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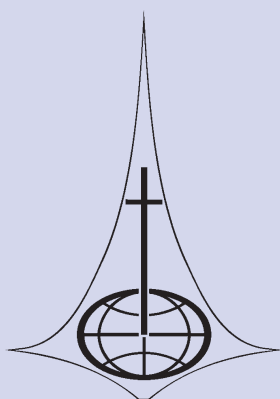
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A Call on Churches to Reflect Anew on their Witness Today



An image of the Luther Rose is covered in a variety of seeds symbolizing the commitment of LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean "to plant and tend initiatives in their own contexts." © LWF/Edwin Mendivelso

Special Focus on Celebrating Lutheranism and Reformation Sunday

GENEVA (LWI)—The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has begun preparations towards the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

In this special edition of *Lutheran World Information (LWI)*, representatives of LWF's leadership offer insights from their respective contexts on how Lutheranism is expressed in regular worship and around Reformation Sunday on 31 October.

In the following pages, you will read about how churches express their Lutheran heritage by signaling a commitment to ecumenism; emphasizing learning and renewal; worshipping alongside their Reformed church members; and celebrating Luther's contribution to music. In other regions they focus on evangelization and building congregations' capacity; praying for the wider church community; producing media programs and initiating social outreach efforts.

Also included is a letter from LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge to

the member churches, inviting reflection "not only on the history but also to discern the present and the future, and the ways in which God calls the churches anew into witness in the present world."

The Lutheran Reformation has travelled around the world, and is thus rooted in the most diverse contexts, Junge says. It "has become both a world citizen and a citizen in this world, relating to a vast variety of cultures."

LWF President Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan urges churches to approach both the Reformation Day and its 500th anniversary in a way that is ecumenically accountable. "By the living Gospel we are united in the body of Christ and hence with churches around the whole world," he says.

The Reformation Day liturgy emphasizes the need for continuing renewal.

Read more in the pages that follow.

12 October 2012

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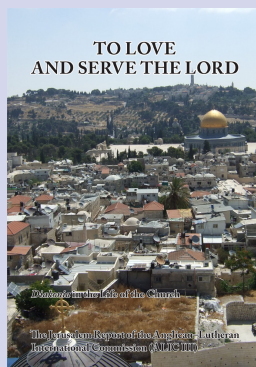
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Church Ministries That Are Transforming Anglican-Lutheran Relations

To Love and Serve the Lord is the title of a new report published in October by the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) on diakonia (church social service work). Jointly produced by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Anglican Communion for the third phase of their bilateral dialogue – ALIC III – the publication offers a diverse array of stories about church ministries that are transforming relations between churches in both communions.

The ALIC III co-chairpersons Lutheran Bishop Dr Thomas Nyiwe (Cameroon) and Anglican Archbishop Bishop Fred Hiltz (Canada) point out that the concluding report of the 2006–2011 dialogue period was intended to highlight what both partners had learned from



their growing experience and therefore focus on “why growth in relations between Anglican and Lutheran churches is possible.”

The Anglican Communion and the LWF commend the report to their respective churches for study, encouraging them to pursue common development of ministries that build up Anglican and Lutheran relationships at all levels of church life and mission, including concrete diaconal action.

The modern dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans on the worldwide level has been in progress since 1972, with joint reports on the different phases.

To obtain a copy of *To Love and Serve the Lord* report, please write to info@lutheranworld.org

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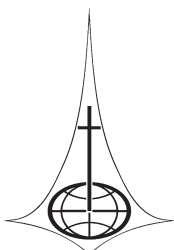
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A Letter to LWF Member Churches

Reformation Day 2012

I take the opportunity to write to you on the occasion of Reformation Day, which is celebrated with special services and activities in most of the member churches of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).



*LWF General Secretary
Rev. Martin Junge
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

Looking already ahead, the LWF as a whole is working with enthusiasm and joy on the preparations for the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in the year 2017. An international committee, set up by the LWF Council is looking at the main cornerstones and conceptual framework that will direct how the LWF as a global communion will approach this important anniversary.

Three basic principles have emerged, which will guide the LWF's further planning at a global level. I am sharing these with you today, hoping that they may be received as an invitation to also guide your own thinking and planning in your respective contexts:

- Lutheran Reformation is a global citizen
- The anniversary needs to be approached with ecumenical accountability
- Churches of the Reformation in an ongoing process of reform and renewal

Lutheran Reformation has traveled around the world. It has become rooted in the most diverse contexts. Churches have become established in far remote regions and witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their particular contexts. Thus, Lutheran Reformation has be-

come both a world citizen and a citizen in this world, relating to a vast variety of cultures, developing through own reflection and praxis their way of being the church. What a wonderful opportunity for a communion-wide approach to the Reformation anniversary: to understand the Lutheran Reformation both in its global and poly-centric dimension! Hence, the question during the Reformation anniversary should not only be about what went out from the historic centers and traveled into the world; equally important is the question about what is coming back from such extended travel, and how conversations are organized that assist the reception of these gifts in a spirit of mutuality.

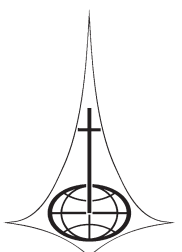
For this to happen, the stories of all the LWF member churches will be needed. I want to invite you

already now to look into these stories: what are the names, which are the places, and what are the events that come to your mind as you think of the history of your church in your own contexts? And how would your churches spell it out in concrete terms: to be a church that reads and witnesses the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the perspectives developed through Reformation?

The second principle, which the LWF invites all of us to uphold, relates to the ecumenical dimension. The Reformation anniversary needs to be approached in a spirit of ecumenical accountability. In many contexts, churches of different denominations have come together and have joined hands in order to serve the neighbor in need, defend the human rights of people denied their rights and uphold their dignity. The mutual trust that has grown among them through this cooperation is a valuable fruit to be harvested and



© LWF/H. Putsman Penet





Children in Görlitz, Germany, set off on a Reformation Day celebration in 2010.
© Evangelisches Jugendwerk in Württemberg

acknowledged on the occasion of the Reformation anniversary.

But let me also mention two concrete examples that have resulted from our ecumenical dialogues: the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the LWF in 1999 not only identified an important differentiated consensus on this doctrine, but also underlined that there is no reason for repeating today the condemnations that were expressed centuries ago. The JDDJ has moved us beyond this point. The Reformation anniversary in 2017 will be a great opportunity to both affirm and express this.

The other example relates to the “Mennonite Action” of the LWF—which the LWF Assembly adopted in 2010—and in which the LWF apologized for persecution to Anabaptists, and for the misinterpretations of their teachings, which last until today. Indeed, some of the theological differences remain. Yet, there was a need for the LWF communion of churches to distance itself from those dimensions of the history of Reformation, which are not justifiable: violence, persecution and caricatures.

Moreover, is the LWF’s deep ecumenical engagement not an ex-

pression of the ongoing pain over the fragmentation of the body of Christ and the embodiment of its fervent prayer for unity?

I want to invite you to reach out to your ecumenical relations partners and to initiate conversations (if not done already) about their possible support to approach the Reformation anniversary with ecumenical sensitivity. I want to invite you to look self-critically into the history of your own church so that the Reformation anniversary in 2017 may also become a liberating moment to heal painful memories.

The third principle, which the LWF invites all of us to uphold, helps to shift the focus from the past and to look into the present and the future. Indeed, the history of Lutheran Reformation is long and rich. Yet, the Reformation anniversary invites all of us not only to reflect on the history, but also to discern the present and the future, and the ways in which God calls the churches anew into witness in the present world. Your church is not only a church *of* the Reformation, but also a church *in* an ongoing process of reformation and renewal. Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century was an expression of such a renewal, which indeed had taken place before that date already, and which will continue taking place—even in this very time. With such an approach, the 500th anniversary will unfold its full potential!

I want to invite you to ongoing discernment about God’s call into mission in the context in which your church finds itself, so that it continues offering its witness for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.

(Rev. Martin Junge, LWF General Secretary)

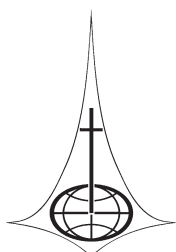
Liberated by the Gospel of Christ

I appreciate this opportunity to reflect with the global Lutheran communion on the meaning of celebrating Reformation Day as a worldwide communion.

The Reformation brought back the freshness of the gospel to Jerusalem. By the living gospel we are united in the body of Christ, and

hence with churches around the whole world.

As Lutherans we have the privilege of belonging to a global com-



munion of churches as members of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). We are all “united in pulpit and altar fellowship” and “serve Christian unity throughout the world” (LWF Constitution, article III).



LWF President Bishop
Dr. Munib A. Younan
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

For many years, Reformation Day was seen as a Lutheran event over against other confessions. Today this has changed. A symbol of that fact is that the Lutheran – Roman Catholic *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, which dealt specifically with the most divisive issue of the Reformation, was signed and celebrated in Augsburg, Germany, on Reformation Day, 31 October 1999. And we have recently seen the result of further work on the biblical basis of the doctrine of justification together with Roman Catholics, Methodists and the Reformed.

We have also good reason to thank God for the significant achievements of the Lutheran – Orthodox dialogue, which for 30 years has moved us gradually from the periphery to the central issues of Christian doctrine.

How can we celebrate the Reformation if we are not liberated by the Gospel of Christ to repent and to forgive? We therefore remember with

humility that the Reformation also brought with it unfortunate social and religious confrontations, also at the hands of the early Lutherans. Hence, at the LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart (July 2010), we held a *Service of Repentance* together with representatives of the Mennonite World Conference where we listened to testimonies of persecution

and suffering of Anabaptists, prayed for forgiveness, and envisaged our future together.

The Reformation contributed significantly to the liberation of human resources, with ramifications in theology, church order, music, literature, and social reform. The emancipation of science and philosophy came with freedom of speech and freedom of religion. We learned that society must be based on justice and human rights. We need to learn that lesson also today, not least in the region of



Christian and Muslim students from the four schools run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) gather in the courtyard of the Dar al Kalima School for a Reformation Day celebration.
© ELCJHL



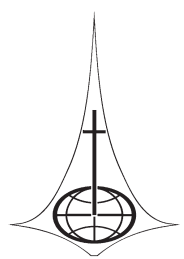
Girls from Talitha Kumi School singing a traditional Palestinian folklore song on the Reformation.
© ELCJHL

the Middle East where my church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land lives and struggles.

We remain grateful to God that through the Reformation the gospel of the saving grace in Christ is the centerpiece of our churches. It is, in Martin Luther’s words, the “true treasure of the church,” by which we are united in faith and hope and service.

May this gospel be at the center as we prepare and celebrate Reformation Sunday in the year 2012.

(LWF President Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan heads the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.)



Lutherans in Tanzania Share the Faith through Evangelization and Capacity Building

Reformation Sunday is one of the most celebrated days in the Lutheran church calendar in Tanzania, a time when we remind ourselves of Martin Luther's emphasis on salvation by God's grace and justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

In preparation for the day, the *Nyumba kwa Nyumba* ("house to house" in Kiswahili), community prayer groups are encouraged to deliberate on these cornerstone doctrines of Lutheranism.

The focus of Reformation Sunday within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is on evangelization and capacity building that enables church members to share and defend their faith.

Some ELCT dioceses celebrate the day with revival meetings and home visits, while in others top church choir groups present their best in an annual music festival.

An example is the Northern Diocese, one of ELCT's 20 dioceses, which gives special attention on Reformation Day to "capacity building for spiritual care" for church members. The day's offerings are earmarked for the training of evangelists—lay village teachers/preachers with basic training in Bible knowledge, theology, church history and social work.

With nearly 400,000 church members, the diocese has only 200 pastors. However, the workload of the pastors is shared by more than 400 evangelists, many of who have been trained at the Mwika Bible School, a pioneer in the training of evangelists throughout Africa.

Reformation Sunday offerings are also used to support the work of

the Bible Society of Tanzania, helping with translation, production and distribution of Scripture. It is also an occasion to drum up support for

activity which has become a popular feature of ELCT's Sunday services.

The highest bidders will secure goats, cattle, chicken, eggs, milk,



Bananas are one of the many items that subsistence farmers offer at Sunday worship to support different ministries of the ELCT Northern Diocese. © ELCT/Michael Shayo

the Scripture Union of Tanzania, which prepares and publishes daily Bible readings and commentaries in Kiswahili.

This Reformation Sunday, church members in the hundreds of thousands will sing the Lutheran anthem, *Mungu Wetu Ndiye Boma* (*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*), before they walk slowly in long lines to the front of the church carrying their monetary offerings. Huge baskets are needed to hold the day's offering.

After benediction, worshippers will leave the sanctuary in joyful anticipation of the final activity of the day—the auctioning of non-monetary items—a participatory

firewood, animal feeds, maize, beans, bananas and juicy fruits to name just a few. This is how some of the local and non-salaried church members support their church.

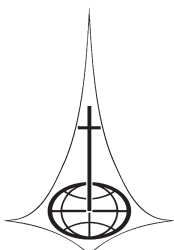
The celebrations in the ELCT Northern diocese serve as an example of the many cultural flavors that make Reformation Sunday a rich expression of the Lutheran communion in Africa.

With 5.8 million members, the ELCT is one of the fastest growing churches in the world. It has played a central role in the planting of Lutheran churches in, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia.

(*ELCT Presiding Bishop Alex G. Malasusa is LWF Vice President for the African region, which has 31 churches and nearly 19.9 million members.*)



Presiding Bishop
Alex G. Malasusa
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet



Korea's Lutherans Focus on Reformation of Church and Society

The Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK) has traditionally celebrated Reformation Sunday in a joint Reformation service. This year the service will be held on 28 October at Central Lutheran Church in Seoul and will commemorate the 495th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation.

Lutherans in Korea assemble at this annual joint worship to celebrate and commemorate both the spirit of the Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, and to reaffirm our ongoing commitment to revival, renewal and reformation in the church and society. This service will be broadcast nationwide.

In addition, the Korea Luther Study Society (KLSS) has invited Prof. Hans Martin Barth from the University of Marburg, Germany, to deliver a lecture on 1 November on the themes; "The Reformation – Annoying Inconvenience or Gift to Mankind?" and "Lutheran Theology in the Context of non-Christian Religions."

The KLSS is a diverse ecumenical gathering of scholars working since 2008 to stimulate and support study about Luther and his theology.

We are blessed to celebrate and share our richness of Lutheran legacy and theological tradition through worship and dialogue within our church and other denominations.

We want to be a Reformation church. That means that as we look ahead to the 500th anniversary of the launching of the Lutheran Reformation to be held in 2017, we want to affirm reformation as our continuing call while reflecting on our role in society today.

We are also conscious of the need for the continued growth of the church. The LCK celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2008. To mark this

occasion we developed numerous ecumenical media programs, published literature and initiated social outreach efforts.

As a young and minority church, we are still passionate about continuing missionary work right in our community but also want to expand our horizons, proclaiming the gospel in word and deed throughout Asia.

For Reformation Sunday this year, we are working alongside the whole Lutheran Communion in Asia to define and strengthen the Lutheran identity in the region. The LCK will focus on the research and study

desire for greater fellowship among churches worldwide through The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

As descendants of Luther's Reformation, we feel a strong sense of responsibility for sharing the spirit of the Reformation with the wider Christian community in Korea to nurture and enrich the Christian faith.

As churches struggling to find their rightful role in a society that is increasingly secular and materialistic, we want to share the core of the spirit of the Lutheran Reformation: by scripture alone, by faith alone, by grace alone.

In this way we will help Christians in Korea to rediscover the call to continue the reformation of the church and society.



*Ms Eun-Hae Kwon, Lutheran Church in Korea
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

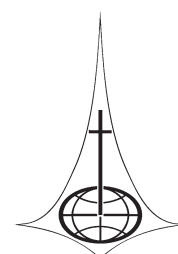


Rev. Dr Hyun-Sub Um, LCK president, delivers a sermon on "The Recovery of Reformation Spirituality" during the 2011 Reformation Day worship service at Central Lutheran Church in Seoul, Korea. © LCK

of Luther, theological dialogues, diaconal work and the training of pastors and lay people in the church.

By establishing a strong Lutheran identity, we to hope grow in our own understanding of Lutheranism and strengthen our commitment and

(Ms Eun-Hae Kwon of the Lutheran Church in Korea is LWF Vice President for the Asian region. The LCK with more than 4,800 members, is one of the 52 member churches in Asia, bringing together over 9 million Lutherans.)



Lutherans in Hungary Celebrate Reformation Day Ecumenically

Although 31 October is usually a workday, there are worship services in each Lutheran congregation in Hungary to celebrate Reformation Day. In many places this is the greatest Lutheran feast after Good Friday. There are always live radio and television broadcasts of Lutheran worship services on this day.

It is also customary that we celebrate Reformation Day together with the Reformed Church in Hungary in ecumenical worship services.

Marking Reformation Day in this way is part of the tradition that gives us our identity as Lutherans in Hungary today.

As we move towards celebrating the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 2017, we have been focusing on different aspects of the Reformation.

This year the theme is “Reformation and Women.” We are making particular efforts for this theme to be adopted by congregations throughout

ample, in December we join Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists and other Christians in trying to understand together the importance of the Reformation today.

We will also organize our annual Reformation Gala together with our Reformed sisters and brothers at the Urania Theater in Budapest. The cooperation of well known and acknowledged artists and scientists always guarantees a high quality event.

In addition, we will hold a Reformation Commemoration in the Reformation Park in Budapest, where last year we planted a tree just as The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and other Christian leaders have planted trees at the Luther Garden at the Reformation Park in Wittenberg (Germany) beginning in 2009.

hance Lutheran identity throughout Europe and the global communion.

The church plans to produce 12 animated episodes on the life of Luther at the time of the Reformation in 13-minute programs suited to confirmation-age children so they can be viewed in schools, at church Bible study or at home.

The project idea has special meaning in the Central Eastern European context which, for historical reasons, has a certain distance between Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church. Emotional and uninformed opposition to other churches rather than one’s own is still a typical phenomenon in the region’s countries.

Overcoming this attitude through communication and dialogue about one’s respective history and identity is an important strategy for deepening ecumenical relations. The animation series will address Lutheran tradition and identity in a modern “fresh language.”

As Lutherans make up just three percent of Hungary’s 10 million people, it is hoped that this series will also help illustrate Lutheran contributions to society, particularly as they relate to Luther’s economic thoughts, and our educational outreach.

The ELCH includes three dioceses headed by bishops, with all levels of the church sharing leadership between lay people and the clergy. There are 300 congregations, led by 200 male and 100 women pastors

(Bishop Dr Tamás Fabiny heads the Northern District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary. He is Vice-President of the LWF Central Eastern Europe region, which includes 15 churches and 1.4 million members.)



*Hungarian Bishop
Dr Tamás Fabiny
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet*

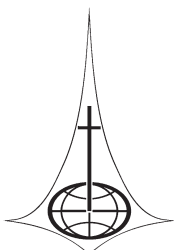


*ELCH Presiding Bishop Péter Gancs (right), ready to water the tree planted by the Hungarian Lutheran church at the 2011 Reformation Day commemorations at the Reformation Park in Budapest.
© Zsuzsanna Bolla/Evangelikus.hu*

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH).

Reformation Day celebrations are part of our ongoing efforts to enrich the Lutheran communion. For ex-

In anticipation of the 2017 anniversary celebrations of the Reformation, the church is developing an animation film project on the life of Martin Luther, with the goal to en-



In Württemberg “ChurchNights” Increase Awareness about Reformation

In Württemberg traditional church services are held in many congregations on Reformation Day – sometimes on the Sunday before 31 October, and sometimes on the very day.

An additional “discovery” dating from 2006 is the ChurchNight. On the evening of 31 October many congregations hold special events for, and with, young people. They mainly include youth services, often with a band, and also programs in and around the church, such as concerts, torch relay races, and climbing the church tower.

Over 100,000 Visitors

ChurchNights have become more and more popular in the last few years. This year, too, the organizers expect over 100,000 visitors all over Germany.

We note that the original American Halloween has become very popular with children and young people. We would like to counter that on a positive note and strengthen the perception of Reformation Day.

As the patron of the ChurchNight action I am very glad that church congregations are taking part, so that children and young people are again becoming more aware of the meaning of Reformation Day. The media are taking it up too, by the way. The TV news shows images of events on 31 October as a contrast to Halloween.



Württemberg Bishop
Dr Frank O. July
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

Writing Hymns

In the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) the focal theme this year is “the Reformation and Music”. ChurchNight takes up this

topic. The organizers have invited young people to write their own songs. That way there will be competitions and presentations on the



Young people in Erfurt, Germany, issue an enthusiastic invitation to ChurchNight 2010.
© Evangelisches Jugendwerk in Württemberg

subject of Reformation before the big day.

The services and ChurchNight really do serve to strengthen the fellowship among churches.

The ChurchNight, in particular, sharpens the profile of Lutheran belief since young people assist in preparing for the worship. By writing hymns themselves, they continue the tradition of Martin Luther, who expressed important articles of faith in the form of hymns.

When people rediscover Reformation Day that also heightens their faith and their Evangelical Lutheran identity, and benefits the whole Lutheran Communion.

Established in 1534, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg is one of the oldest churches of the Reformation. It has the historical and theological

particularity of being geographically located between the Lutheran and Zwinglian spheres of influence and therefore, from the very beginning,

had a role as mediator between the two. When the Reformation took place in this region, the church adopted the Lutheran confession under the motto: “The Word of God endures eternally.”

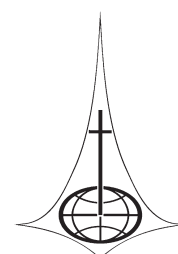
Christians from Other Churches

In its groups, parishes, and in the church administration, the Württemberg church seeks to express how God’s Word can be effectively spoken and actualized in today’s world, underlining the importance that this is done together with Christians from other churches.

The Württemberg church has 2.2 million members in nearly 1,400 parishes and 51 church districts, served by around 2,400 pastors.

(Bishop Dr Frank Otfried July, head of the Württemberg church, is LWF Vice-President for the Central Western Europe region, which includes 20 churches with some 15.2 million members.)

More LWI News at
www.lutheranworld.org/lwf



Nourishing Hope in the World, a Vocation for Swedish Diocese

The Church of Sweden does not have a living tradition of celebrating Reformation Day on 31 October, but uses instead from its lectionary, the Sunday Sexagesima theme “The Living Word.”

The bishop of the diocese of Lund, one of the church’s 13 dioceses, shared the diocesan vision statement as one expression of how the church works with its Lutheran identity. Titled “Grounded in Grace, Creative in the World,” the vision statement elaborates how this diocese inspires learning and teaching, and gathers around hope, with baptism as its cornerstone.

It states that learning and renewal are the trademarks of the Holy Spirit and learning has always had an important place in the Evangelical-Lutheran tradition.

“We live in an age when secularism is confronted by a revival of religion. For that very reason there is increased need for teaching, research and reassessment of the Christian tradition and its cultural heritage,” the vision statement says.

It notes that church is a place that is rich in knowledge and broad in its perspective, a place where all genuine questions are honored.

Because the people of God are fundamentally a people of hope, every Sunday the church celebrates the victory of life over death, and joy at the fellowship with God, each other and God’s whole creation.

“To nourish hope in the world is the vocation for all our parishes. Our parishes are places where we can raise our sights to look beyond our own boundaries and gain new perspectives. We are proud of the church and we are eager to tell about it,” the Lund vision affirms.

Elaborating baptism as the cornerstone of Christian life, the vision

statement emphasizes: “Here everything is given us freely, by grace. That is why we are generous in giv-

one of the many ways in which the church can live in critical solidarity with society.



© Kristina Strand Larsson

ing access to baptism. We welcome children, women and men who may be on their way to baptism. Because of baptism we are called to live courageously, confidently and lovingly, with Christ as our role model.”

For the diocese, the community of the baptized expresses itself in the “glocal church”—global and local—in relationships that link churches, dioceses and parishes, affirming each other’s gifts and keeping one another prayerfully connected.

At the same time, Christians are urged to be mindful of the great divide in today’s world. “We are challenged by the riches and poverty in and around us and by the command to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.”

The Lund vision statement calls on Christians to be profoundly and radically transparent, and seek to “be pioneers in finding sustainable ways of meeting and living with each other in a multi-cultural society,” as

The vision statement concludes with a prayer:

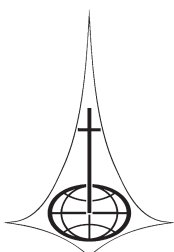
God, you continually call us into life and renewal of life
You grant us the responsibility of being creators with you
finding our footing in grace
You have given your Son to show us the road to you
and your Spirit to inspire us to a life of service and compassion,
of challenge and growth
Thank you that you **are**
and give us life of your life
Amen

(Bishop Dr Antje Jackelén heads the Diocese of Lund in the Church of Sweden. She is a member of the LWF Council. The Swedish church is one of the six LWF member churches in the Nordic region, which represents some 19.5 million members.)

The full text of the Diocese of Lund vision statement is available at:
www.svenskakyrkan.se



Lund Bishop Dr Antje Jackelén
© Kennet Ruona



In Chile, Celebrations Are a Clear Signal of Commitment to Ecumenism

In 2005, at the request of the Pentecostal and Protestant Churches, then Chilean President Ricardo Lagos Escobar promulgated a decree-law establishing 31 October as the “Day of Evangelical and Protestant Churches” in Chile.

In 2008, President Michelle Bachelet signed another decree-law, which declared 31 October a national holiday. This situation highlighted the need to educate the Chilean people about the date and its significance, and especially to inform them that—rather than being a holiday to celebrate Halloween (a pagan feast of Celtic origin)—it serves to commemorate Reformation Day, and is a day which unites the Evangelical and Protestant Churches.

Significant National Issues

In this context, Reformation Day is celebrated on the day itself. In the case of the southernmost Lutheran church in the world, located in

Magallanes-Punta Arenas, the commemoration service is an ecumenical one, with guests from both the ecclesiastical and public authorities.



IELCH pastor
Rev. Dr. Gloria Rojas Vargas
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

We celebrate in this manner in order to send out a clear signal of our commitment to ecumenism and engagement with a date which divided us, but which today permits us to find paths towards unity on significant national issues, such as the situation of young people, education and the unfair distribution of wealth.

The Right to Education

Indeed, this year we will specifically focus on the right to education, as expressed by Martin Luther in the majority of his writing and doctrinal thinking.

In October, we will be celebrating the seventh anniversary of the National Day of Evangelical and Protestant Churches in Chile, the 495th anniversary of the Lutheran

Reformation and the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. Against this background, the following questions come to mind:

- What is the relevance today of the teachings of the Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther?
- What role do those teachings play in the life of the Evangelical churches in Chile?
- How are they relevant to our participation in society?
- Where do we stand with regard to ecumenical connections?

On Tuesday 3 October, I was invited by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Punta Arenas, Father Bastres, to give a presentation on those issues to an audience consisting of priests, deacons and nuns from the area. The presentation was very well received, and well-attended.

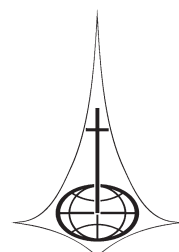
The IELCH has 3,000 members in 12 congregations and communities, served by 10 pastors and 20 co-workers. It considers itself as a church that is called to minister among the poor population, and is currently in the midst of a ten-year period dedicated to mission growth and stewardship through the strengthening of congregations, training of leadership, and the development of new worshipping communities.

Diaconal work continues to be a strong emphasis, with projects dealing with public health education, community centers and day care ministries, outreach to those facing domestic violence and pastoral accompaniment for people living with HIV and AIDS.

(Rev. Dr. Gloria Rojas is LWF Vice-President for the Latin American and Caribbean region, which comprises 16 churches with over 846,000 members. She is pastor of IELCH's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Magallanes, southern Chile.)



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile played a mediating role as students of all ages in Chile mobilized in 2011 demanding a more just educational system. © IELCH Comunicaciones/Roberto Buentealba



North America: An Opportunity to Celebrate the Gospel

Reformation Day/Sunday in North America is an opportunity for congregations across our churches to gather in the spirit of the Reformation to celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

On this day we celebrate the heart of our faith: the gospel of Christ—the good news—that makes us free! Though we give thanks for the events of the 16th century Reformation that brought renewal to the church of that time, we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to unite the church today in its proclamation and witness to the world.

Such an understanding leads us to see that we gather in the same

Spirit with Lutherans across the world, united in one baptism; and we fervently pray for God to continually renew and sustain the church catholic in its proclamation and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Congregations of our North American churches will observe Reformation Sunday in a variety of ways. The most common celebrations will be in worship. Some congregations will mark the day by gathering for festive liturgies with brass bands, choirs,



ELCIC Bishop Susan C. Johnson
© LWF/H. Putsman Penet

processions and other celebratory elements. Other congregations will observe the festival in worship that is an expression of their local context.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), congregations are encouraged to lift up The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Sunday on

28 October and include prayers for the wider church community.

Within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American (ELCA), a Hymn Festival has been prepared for use in congregations and synods across the church to celebrate Luther's contribution to music in the church and the ever growing global voice of song that continues the reforming and transforming work Luther began.

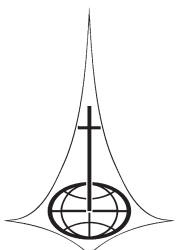
Using the prepared text from the ELCIC and ELCA's worship book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (EvLW), we pray:

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your work, protect and comfort them in times of trial, define them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen. (EvLW, pg 58)

(National Bishop Susan C. Johnson leads the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. She is the LWF Vice-President for the North American region, which includes the ELCA, ELCIC and the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad, bringing together 4.4 million members.)



For Reformation Sunday 2011, the ELCA congregation Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington D.C., held an outdoor service, during which worshippers posted their reforms for the church today on the congregation's statue of Martin Luther. Courtesy of Luther Place Memorial Church, Washington D.C., USA





Liturgical Material

Reformation Day

Worship



© LWF/Edwin Mendivelso

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) invites churches and their congregations to use this liturgical material to celebrate Reformation Sunday or any other worship associated with Reformation Day in their respective contexts. Alternative prayers, Bible readings or hymns can be used to suit the respective traditions.

Opening and Invocation

In the name of God the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit

Amen

Leader:

Is there anything which is new on earth?

Congregation:

There is nothing new under the sun.

Yet the Lord says

Behold, I am doing a new thing;
Do you not see it?

The Lord says,

**Behold I am doing a new thing;
Already it springs forth.**

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers
in the desert.

The wild beasts will honor me

Yes, the jackals and the ostriches,

For I give water in the wilderness.

Rivers shall flow in the desert

So that my people will not thirst.

God has put a new song in our mouths,

A new song of praise to our God.

Sing to the LORD a new song;

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Song:

Hale, hale (Caribbean Traditional) *Thuma*
Mina 55

Hal - le-, Hal - le-, Hal - le - lu - - - ja, Karibik

Hal - le - Hal - le - Hal - le - lu - - - ja.

Hal - le - Hal - le - Hal - le - lu - - - ja. Hal - le -

lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - ja.

Prayers of Penitence

(First reading [Isaiah 42:9-16])

God, we confess

We are not always open to the new thing you
are doing.

That we are not always open to that new
thing breaking forth;

We like being comfortable.

**Even when we know you have brought us
this far,**

Even when you intend us to move on,

We settle down. We settle in our ways.

We like being comfortable.

Help us to trust you as you lead us to new
ground.

Remove our anxiety;

Free us from the fear of the new.

Response: Santo, Santo (*Spanish*), *Thuma*
Mina 117

We also confess

That we love the new, the bright and shiny.

We rush to embrace it,

To buy and sell it,

We confess that we are sometimes easily
drawn to the spirit of our time,

Disdaining and loathing the old

**We disrespect old age, we disregard old
practices,**

And we discard old points of view,

Even those that are tried and true

Deliver us from our addiction to the appear-
ance of youth;

Free us from our attraction to change for its
own sake.

Teach us to embrace gifts from the past

That still have the power to renew us.

Santo, Santo, Santo (*in English*)

In this dilemma we pray for discernment, O
God,

For you are the Alpha and the Omega,
The beginning, middle and end.

Teach us to know the times:

When it is time to move on,

Let us move on.

And when it is time to remain faithful,

Let us stand firm.

We pray in the name of Christ Jesus,

Our Teacher in times of stillness

And our Guide and Companion in times of
change

Amen.

Hymn: Rock of Ages

Lutheran Book of Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg
Publishing House, 1979), 327

Absolution

The One who is always doing a new thing,

The one whose mercies are new every morning,

The one who pulled down the wall dividing us
And adopted us as children,

To the one who reclaims us every day for the
sake of his son, Jesus Christ,

The atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not
only for ours

but also for the sins of the whole world,
glory be now and forever,

Amen

IV

Word and Reflection

(Gospel reading [Matthew 13:45-52])

Intercessory Prayer

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who
has created us
and made us into tribes and nations.
God, you who renews creation every day

Make us co-creators with you

May we seek new relations with those who
hate us,
Seeking blessings for those who curse us,
Praying for those who abuse us
Lord, make us instruments of your new creation.

Make us co-creators with you

We pray for those whose present life is dis-
couraging,
Whose only hope is what has gone,
Whose joy is in that which is past,

Make us co-creators with you

Response: *In manus tuas, Pater* (Taizé hymn)

O God you created order out of chaos

Where there is discord, bring unity

O God of new beginnings usher a new era of
friendship

So that even our economic relationships can be based on mutual care

So that our politics may be governed by tolerance

So that our difference may be resolved in peace

Make us co-creators with you

In manus tuas, Pater

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

May God who was the same yesterday, is so
today and remains so forever,
The one in whom there is no shadow of turning
Whose mercies are new every morning
Sustain and transform you today.

Amen.

Prepared by Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata, LWF Department for Theology and Public Witness



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