

ELCE News

News from the Executive Council and around the ELCE

24th April 2021

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

And that resurrection message brings us face to face with the death of Jesus – crucified, dead, and buried. Why? For us! And this is what moves the event from history only and we can make of it what we will to an historical event that breaks into today in the way any news item does! It is today's news – and good news too – the unbelievable news of a gracious God who serves people – us – and look at who we are and the world we've made, the history we have as a species – and yet God keeps coming walking in our world – it isn't exactly a garden now – to care for us with life in a world full of rebellion, fear, and death.

A lot has been happening in the ELCE since our last ELCE News (27th Feb) and we have a lot of things in front of us but in-between we have observed Holy Week and celebrate Easter because that's what the ELCE is all about, what we are all about – living with this gracious God as we follow Jesus each day.

Christ is risen! ... 😊

COVID-19 is still here

Ok, that may seem pretty obvious! And with the easing of lockdowns across the UK and the amount of vaccination that has happened – which is all good – possibly the biggest consequence is complacency. It is wonderful that we can gather together for public worship more and more and let's remain vigilant about not spreading the virus through our physical distancing, wearing masks, singing silently indoors, and washing / sanitising hands. If you or those in your bubble have tested positive or have any symptoms or you feel it is safer for you and others to be at home, then please stay home. (Thanks.)

One way to further limit the spread of C-19 is through regular rapid C-19 testing twice a week (which many of you may be doing because of your work situation). It can also help keep our congregations safe and pastors (even those vaccinated twice) are encouraged to do this regularly to help members have confidence in their congregational involvement. The rapid C-19 tests are free.

From the Executive Council

The Executive Council met on Saturday 24th April and covered a wide range of business – which you will see in the minutes. Four things particularly to note ...

1. For all Synod Delegates ... there will be a postal vote

coming your way to do with our auditors and whether we can change the firm to a local firm mainly because of timing issues – but all the details will be with the ballot and the stamped return envelope. Please look out for it. (Thank you.)

2. For everyone ... but particularly for congregational leaders and those who work with children (even online) there is the need to update our safeguarding training. Pastor Jon Ehlers, ELCE Vice Chairman, has gone through the webinars available from Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) and produced quite a long list which I will email to the pastors. Please discuss in your congregations which seminars are best for you.

This link is to the safe guarding children course, for all Sunday school teachers, youth workers and pastors, £40.00, and should be undertaken as a minimum:
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/training/webinars/children-and-young-people/?subject=safeguarding+children+%26+young+people&eventtype=webinar&page=1>

Tangentially we received the following link regarding safeguarding training from the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) which is the go-to source for social care professionals.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups/trustees/training>

3. We are progressing in the cyber world and increasingly working online – particularly with regards to finances. We are getting the folders and pathways in place for each congregation and Central Office. We are also getting quotes to update our ELCE webpage and also offering support and help for all congregational websites. More news next month.

4. Central Office change of email address. The old has gone – forever – and the new is here ... please note and use contact@lutheranchurch.org.uk

Synod is coming – 22nd May ONLINE

Our one day Synod is Saturday 22nd May online starting at 9:30am. The main item of business is the discussion, debate, and voting on the variant options of some parts of the Church Order document.

The Book of Reports will be distributed in the week after next. If congregations have material for the Book of Reports please send it to me and ELCE Secretary, Mrs Doreen Rosser, as soon as possible.

Representing the ELCE

Coming across my desk are requests for input from the ELCE to a range of issues that affect all churches and society. The requests often are for meetings, talking, and a report. The ELCE is a founding member (1960) of the European Lutheran Council and has actively participated in all its conferences. The ELCE is also a member of Churches Together in England (CTE) in 2011 and we regularly participate in it's Enabling Group and, when it existed, it's Theology and Unity Group.

In the past two years and because of C-19 which cancelled many in-person meetings and the increasing use of online technology the need to meet in person has lessened and so there are an increasing number of opportunities to be involved with other Lutherans and with ecumenism.

Currently I have requests to the ELCE:

- for a lay delegate to the online European Lutheran Conference 2nd – 4th June;
- to participate in the CTE discussions on 'Living with [our Church] Diversity';
- to be involved in the CTE Youth Forum in March 2022 (participants are to be between 18-30) and some meetings now;
- for someone to attend online the next briefing of 'Faith in Europe – the Churches' European relations Network' which is a body in association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – about the Council of Europe (the UK is still a member of this Council, Brexit notwithstanding);
- to provide names of people interested in attending some small groups (of about 10 people) run by CTE looking at various issues the churches face as we come out of C-19. There are five issues to be discussed: theological anthropology, ecclesiology, liturgy, mission and justice, and understanding God and spirituality.

If you are interested in any of the above or if you have questions, please contact me. It'd be good to know who is interested. (You may not get selected – there are over 40 member churches in CTE and if the group is 10 people and every church nominates someone ... you get the idea.)

Participants should have firstly an interest in listening to and discussing church life with other denominations. Having an awareness of the ELCE's doctrinal and ethical views and how we operate (church government) is also a help – but please don't think you have to be an 'expert' to participate.

'What would I have to do?' I hear you ask. 😊 Be able to attend the meetings, listen well, contribute to the discussion winsomely, and then write a brief report for me and the ELCE.

(PS. It'd really be good to have someone attend the online European Lutheran Conference, 2nd-4th June.)

And a little random ... calling all graphic artists
Churches Together in England has a Forum Logo competition.

https://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/607080/Home/News/Latest_news/Will_you_design.aspx?redirected=1

The Lutheran Women's League of Great Britain's Convention

The LWLGB Convention is **Saturday 8th May online from 10:00am**. The theme is 'Kindle the Fire of the Gospel'. The link will be sent out closer to the event. All women are most welcome!

Thank you Congregational Life Committee

The ELCE Retreat went online this year when an in-person time wasn't possible and the weekend shrunk to 5 hours on Saturday 17th April. It was a stimulating time described as 'A Day of Reflection – Our Mission' where most of the ELCE pastors gave very short presentations or discussion starters on a range of Bible texts from Genesis to Revelation and then everyone discussed how we locally or synodically viewed our mission as God's people. It was a rich and wide ranging day. Thank you Congregational Life Committee for something new for the Retreat. We look forward to what you organise next!

500 Years ago?!

Do you know what happened on 17th and 18th April 500 years ago? Log in to The Lutheran Inquisitor (Lutheran Radio UK) and hear the 3 part interview Pastor Jon Ehlers has with Dr Robert Kolb on Dr Martin Luther and the Diet of Worms. It is called ... Here I Stand. 😊



Thank you for reading!

God bless! ... He always does!

– Pastor George Samiec