

ELCE News

News from the Executive Council and around the ELCE

21st November 2020

A patchwork or a bower or ...?

Hello! I trust you are safe and well and coping with the lockdown or isolation or having COVID-19 in your home or nearby. The image of the storm – we are in the same storm but in different boats – hasn't abated but we do know the One who stills any storm. Jesus doesn't abandon his people and while the future in your storm might look particularly grim, the darkness will not win. We continue to support each other – particularly in prayer – but also with other contact during the week – all of which is nurtured as we gather around the Lord of the Church who calls us to himself and wonderfully then serves us!

I imagine this *ELCE News* as more a patchwork or even a bower bird's bower – lots of random items – aspects of our church life together. It may seem 'bits and pieces' – because they are! 😊 – but that is how we often live life – just through all the bits and pieces.

News from the Executive Council

The Executive Council met today – and it was long meeting – there is a lot to cover with general administration, Synod preparation, and the restructure.

We discussed ...

- **A budget and support for *The British Lutheran*** which will see the light of day again in the new year and we thank Pastor Tapani Simojoki for taking up the role of Editor.
- The **current COVID-19 situations** throughout England, Scotland, and Wales and monitoring the changes in guidance and the consequences for congregations.
- **The preparation for Synod (11th and 12th December) which will be online via ZOOM 9:30am – 6:00pm.** The Book of Reports is not ready (unfortunately most reports are still not in – please try and send them in this week if they are your task to do – thank you) – and the agenda is being finalised. Generally speaking, the Friday of Synod will focus on the year past and the Saturday will focus on the year going forward.
- **Finances.** There is a lot to discuss – specific contexts, futures (eg. investing in solar panels? [Not at this time]), and the audit. As Trustees of the ELCE and Directors / Trustees of the ELCE Trust Ltd, the Executive Council agrees a report – it is not all about numbers – that tells the world what has been happening in the charities. More work on this needs to be done this week and so the Council will meet again to continue this work which will also give us a

'spring board' for the restructure. Again, we thank ELCE Treasurer, Dr Cyndy Lumley, for all her work at this time!

- **And yes, the restructure was certainly discussed.** We are conscious that documents are still being prepared by various groups. At the moment the largest document is the Church Order document; probably next the Constitution for the 'umbrella' CIO, and then papers relating to practical issues such as employment and how we relate to each other in membership agreements so that there is both an agreed level of support from the local level and an agreed level of ministry to the local level. There is no document that is complete at the moment. And by 'complete' I mean that a draft is finished ready for discussion. So work on the documents is stopping and we are reading the latest version and commenting. Please note that these documents are largely ready for discussion but each has unfinished business or differing views which, in some way, are being highlighted. We know we cannot create the 'perfect' restructure but I think it is fair to say that we all are seeking a restructure that will 'outlive' us and provide a good way of working together – being church locally and nationally and internationally – so that our structure indeed serves us and helps us live the Gospel. As the documents are ready to be discussed, they will be distributed (hopefully within the next 10 days).
- **Safeguarding** can never be forgotten. All congregations are reminded that pastors and members with particular roles (eg, those involved with children and vulnerable people) are required to undertake regular training. The Executive Council will be sending material about training from thirtyone:eight (<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>) soon.
- **Lutheran Radio UK** has many more listeners than ever! More details at Synod but everyone is smiling at this news and with Lutheran Radio UK – <http://lutheranradio.co.uk/>

Discussing our future

The first of the documents for discussion – the Church Order document – is being distributed now. Please contact me for the material if it doesn't reach you.

There are two documents to note. The first is ...

'Church Order – Draft for Synod 2020'

Please note that there are different colours in this document. **What is in black is material agreed by the Barnes Conference. What is in brown are the**

provisional working titles. What is in blue is provisional, needing amendment, further details or a final agreement.

Because there are variances about segments of the Church Order, a second document called 'Table of Variance' is presented to show you the thinking of the pastors, at the moment, where there is variance.

We said at our July Synod that we would give time for all the documents to be read and questioned and discussed and commented on and this will happen.

The Reading Day is Saturday 5th December 9:30am to 4:30pm – online via ZOOM. The goal is to read through the document and discuss what it says and respond to it. This process is new for us all! We have no idea how long this might take. 😊 If we finish reading the Church Order and the Constitution is back from the legal work, then we will also begin to look at the Constitution, or even material about the Working Arrangements.

And yes, to make sure everyone has a good opportunity to read and reflect on all the material, there will be other Reading Days. And another yes, 2021 will more than likely have more than one Synod.

What's in a name?

I received a number of answers to my question about what our restructured Church might be called. There was the creative, the logical, and the historical. There are rules about names of charities and companies which we will need to note. If you are interested go to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-choose-a-charity-name> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incorporation-and-names/annex-a-sensitive-words-and-expressions-or-words-that-could-imply-a-connection-with-government>

Here are the suggestions sent to me ...

- Evangelical Lutheran Congregations in the British Isles
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in the British Isles
- The British Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Atlantic Archipelago
- The Lutheran Church – London Synod (the proposer suggested using a city name – London or Cambridge – akin to historic practices of Church of Jerusalem or Church of Alexandria – and styling it akin to the LCMS to show our 'mother church' history)
- Keep the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England and make the following changes ... for Scotland – 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Scotland – Affiliated with the ELCE' ... and for Wales – 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wales – Affiliated with the ELCE'

The other thing we might want to consider is whether we will have an agreed format for how congregations call themselves. How to decide all this? We will do so together at a Synod.

COVID-19 is still around

There have been some updates from the various jurisdictions. Here are three ...

Updated Guidance for arranging or attending a funeral https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic?utm_source=0e1e4495-b570-4d2b-834b-b0f671fd25a6&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Guidance for reopening places of worship in Wales after the firebreak

<https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-html#section-44811>

Public Health England Guidance regarding suggested principles of safer singing (applies to England)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing>

Calling Synod Delegates

I hope many people join online for Synod! Visit for the day or days or just for a session. You are welcome. When it comes to anything formal (eg. elections) then we will need to know (as always) the delegates. Would delegates complete the congregational form and send it to ELCE Secretary, Mrs Doreen Rosser? Thanks.

Calling Synod Helpers

If you are interesting in helping behind the scene – that should be behind the computer screen 😊 – with computer / ZOOM things – then please contact me. (Sorry. If you're a delegate, you're busy already!) Thanks.

Online ...

Yes, listen to ...



Thank you for reading!

God bless! ... He always does!

– Pastor George Samiec