



The Porvoo Communion

**Tampere and Dublin**  
**1 February 2024**

**To the Primates and Presiding Bishops of The Porvoo Communion**  
**The Church of the Faroe Islands (Faroese Fólkakirkjan)**

Since last we met as co-chairpersons and co-secretaries with the Primates and Presiding Bishops, in Tampere, Finland, in October 2022, a fresh opportunity to extend the membership of the Porvoo Communion has arisen. In recent times, this has happened with the welcoming of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, who signed the Porvoo Declaration in 2010, followed by the Latvian Church Worldwide and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Great Britain, who signed in 2014, following a period as observers since 2010. In every way this has enhanced and expanded our self-understanding along with our capacity to contribute to Christian witness in the societies to which we belong.

A further opportunity now presents itself in regard to the Church of the Faroe Islands (Faroese Fólkakirkjan). By invitation, two members of the Faroese Church attended the 2023 Porvoo Thematic Conference which was held in Madrid last October on the theme 'Life in the Eucharist'. They made a presentation on the character and the life and witness of their church and its positioning in the religious and ecumenical life of the Faroe Islands. The Lutheran co-secretary, the Rev'd. Dr Thorsten Rørbæk, has met with representatives of the church on 5 January 2024. The Bishop, the Rt. Rev'd. Jógvan Fríðriksson, and the Dean of the cathedral, the Very Rev'd. Uni Næs, reported to Thorsten that the church is ready to sign the Porvoo Declaration and wish to have some further preliminary discussion with clergy to progress this.

We believe that this is a welcome development and one that is entirely consonant with the theological and ecclesiological bases on which the Porvoo Communion stands. For centuries the Church of the Faroe Islands was a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, first as a part of the diocese of Zealand/Copenhagen, and from 1990-2007 as a diocese, and it maintains close connections with the Danish Church following its recognition as an autonomous church in 2007. The Faroese share the same faith, based in the Holy Scriptures and expressed in the Apostolic and Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Furthermore, the church celebrates the two sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist and is episcopally ordered. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the Danish Church was part of the initial negotiations and the drafting of the Porvoo Common Statement from the very beginning, even though the Danish Church did not sign the Porvoo Declaration until 2010. During this time, the Church of the Faroe Islands was still a part of the Danish Church, wherefore it was indirectly a part of this process.

Given this theological and ecclesiological concurrence with the essence of Porvoo, it seems to us to be a natural progression to advance the process by which the Church of the Faroe Islands might sign the Porvoo Declaration.

In preparation for this, both of us intend to make a visit in the coming weeks, accompanied by the Lutheran Co-Secretary. This would enable us to set out clearly the theology of Porvoo, to worship with the bishop and clergy, to address any issues and to report to you our perspective on the accession of the Church of the Faroe Islands to full membership of the Porvoo Communion. We should also be able to explore ways in which the Faroese church might contribute to the life of Porvoo and be itself enriched within this widening circle. The fact that there is a strong working relationship in existence with the Danish Church is a very promising start.

We hope to report to you by the end of March 2024. Provided that this exercise of due diligence affords us good theological and ecclesiological reasons to proceed we will begin the process of formally admitting the Church of the Faroe Islands at the Porvoo Communion's next conference, to be held in Sigtuna, Sweden, this coming October.

In the meantime, we seek your comments and ask you kindly to send these to either of the co-secretaries, whose contact details are given below. We kindly ask you to send any comments no later than **Friday 1 March**.

For your information, the short appendix at the end of this letter provides a brief sketch of the Church of the Faroe Islands.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt. Rev'd. Dr Matti Repo**  
**Bishop of Tampere**



**The Most Rev'd. Dr Michael Jackson**  
**Archbishop of Dublin**



**Co-chairs of the Porvoo Communion**

**Please send comments on the proposals to either co-secretary by 1 March:**

**Lutheran** The Rev'd. Dr Thorsten Rørbæk

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**Anglican** The Rev'd. Canon Dr Ainsley Griffiths

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## **Appendix: The Church of the Faroe Islands**

The Faroe Islands form an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, with eighteen islands having a combined population of 54,557 (November 2023 estimate). According to official statistics (2023), around 77% of the population are members of the Church of the Faroe Islands whilst considerably smaller numbers are members of the Plymouth Brethren and the Roman Catholic Church (Diocese of Copenhagen). The Church of the Faroe Islands has a single diocese, with its cathedral church in the main city, Tórshavn. The bishop, the Rt. Rev'd. Jógvan Fríðriksson, was ordained priest in 1985 and consecrated in 2007, serving as the bishop of the newly autonomous church to the present day. There are around twenty-seven ordained priests to serve the sixty or so churches which are grouped into sixteen parishes around the country, with worship conducted in Faroese.

The Church of the Faroe Islands' website (in Faroese) can be accessed [here](#), with some information in English, including a history of Christianity in Faroes, [here](#). There are also many photographs of church life which are available [here](#).

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