-19 Guidance** in light of the 3 Tiers and responding to those attending our church services who are told they are C-19+. The Executive Council is meeting again this Tuesday to review the ELCE Guidance and will send out another version by the end of the week.  
  
Would ELCE places in England and Wales please put up the NHS Track and Trace QR code for venues so that people who are using the NHS Track and Trace app can scan the code when they are present? Thank you.  
<https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>
- The work to date on the restructure – with questions from the Employment Task Force taking up the most time which looked at the minimum expectation of a vacant congregation for pastoral services (public worship and pastoral care). Not wishing to steal their thunder (well, only a little) but

this group is working on the practicalities of all ministry models we have in the ELCE and how congregations might function if a congregation chooses to be a CIO or if it decides that they can't be a CIO but, of course, want still to exist in the ELCE. It is good that there is this thinking happening. (Thank you.) Also, the Church Order document is now at Draft 12 and there is a meeting each Wednesday of the pastors to discuss the topics raised. And then there is the CIO constitution which has been handed to our solicitor for drafting a bespoke constitution that deals with the complexity of our organisational relationships.

**Please remember that all this material is being prepared for discussion and not as a fait accompli.** We are still talking about who we are and how we want to function together.

As I mentioned last month, there are lots of other business items that are discussed, reports from the Treasurer and Chairman, and also Westfield House, Lutheran Radio UK, and Seedlings and still more matters on the agenda. You can check them all out in the minutes of course.

## **And now some Church Notices ...**

### **Roll of Pastors**

The Rev. Steve Edge has sought to be released from his call to St Timothy, Sunderland, which has been granted by the congregation. He has also announced to the ELCE and its Ministerium that he is resigning from the ELCE Ministerium effective 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. His resignation has been accepted with regret and his name will be removed from the Roll of Pastors.

The ELCE wishes Pastor Steve and Debbie God's blessings as they remain in Tyne and Wear to discern their future with the Church of England.

### **Announcement about St Timothy, Sunderland**

St Timothy Lutheran Church, Sunderland, has released Pastor Steve Edge from his call and the congregation becomes vacant as of 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020. Their immediate pastoral care needs will be covered by the ELCE Chairman as the congregation discerns its future. Please pray for St Timothy in these times.

## **News from Finland**

At Synod 2019 (was that just over 12 months ago?!) the ELCE recognised Church Fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (and

the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Norway). We met and enjoyed the company of Bishop Risto Soramies. Bishop Risto has written to the ELCE to inform us that he has asked his Consistory for an early release from the role of Bishop (to conclude his term in Summer 2021) and this has been granted and so the process begins for the election of the new bishop. He also wrote to say that the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has accepted a church relationship with the ELMDF and that this would be considered at their Synod (14<sup>th</sup> November). I have replied to Bishop Soramies and will send formal greetings to the ELMDF's Synod. Let us keep them in our prayers at this time.

#### **Vale Pastor Harlan Schoenrock (1944 – 2020)**

Word has come to us that Pastor Schoenrock has died. Many of you will remember him. I went hunting through many copies *The British Lutheran* to attempt to piece together his service in the ELCE. What follows may be incomplete ...

1970 – 1971 St Andrew

1971 – 1977 Good Shepherd

1978 – 1993 Holy Trinity

1981, 1983-1985 Pastoral Advisor, LWLGB

1987 – 1990 Redeemer (Vacancy Pastor)

1993 – 1997 St David

All I've heard about him is good and positive and that he served the ELCE with flair and distinction. And we thank the Lord for his gifts to his Church of such servants. May the Lord comfort his family and all who mourn with the hope of the risen Jesus!

#### **What's in a name?**

I asked this last month. (Please see that edition of *ELCE News* for the details.) Thank you to those who have sent in suggestions about a new name for our Church that reflects where we are situated and what we believe. Please keep your suggestions coming to me to the end of October.

#### **Online ...**

Don't forget our

#### **Thank you for reading!**

God bless! ... He always does!

– Pastor George Samiec

