

THE WINDOW

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THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

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We hope you enjoy this issue of your Newsletter.

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The New Archbishop of Canterbury: Pages 7-13



Bishop Paulina Hlawiczka-Trotman of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (right) and Rev Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, Moderator of the Free Churches (left) with Archbishop Sarah Mullally (centre). Page 12

The Annual Meeting 2026

Saturday 7th March

On this and the following pages you will find an account of our meeting entitled 'Caring for God's People Everything has been summarised by our Secretary, Dick Lewis. Members who were there will know that everything that day was of a very high standard and happily you can find everything in full on the Society's website. It's well worth a visit at <https://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org/events/2026-03-07-annual-meeting>.

The AGM in brief

As 11am approached 28 members and three speakers and 10 members on a Zoom call gathered at St John's Wood Church in London. We were warmly welcomed by the Rev Dr Anders Bergquist, the Vicar, and then our Lutheran President, Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, led the opening prayers, and the Annual General Meeting began. 20 members had sent their apologies.

Our two Presidents, Bishop Jana and Bishop David Hamid, were thanked by the Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama, our Lutheran Moderator, for their active and helpful support. Both had agreed to stand for another year and were elected unopposed. Then **the Minutes of the last AGM** on 8th March, 2025, were agreed unanimously.

The Co-Moderators Report was presented by Jaakko on behalf of himself and Bishop Paul Ferguson, our Anglican Moderator. They told the meeting that during the year efforts had been made to clarify the Society's vision, strategy and operational activity, and to engage more effectively with younger members. They consider it important that the Society should be truly an international organisation, not merely Anglo-centric! Succession planning is being undertaken for the roles of The Window editor, conference registrar, membership secretary, treasurer and secretary. The Society's policies have been reviewed and confirmed: Expenses Policy, Investment Policy, Reserves Policy and Safeguarding Policy. The Social Media Policy is in process

This was followed by the **Treasurer's Report and financial statement**. Our Treasurer, Patrick Litton, was unable to be at the meeting but had circulated the accounts and his report in advance. There was just one question and that was with regard to the debt incurred when the caterers for the Edinburgh Conference Dinner failed to deliver. Bishop Paul explained that all possible legal processes had been followed but it had become, if not impossible, certainly uneconomic to recover the debt. The matter had been reported to the Charity Commission who have noted that we have done all we can and have put procedures in place to ensure we won't face a similar situation in future. Bishop Paul expressed our gratitude to Patrick for his careful stewardship of our funds and the meeting showed its appreciation with applause. **Our Independent Examiner of Accounts**, Lisbeth Pedersen, was reappointed to serve for 2026.

Officers and Trustees: it was noted that the Rev Joseph Nelson had resigned as a Trustee as from this meeting and he was thanked for his contribution during the year. No election was necessary because we have more than the minimum number of Trustees. The Officers and Trustees will have completed their term of office by the next Annual Meeting so there will need to be an election in March 2027.

National Coordinators Reports were received from Dr Jaakko Rusama (Finland) and the Rev Fredrik Ulseth (Norway). Jaakko reported that our Society has good

relations with both the Lutheran Church and the Anglican Chaplaincy in Helsinki. He shares information about the Society's activities on Facebook and by email. Fredrik reported that he is making strenuous efforts to invite theological students to join us, and is being assisted by Church House and by members in the faculties.

The Membership Secretary's Report revealed that we have gained 28 new members during the past year of whom 18 are students. We have a new reduced subscription of just £12 for newly ordained or authorised ministers and she is delighted that some have renewed their membership on this basis. We currently have members in 33 countries.

Bishop Paul reported that **the Hamburg Conference, September 2026**, is at an advanced stage of preparation. It will reflect the distinctive nature of Hamburg. 37 people have booked so far but it is hoped that more will still register. Details can be found on the website.

Finally, Mary Kilikidi and Rebecca Daniel told the meeting that **A-LS Young Voices** has got off to a good start. Most of the members are men and it would be good to have more women joining their voices! They have an exciting programme planned for the rest of this year.

There being no other business the meeting ended in prayer led by Bishop David Hamid.

We then turned to the Topic for the Day:

'CARING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE': 'THE CHURCH ENGAGING WITH SOCIETY'

This is a very brief summary of Bishop Rob Wickham's presentation to our Annual Meeting. Bishop Rob is Chief Executive of the Church Urban Fund. Here he is being introduced by Bishop Paul

Bishop Rob began by telling us that the recent Church's engagement with social issues, particularly poverty and racial justice, was inspired by the 'Faith in City' report and by frameworks like Bonhoeffer's principles for ministry.

The Historical Impact of 'Faith in the City' Report

This was a groundbreaking, research-based call to action addressing urban poverty and social justice in 1985. It was a daring report, he asserted, not written by academics but after a three-year listening research project. It was initiated by Archbishop Robert Runcie who wanted to understand what had led to the urban riots and social unrest in the early 1980s.

During Margaret Thatcher's era as Prime Minister of the UK, poverty rose from 13% to 25%, nearly doubling in a few years. Poverty levels have remained steady since then, despite reforms made by parliament, with about 1 in 5 people living in poverty nationwide. It came as a surprise to some in the meeting that London has the highest poverty rate, despite pockets of extreme wealth.

The report led to the creation of the Church Urban Fund, raising about £60million from churches, businesses, and government over 7-8 years. The funds were used for grassroots projects, youth and community workers, and social initiatives. Bishop Rob told us that gradually issues of



racial justice led to the establishment of the Church of England's Racial Justice Unit some 30 years after 'Faith in the City'.

Frameworks for Engaging with Society

The Bishop suggested some key theological and practical models to guide church engagement in social justice and community development. The first was Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'Life Together' which emphasizes listening, holding your tongue, and serving outside the church walls. Bonhoeffer suggests that the ministry of listening is a primary act of love and service.

The second was Henri Nouwen who, in his book 'Community', emphasises going to places of poverty and brokenness, seeing blessing in the marginalised. Jesus said 'Blessed are the poor'; he didn't say 'Blessed are those who

care for the poor’! Don’t veer away from places of hurt but go right there!

The Nature of Poverty

Poverty includes economic, relational and identity aspects, Bishop Rob said. Relational poverty can be as damaging as financial poverty. He went on to advocate for Asset-based Community Development which involves recognising existing community assets, like local resources and people. He gave the example of how we might reimagine church assets by referring to the stone jars at the wedding at Cana. They were there all the time. Nothing new was introduced into the room but Mary tells the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you!’ and the water is transformed.

The ‘Look Up Tool’ (<https://cuf.org.uk/lookup-tool>)

Bishop Rob recommended using this tool which you can find on the Church Urban Fund website. It provides deprivation data for every parish in England. It is a wonderful aid to targeting contextual ministry. The data shows areas of extreme deprivation: for example, 58% of children in Blackpool grow up in poverty; 73% of pensioners in Middlesbrough are in poverty. Life expectancy varies greatly with a 25-year gap between Blackpool and London for boys. Poverty also affects identity and relationships, not just income.

Serving Churches Grow

Research like ‘Growing Good’ links church growth to serving neighbours and discipleship. Strategic partnerships like ‘Places of Welcome’ and ‘The Together Network’ enhance community impact. The approach is incarnational, contextual, relational, and rooted in scripture.

The Church’s Mission and Social Justice

The Church’s mission integrates social action, justice, and proclamation as core to Gospel work. The Bishop cited the Five Marks of Mission across the Anglican Communion which highlight responding to need, proclaiming the Gospel, and transforming unjust structures. Responding to need involves love and service, such as food banks and legal advice, he told us.

Challenging unjust societal structures is the most difficult but essential part of mission. He reminded us of the Church of England’s Ordinal for the Making of Deacons which emphasises serving the community, especially the marginalised.

Biblical stories like Cain and Abel, the Good Samaritan, and Jesus’ resurrection appearances illustrate love, neighbourliness, and service. And Jesus’ command to Peter, ‘Feed my lambs,’ calls the Church to protect and serve the most vulnerable.

Asset-based Community Development

This is all about recognising and reimagining existing community assets. The story of St Lawrence exemplifies serving the marginalised. Knowing that he would soon lose his life under fierce persecution he gave away church treasures to the poor. When the Emperor Valerian demanded of him the church treasure he pointed to the poor – ‘These are the treasure of the Church.’

The Church Urban Fund

This promotes a place-based, collaborative approach to ending poverty. Tools like the ‘Knowledge Bank’ help churches articulate their impact, assessing the monetary value of their social action. He cited one church valuing their work at over £700,000. This kind of data is very valuable when it comes to applying for grants, for example.

Conclusion

The goal of every congregation should be to challenge unjust structures and shape policy through grassroots impact and strategic engagement. We have plenty of tools, plenty of framework and plenty of data, and that’s how we serve the churches and society, he said.

Bishop Rob’s presentation was packed with information, resources, illustrations, examples and challenge. You should read it. It’s doesn’t take long. You can find it in the report of the Annual Meeting on the website at

<https://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org/events/2026-03-07-annual-meeting>.

The Five Anglican Marks of Mission



Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.



Teach, nurture, and baptize new believers.



Respond to human need by loving service.



Seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation.



Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Eucharist

The President was the Rev Kristina Andréasson who, until very recently, was Associate Priest in this church, but who is now Chaplain to Francis Holland School and Associate Priest at St Paul's Church, Rossmore Road, and St Cyprian's Church in Clarence Gate. Our host, Dr Anders Bergquist, preached.



In his sermon he reflected on the themes of divine nearness and judgment. Emphasising Jesus' compassionate welcome as a catalyst for personal transformation or metanoia, he told of a notable observation made during a 2016 meeting in Uppsala considering the revision of Swedish Liturgical

Texts. Someone from Finland had examined them very closely and pointed an increased focus on God's friendly presence and a considerably reduced number of references to God as Judge.

Using the example of Zacchaeus, whose conversion was sparked by Jesus' simple invitation rather than judgment, Dr Bergquist suggested that true acceptance and welcome stem from personal integrity and holiness. A challenge for the Church as a whole, and for individual congregations, lies in embodying these qualities so as to effectively inspire change in others. He concluded by linking Lent to the journey of drawing closer to God and collectively pursuing a holiness that manifests goodness and justice within our churches which makes them more effective in welcoming others, and also leading them into conversion of life.

Lunch came next, providing time for everyone to mingle, greet old friends and make new ones. This was followed by

'The Christian in Social Work'

Natalia Pierson offered the meeting a comprehensive reflection on Christian social work principles, ethics, systemic justice, trauma-informed care, and church's role in community support.

Natalia introduced herself as a Black Biracial military brat from USA (mainly California, Texas and Washington) with 20 years of social work experience in foster care, jail transition, mental health, homelessness, substance misuse and HIV/HCV prevention.

She holds Master's in Social Work and Divinity and is at present a candidate for ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She told us that she found the Lutheran Church after leaving the Southern Baptist Church.

Social Work in USA

Describing the development of Social Work in the USA as a formal profession since 1890s-1920s, Natalia spoke of some of the pioneers including Jane Adams and Mary Richmond, and of the establishment of the National Association of Social Workers in 1955. The Association promotes values including service, social justice, human relationships, integrity, competence, and trauma-informed approaches.

Code of Ethics

As a Christian in the field Natalia told us of the Social Workers' Code of Ethics and the Biblical material that undergirded each aspect for her. The Core Values are Service, Social Justice, Importance of Human Dignity and Worth, Relationships, Integrity and Competence:

Service is about helping those in need, elevating others above self-interest and pro bono work modelled, she said, on Jesus' humility in washing his disciple's feet.

Social Justice involves challenging systemic injustice, advocating for vulnerable groups, addressing poverty,



discrimination and systemic oppression. This, Natalia felt, was implicit in Jesus' reading of Isaiah 61 in the Synagogue in Nazareth – 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ...

Human Dignity and Worth has its root in Psalm 139, which says that everybody is wonderfully made by God, and also the Golden Rule, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Human Relationships are all about recognizing relationships as vehicles for change, fostering community, interconnectedness, and mutual support. Natalia briefly

discussed a diagram of inter-personal relationships and felt that Ecclesiastes 4.9-20 which includes the idea, if two lie together they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

Integrity means acting honestly at all times, repairing harm, working towards reconciliation, acknowledging historical wrongs (she cited the example of the Doctrine of Discovery which led to so much Native American trauma), and maintaining the highest standards because we are dealing with vulnerable people. The scripture Natalia associated with this was Matthew 5.23-24 in which Jesus talks about seeking reconciliation before approaching the altar.



Competence is about practising within your own expertise, continually learning from colleagues and clients, maintaining humility, avoiding burnout, collaborating with other agencies. She told us that Job 38.4-7 reminded her that Social Workers are not God! They cannot be everything to everyone and to attempt to be so damages both the worker and the client.

Different, new Theologies

Natalia spoke of the importance of Theologies from Marginalised Groups, from Liberation Theology through

The Ministry of Chaplaincy

The Rev Sarah Farrow spoke about the ministry and significance of chaplaincy within higher education, highlighting its roles, history, definitions, and practical applications.

Sarah began by telling us that she has the best job in the world. She is Vice-Dean and Chaplain to the St Thomas' and Waterloo Campuses at King's College in the University of London, a post she has held for the past ten years. Prior to that, she worked in Higher Education for 20 years. Chaplaincy encompasses various forms, she told us, including prison, hospital, retail, sports, and higher education. What they all have in common is a focus on offering care through listening, presence, and community-building. Sarah will limit herself to Higher Education because that's what she knows

Overview of Chaplaincy in Higher Education

Chaplaincy offers care, community, and spiritual support to students and staff across diverse backgrounds, she said, emphasising inclusion, hospitality, and holistic well-being. She told us of a 'Lifelines' weekend where students planted hedgerows. Hedgerows are a great symbol for chaplaincy, she said, because just as hedgerows allow plants to grow,

Feminist, African and Native American to Dalit Theologies. Her emphasis is always on liberation, empowerment, understanding cultural difference and the need for social justice.

Counselling people suffering Trauma

In speaking about Trauma-Informed Approaches Natalia took us through Six Principles: Safety, Trustworthiness, Peer Support, Collaboration, Empowerment, and Cultural Responsiveness. Her focus is always on healing, resilience, addressing historical trauma, and cultural needs.

Where Church and Social Work Meet

Natalia then turned to the part played by local congregations in Social Work. She shared the example from a Day Centre in Seattle which arose from collaboration between Catholic, Methodist and Lutheran congregations. Shelter, meals, and a community space were offered to homeless families and people who feel safer sleeping in their cars. Churches should never be measured by numbers; rather by the care they offer.

Conclusion

In her final reflections Natalia again emphasised the importance of love, humility, and interconnectedness in Christian social work, of acknowledgment of past harms by churches and of ongoing efforts for reconciliation. Local churches have enormous potential to serve as spaces of healing and support in their own specific community contexts.

Natalia Pierson's presentation was liberally laced with examples from her own experience and is well worth reading. You can find it in the report of the Annual Meeting at <https://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org/events/2026-03-07-annual-meeting>



keep animals safe and provide shelter for small creatures, chaplaincy offers safe space for small creatures that might feel lost in the great space of a university. The chaplaincy offers safe spaces for exploration, connection, and growth.

Historical Foundation

Chaplaincy, Sarah suggested, has its origin in the story of St Martin of Tours, who shared his cloak with a beggar, symbolising the self-offering and service that is foundational to chaplaincy work. The terms 'chapel' and 'chaplain' derive from the word 'capella,' the Latin for the cloak which St Martin wore and tore in half in an act of compassion and service.

Definitions and Perspectives

Sarah offered a number of definitions of chaplaincy but said that they all boiled down to one simple statement – 'A Chaplain offers Care'. Chaplains are described as representatives of various religious traditions serving in secular institutions, providing spiritual and pastoral care. They accompany individuals in grappling with meaning, values, and identity, quite regardless of their own belief systems. The core role is offering care – whether through listening, providing space for reflection, or simple acts like sharing a meal or a cup of tea.

Chaplains help students recognise their complex identities, hopes, and dreams, and to see themselves as valued in God's eyes.

Key Concepts and Approaches

Sarah explained Howard Thurman's suggestion in 'The Creative Encounter' that the university be seen as a 'Spiritual Laboratory' in which a bunch of individuals are mixed together and we wait to see what happens! He acknowledges that there is potential for overwhelming experiences, and being away from home for the first time in a new, somewhat overwhelming space, can threaten a person's self-esteem and sense of who they are.

Like Bishop Rob Wickham she cited Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'Life Together' which highlights community, bearing

burdens, and the importance of listening, with a focus on meeting others as they are and helping them see themselves through God's eyes.

A Chaplain's ministry is characterised by its uniqueness, lack of agenda, counter-cultural stance, radical hospitality, holistic approach, and reliable accepting presence.

Practical Aspects of Chaplaincy

Moving on to an examination of what Chaplains do, Sarah suggested that they create spaces for encounter, community, and dialogue, exemplified through activities like shared meals, outdoor walks, and social events such as dog days or international lunches. She offered illustrations of the effectiveness of each of these.

On a practical level Chaplains serve as non-judgmental listeners, offering support for issues like homelessness, mental health crises, or personal safety concerns. The role is intentionally low in power but highly impactful, meeting students where they are without judgment or agenda. The diversity of student concerns is broad, requiring adaptability and sensitivity to individual needs.

King's College Chaplaincy

In describing the Chaplaincy in which she works, Sarah told us that the college's multi-faith chaplaincy promotes inclusivity, welcoming all students regardless of faith or belief. Its mission is to foster mutual understanding, respect, and community, emphasising hospitality and justice. Open spaces for worship, prayer, meditation, and spiritual exploration are provided on all five Campuses, alongside practical support like food cupboards and social events. The chaplaincy aims to be accessible, non-judgmental, and responsive to students' questions and needs, including those related to mental health and spirituality.

Conclusion

Sarah ended by reasserting that the ministry of chaplaincy is defined by its focus on presence, community, holistic care, and radical hospitality, serving as a vital resource for fostering well-being, understanding, and connection within higher education environments. She then read a poem: 'A Future Not Our Own: a Prayer Reflection in Memory of Oscar Romero'. "I think it brings together everything chaplaincy is about, and everything that all our ministries are about," she concluded.

Sarah's presentation was packed with personal experiences and practical suggestions. It is well worth reading and can be found on our website in the report of the Annual Meeting at <https://www.anglican-lutheran-society.org/events/2026-03-07-annual-meeting>

That concluded a very enjoyable, helpful and challenging day and we are grateful for the hospitality given us by St John's Wood Church.



Bishop Sarah Mullally becomes new Archbishop of Canterbury

The election and installation of Bishop Sarah Mullally as 106th Archbishop of Canterbury are major events in the history of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. The following articles give a portrait of Archbishop Sarah, trace her path to the Chair of St Augustine, and report on the ecumenical reactions.



Photo: ©Brendan Foster

Archbishop Sarah Mullally: servant-leader

The Rt Rev Graham Kings, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Ely, introduces us to the new Archbishop of Canterbury and CTE President Sarah Mullally, and shares some thoughts on her appointment.

My poem on the new Pope, [Robert Prevost: American Pope](#), concludes with the words:

Many years unfold before this
unhurried, unassuming, unobtrusive
follower of Christ.

The same three adjectives may also suit the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally. Like Pope Leo, she was somewhat of a surprise appointment, but very soon the wisdom of the choice became obvious.

I first knew her, and her husband Eamonn, when she was Canon Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral, from 2012-15, while I was serving as Bishop of Sherborne in the diocese. She was remarkable for her patient, reflective witness to Christ and her diligent, collaborative work behind the scenes for the nourishment and development of God's Church.

One memorable illustration of her character is a project she oversaw, with aplomb – the installation of new toilet facilities in the medieval Cathedral. No small task and typical of her humility.

Archbishop Sarah was born in Woking in 1962, and was educated at Winston Churchill Comprehensive School, Woking Sixth Form College, and South Bank Polytechnic College (BSc, 1982, and MSc, 1994).

She became a Christian at the age of 16 and attended the conservative Evangelical church of St Stephen, South Lambeth. Dr Simon Stocks, who now teaches at St Augustine's College of Theology, London, related to me

recently how much she was loved at that church. When later the PCC had to decide whether to allow a future appointment of a woman priest, he witnessed one conservative member say, 'Can we pass a resolution that we can't have a woman priest, unless it is Sarah?'

She trained as a nurse, specialising in cancer wards, and rose to be the youngest Chief Nursing Officer for England, 1999-2004. She was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 2005, for services to nursing and midwifery.

During that period, she trained for the ordained ministry at the South-East Institute for Theological Education in Southwark, gaining a Diploma in Theology, (University of Kent). She was ordained as a non-stipendary deacon in 2001, and priest in 2002, to serve as a curate at St Saviour's Church, Battersea Fields, in the Diocese of Southwark. In 2004 she began full time stipendary ministry and in 2006 she gained a Masters in Pastoral Theology at the Roman Catholic Heythrop College, University of London.

From 2006 to 2012 she was Team Rector in the Sutton Team Ministry, serving at St Nicholas Church, Sutton, in the Diocese of Southwark, and from there she moved to be Canon Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral, 2012-15.

In 2015, she was consecrated Bishop, the fourth female bishop in the Church of England, at Canterbury Cathedral to serve as Bishop of Crediton, in the Diocese of Exeter.

In 2018, she was installed at St Paul's Cathedral as the 133rd Bishop of London, and joined the House of Lords.

Now Sarah is the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, the first woman called to that role. On 25 March 2026 – appropriately, Lady Day, and the day before her 64th birthday – she will be installed at Canterbury Cathedral, before many ecumenical guests, and TV cameras, from all around the world.

Throughout her ministry, she has been involved profoundly and positively in ecumenism. On 26 February, in Lambeth Palace Chapel, she commissioned the new National Adviser for Ecumenical Relationships to the Church of England, Matthias Grebe, in the presence of representatives of churches in England.

If we look back at the last three Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury, perhaps we may trace a pattern of personalities: Benedict and Rowan were renowned theologians; Francis and Justin were mission activists; and now Leo and Sarah are quiet servant-leaders.

God has called Sarah, an expert in loving care, to take care of the Church of England at a crucial time for the next six years, and to be a midwife, bringing to birth new possibilities and relationships. Let us continue to pray for her and her family.

Q & A with Archbishop Sarah Mullally

The Church of England National Adviser for Ecumenical Relations, Rev Dr Matthias Grebe, spoke with the Archbishop of Canterbury about her ministry, the life of the wider Church, the Anglican Communion, and the importance and role of ecumenism and hospitality in the Churches. In the conversation below, the Archbishop responds to six questions, reflecting on these themes and on the opportunities and challenges ahead.

1. Something about your ministry that many people may not know

One thing people may not always see is how deeply rooted my ministry is in local parish life. Even in national and international roles, I try to keep listening to ordinary clergy and congregations, because the life of the church is sustained there, week by week, in prayer, pastoral care, and faithful service.



Photo: © Neil Turner

The ministry I feel called to as Archbishop is not about creating new programmes, but about spotting where the Holy Spirit is at work, encouraging the good work already happening and helping others to flourish. That conviction shapes how I hope to serve – calmly, consistently, and in partnership with others.

2. How has your background in nursing shaped your leadership?

Nursing taught me to listen carefully, to notice what is not being said, and to care for people as whole persons. It also taught me the importance of teamwork and humility: no one serves alone.

In ministry, that translates into trying to be a calm and attentive presence, especially in times of anxiety or disagreement. The Church, like any community, carries wounds, and healing requires patience, honesty, and compassion. Nursing formed in me a pastoral instinct that is about washing feet, binding wounds, and helping people grow in hope.

3. Themes for your archiepiscopal ministry

I hope my ministry will be characterised by three things:

Confidence in the Gospel: encouraging the Church to rediscover hope in Christ and not to be driven by fear or anxiety. To speak of our Christian hope.

Hospitality: creating space where people who disagree can still pray, listen, and walk together, trusting that unity is a gift of God.

Shepherd of the flock and Pastoral care: supporting bishops, clergy, and lay leaders so they can flourish in their calling, and ensuring safeguarding and accountability are always taken seriously.

These are not new initiatives, but a way of being Church together.

4. Signs of hope and challenges in the Church of England

There are many signs of hope: growing prayer movements, faithful parish ministry, new communities forming, and people quietly discovering faith in Christ. Churches serving their communities day in day out. Often these stories are small and local, but they are real.

The challenges are also clear. Safeguarding is a fundamental, non-negotiable responsibility, sharpened by our past failings and shaped by the work we still have to do. Progress has been made in recent years, but we must build on these good foundations to make sure the Church is safer for everyone.

We are also navigating deep differences within the Church, and responding to a society that is often uncertain or divided. Our calling is not to pretend these challenges are easy, but to face them with honesty, patience, and confidence that God is at work among us.

5. What is the Holy Spirit asking our Churches to learn from one another?

I believe the Holy Spirit is asking us to offer and receive hospitality to create spaces in which we can rediscover we are all made in the image of God.

Across traditions we can learn humility, perseverance, and courage. Some churches teach us depth in prayer and liturgy; others witness to courage in mission; others to service among the poor. When we listen to one another, we see Christ more clearly.

Ecumenical friendship is not about losing identity, but about receiving gifts from one another so that our common witness becomes more credible in the world.

6. Opportunities within the Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion is a remarkable family shaped by very different cultures and histories. That diversity can be challenging, but it is also a gift. Opportunities lie in listening more deeply to one another, supporting local churches facing hardship, and speaking together about hope, human dignity, and peace in a fractured world. When we pray together, share resources, and learn from one another's experience, communion becomes tangible and our witness becomes stronger.

CEC congratulates Sarah Mullally on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) has welcomed the election of Sarah Mullally as the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

CEC General Secretary, the Rev Frank-Dieter Fischbach, attended the service, conveying congratulations and prayers on behalf of the fellowship. The Church of England, one of CEC's member churches, thus enters a new chapter of leadership within the Anglican Communion.

Reflecting on the occasion, Fischbach said, "We give thanks for your ministry and look forward to continuing our shared witness to the Gospel, in service of unity, justice and peace."

CEC President Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain underlined the broader meaning of the

appointment. "Your designation marks a significant moment not only in the life of the Church of England but also within the wider communion of churches across Europe and beyond," he said, expressing confidence that her leadership would be "a source of renewal and encouragement to many across the globe." [...]

CEC expressed its prayerful support and reaffirmed its commitment to continued collaboration, dialogue, and shared discipleship, as churches across Europe walk together.

Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally installed in service attended by Anglican Communion leaders



Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally was installed March 25 at a service at Canterbury Cathedral that was attended by leaders from across the Anglican Communion, including Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe and several other representatives from The Episcopal Church.

The ceremonial installation marks the start of Mullally's public ministry. As the 106th archbishop of Canterbury and the first woman to hold that office, she acknowledged that history and her unlikely path to this moment in her sermon.

"I make this journey both on a personal level ... but more significantly I make this journey with others and in the footsteps of the past," she said, mentioning Thomas Becket, who served as Archbishop of Canterbury 850 years ago.

"Today, I think of the many thousand unknown Christians who have trodden these same paths since, and not just on this ancient land, but all across the world. People walk the pilgrim paths of faith each and every day." [...]

The installation also marked the feast day of the [Annunciation of Our Lord](#). The cathedral released the [order of service here](#). During the procession of bishops before the service, more than 5,000 viewers already were watching online, and that number topped 8,000 after the service got underway.

"This is a truly global gathering," Canterbury Cathedral Dean David Monteith said in welcoming remarks at the start of the service that acknowledged the geographic breadth of

those in attendance. "We meet in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose service we are united."

After a ceremonial reading of the mandate for Mullally's installation, those inside the cathedral stood as, outside, the new archbishop gave the customary three knocks with her pastoral staff on the cathedral door, which opened for her entrance.

"I am Sarah, a servant of Jesus Christ, and I come as one seeking the grace of God, to travel with you in his service together," Mullally said, in the words appointed for the liturgy. "I am sent as Archbishop to serve you, to proclaim the love of Christ and with you to worship and love him with heart and soul, mind and strength."

After processing to the nave altar, Mullally kneeled, and Monteith said: "Let us join Sarah, our Archbishop, in prayer for God's blessing on her ministry in this diocese, in the Province of Canterbury and throughout the world-wide Anglican Communion."

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell and Monteith then led Mullally through the Declaration of Assent and the Oaths, which she spoke after placing her hand on a Bible.

After she was formally installed, Mullally said: "I solemnly commit myself before you to the service of the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of

Christ throughout the world, that together we may proclaim the Gospel of Christ who reconciles us to God and breaks down the walls that divide us."

On the Dean's cue, all stood in applause.

Twenty-six Anglican Primates — Archbishops and Presiding Bishops who lead the Anglican Communion's provinces — were reported in attendance at Mullally's installation, including the Most Rev. Alba Sally Sue Hernández García, who was just [elected Primate of the Anglican Church of Mexico](#) on March 21. Speaking in Spanish, she read the Gospel reading for Mullally's installation, [Luke 1:26-38](#).

In her sermon, Mullally noted that some Anglican leaders were unable to attend the service because of the war in the Middle East between the United States, Israel and Iran. "We pray for them without ceasing, and for all those in worn-torn areas of the world, in Ukraine, in Sudan and Myanmar, that they would know God's presence with them, just as we pray for peace to prevail," she said.

Ecumenical guests included the leaders of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Assyrian Orthodox Church, a representative from the Vatican, other Roman Catholic officials and British Protestant leaders. Others present included representatives from a wide range of global faith traditions, including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Archbishop Sarah's Sermon at her installation

Archbishop Sarah preached about the Gospel story of Mary's acceptance of God's call, saying it was an inspiration for her and for all Christians. You can read the full sermon [here](#).

For nothing will be impossible with God, may I speak in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I am delighted to be with you today. Over the last week I have walked the ancient pilgrim path from St Paul's Cathedral in London to Canterbury Cathedral. Each day my heart and spirits were lifted immeasurably by the people young and old we encountered, even though my aching feet and limbs tell a different story.

As I walked, I have been made aware that I make this journey both on a personal level, as my ministry moves from being the Bishop of London to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but more significantly, I make this journey with others and in the footsteps of the past. Thomas Becket, one of my predecessors as Archbishop of Canterbury, made this same pilgrim journey over 850 years ago.

Today, I think of the many thousand unknown Christians who have trodden these same paths since, and not just on this ancient land, but all across the world. People walk the pilgrim paths of faith each and every day.

Of course, even if you're following a path, the way can be unknown. Where it leads isn't always clear, but we can trust in God's hand guiding us, and in God's promises. In the prayer that was written for my pilgrimage by student chaplains at the Archbishop's School here in Canterbury, they prayed that God might strengthen us in faith, grant us a heart like Christ, gentle, humble and devoted to the truth, so that we may share the Gospel with joy.



Pretty good, isn't it? And it reminds us that we can all learn from the faith of our young people.

For Mary, perhaps the same age as those student chaplains, following God's invitation to trust in his promises meant trusting in a future she couldn't yet see, a future she could never have imagined. Mary was invited to put her faith in God and to trust in the angel's words of reassurance, "for nothing will be impossible with God."

This resonates with me. As I look back over my life at the teenage Sarah who put her faith in God and made a commitment to follow Jesus, I could never have imagined the future that lay ahead, and certainly not the ministry to which I am now called.

Mary followed in the footsteps of the faithful. Her story resonates with the beautiful stories of women, like Hannah, in the Scriptures. Mary put her hope in God's future. She trusted that he was with her, and through Mary, God did a new thing.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, we also know that Mary's journey wasn't easy, and that she faced unimaginable challenges. The sword of grief and pain pierced Mary's soul, just as Simeon had foretold, most of all on the cross, yet even that was transformed into the joy and hope of the resurrection.

But here, in this moment of encounter with the angel, before any of the story unfolds, Mary is invited to open her heart, to offer herself and say, "Here I am," and to put her hope in the angel's words, "for nothing will be impossible with God."

Some of our Anglican brothers and sisters are unable to be here today due to the war in the Middle East and the Gulf. We pray for them without ceasing, and for all those in worn-torn areas of the world, in Ukraine, in Sudan and Myanmar, that they would know God's presence with them, just as we pray for peace to prevail.

And in a world already torn by conflict, suffering and division, we must also acknowledge the hurt that exists much closer to home. We must not overlook or minimize the pain experienced by those who have been harmed through the actions, inactions and failures of those in our own Christian churches and communities. Today and every day, we hold victims and survivors in our hearts and in our prayers, and we must remain committed to truth, compassion, justice and action.

As a church, we are a pilgrim people, and like Mary, we are called to trust that nothing will be impossible with God, even when we see so much in the world that makes hope seem impossible. But there is hope, because we make this journey with God. We do not bear the weight of this calling in our own strength, but only in the grace and power of God. We walk with God, trusting that God walks with us, trusting that in all that we face. In the sorrow and the challenges as much as in the joy and the delight, we do not walk alone.

There is hope, because we are invited to trust that God will do a new thing.

The moment of encounter between Mary and the Angel Gabriel announces the mystery of the incarnation, the definitive moment that reveals God with us, Emmanuel.

In the Incarnation, we see God becoming one of us, and this gives me such hope for the Church. In the ordinary and the extraordinary life of the Church, we see God's hand at work, the Church rolling up its sleeves and getting stuck in where God is already at work, in the local and the global. The church through the ordinary lives of its people continues to do so many extraordinary acts of love. God's people, offering a listening ear, a word of encouragement or a prayer of healing, offering food, shelter, sanctuary and welcome in a world that so often seeks to divide us, tables to sit at, conversations to be shared, and being a simple loving presence, like the salt of the Earth, a light on the hill, the treasure of the kingdom, a Church for the whole nation and for the world, which looks for ways of joining in with people of all faiths and of none in acts of service which will transform, a Church which extends around the world with our sister Churches in the Anglican Communion, as part of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church to embody Christ's love.

God is at work in the good news of the Gospel and in the hearts and lives of ordinary people who, like Mary, have the audacity to believe that with God we can do extraordinary things.

For me, this trust and hope in God began as I committed my life to Jesus. And God has been with me at every step of my pilgrim path, and I trust he walks with me now.

Maybe, as you are listening, you are thinking about your own journey. Perhaps it is smooth, perhaps it is hard. Knowing God is with us on our journey makes a real difference. I'd encourage you to visit a church or a chaplaincy for a quiet prayer, for a conversation. If you want to talk, you will be heard. And you can respond to God's invitation with words as simple as those of Mary: "Here I am."

As I begin my ministry today as Archbishop of Canterbury, I say again to God, here I am. May we have the audacity to believe in the promises of God, for with him, nothing will be impossible.

Amen.

Lutheran leaders in Canterbury for installation of new Anglican archbishop

Lutheran leaders from many countries were among those gathered in Canterbury Cathedral for the installation of Archbishop Sarah Mullally. Find out about their experiences and expectations.



Bishop Paulina Hlawiczka-Trotman of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (right), a member of our Society, and Rev Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson, Moderator of the Free Churches with Archbishop Sarah Mullally during the signing of an ecumenical covenant at the installation service. Photo: Neil Turner/Lambeth Palace

LWF welcomes Archbishop Sarah Mullally, the first woman to lead the Church of England

The Lutheran World Federation's General Secretary, the Rev Dr Anne Burghardt, and the Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, Prof Dr Dirk Lange, were among some 2,000 people gathered in England's ancient Canterbury Cathedral on 25 March for the installation of Anglican Archbishop Sarah Mullally, the first woman elected to lead the Church of England.

"This is a historic moment and we are delighted to be here representing the global Lutheran communion as Archbishop Sarah inaugurates her ministry in this diocese of Canterbury, in the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion," Dr Burghardt said. "Anglicans and Lutherans enjoy close and fruitful relationships, including some full communion agreements in different parts of the world and so we are happy to join other ecumenical delegates here to pray and to wish Archbishop Sarah every blessing as she begins her new role," she added.

Before her ordination in 2002, Sarah Mullally had a successful career in nursing, becoming England's youngest Chief Nursing Officer. Following her election Archbishop of Canterbury, she reflected that in her new calling she would "strive to carry the care and compassion that shaped my vocation as a nurse into everything that I do."

Archbishop of Canterbury's installation a joyous day for women in ministry

Lynette Wilson, managing editor of *Episcopal News Service*, reflects on the next Archbishop of Canterbury being a woman. She has captured many voices from women Primates and Bishops from all over the world.

Women bishops from across the Anglican Communion gathered at [St Peter's Anglican Church](#) for Morning Prayer just hours before the historic March 25 installation of Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally, the start of a joyous day for women in ministry and church leadership.

"There were maybe 25 of us in the room, women from Africa, Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, all over England," Archbishop Linda Nicholls, former Anglican Church of Canada Primate, told *Episcopal News Service*.

"The focus was on praying for Sarah in her role with the communion, in her role with England, as a wife, a mother ... there was just a sense of the communion coming together, such joy that this is happening and people rejoicing with her on this day."

That afternoon, over 2,000 people gathered at [Canterbury Cathedral](#) and thousands more joined online for a service that celebrated the diversity of the Church of England, the nation and the Anglican Communion. Sarah Mullally was [confirmed](#) as the Archbishop of Canterbury in January, and

this service marked the start of her public ministry in that role.



Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally stops to pose for a photograph following her March 25 installation as the 106th person and the first woman to hold the office in its 1,400-year history. Photo: Press Association via AP

Her installation, as the first woman to hold the office, was 1,400 years in the making. Praying together with Mullally and the other women bishops was “powerful and hopeful,” Archbishop of Mexico Alba Sally Sue Hernández García, who on March 21 became the sixth woman to be elected primate in the Anglican Communion, told ENS.

Hernández, who in 2022 was the first female bishop elected to serve the Anglican Church of Mexico in the Mexico City-

based Diocese of Mexico, read the Gospel, Luke 1:26-38, during the installation service. Women’s voices were included throughout the traditional Anglican service, celebrating centuries of female scholars, musicians and writers. The choral music ranged from the Renaissance to contemporary, including the anthem [“All Shall Be Well,”](#) music set to texts by Mother Julian of Norwich by British composer Joanna Marsh. It was also the first time that the Girls Cathedral Choir, formed in 2014, performed at an Archbishop of Canterbury’s installation.

“It’s an incredible day for the Church, both the Anglican Communion, but also the Christian community,” Indianapolis Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows told ENS. “To have a woman taking this historic seat in this historic time is extraordinary.”

She added she was proud to represent The Episcopal Church as Vice-President of the House of Bishops. “It was beautiful to be a witness to all of it – the fanfare, the pageantry, the worship, the prayerful ways in which we welcomed her to her cathedral and to her see and to the historic seat as the successor to Augustine.”

The service coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation, which commemorates the Archangel Gabriel’s announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and bear a son, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As Mullally said in advance of the service, it was meant to celebrate the church, the Anglican Communion and God.

Smashing the stained glass ceiling. What is it like to be both a leader and a woman in the Church?

In this article, other female church leaders from Churches Together in England (CTE) Member Churches give their thoughts on the next Archbishop of Canterbury being a woman.

The 106th Archbishop of Canterbury is a woman. The Most Rev Dame Sarah Mullally has been installed as the Head of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, the shepherd (as she calls the role) of more than 100 million souls – a truly historic event.

Women leaders and leading thinkers from across CTE Member Churches were asked for their thoughts on its significance.

Vice Chair of Trustees Churches Together in England, the Rev Dr Lurliene Miller

Across ecumenical spaces, women in prominent roles carry both the legacy of faith and the labour of the Church’s mission. Long the spiritual backbone of the Church, they have sustained its life even when formal authority failed to reflect their contribution. The tension is historic as well as theological.

Beyond doctrine lie practical pressures: balancing ministry with family expectations, navigating male-dominated spaces, and enduring subtle exclusion. Women often bear a double weight — the visible responsibility of spiritual oversight and the invisible burden of proving legitimacy. Even where barriers have fallen, cultural assumptions linger, shaping how leadership is received.

The call of God does not come with a gender clause, yet women are frequently scrutinised before their gifting is



affirmed. Theologian and activist Prathia Hall declared, “I have a dream,” words that shaped a movement often attributed to male voices. Her witness reminds us that women’s leadership has been prophetic before it was platformed.

Though challenges persist, women continue to lead faithfully, creatively and courageously, expanding the imagination of what servant leadership looks like in the Body of Christ.

Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Great Britain and CTE President representing the Fourth Presidency Group, the Rt Rev Paulina Hławiczka-Trotman

The election of Sarah as Archbishop of Canterbury has reopened an old conversation in the Church. Some see it as a breakthrough. Yet women have always been part of God's leadership story. Scripture itself remembers women who taught, prophesied, and helped shape the earliest Christian communities.

For a long time, some of their stories were softened, hidden, or even renamed. But careful reading with study tools has begun to restore them to view. We meet Junia, whom Paul calls "prominent among the apostles," though for centuries her name was turned into the masculine "Junias." We meet Phoebe, a deacon, and Priscilla, a teacher and missionary partner. Their presence reminds us that women were never absent from the work of the Gospel, even in a time when they had little voice in a deeply patriarchal world.

Still, the path is rarely easy even today. Women who sense a call often must walk slowly and gently, proving again and again that their call is real, and that they are good enough for their voice to be heard.

I know this journey myself. I felt called to ordained ministry when my church in Poland did not yet ordain women. Many of us encountered silence, resistance, humiliation, belittling, ridiculing and closed doors. More than once I thought about giving up.

And then, unexpectedly, another door opened. The Lutheran Church in Great Britain needed someone to serve a Polish-speaking migrant community. I barely spoke English at the time, and the idea felt impossible.



Yet God's call often arrives exactly where we feel least prepared. You pray, you hesitate, you might even ask for the cup to pass from you, but somehow you keep walking.

Years later, you look back and see that what felt uncertain and fragile was quietly guided all along. God had already been arranging what you could never have planned yourself.

The Church does not need to create space for women's leadership. It needs to remember that the space was always there.

"...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus..." Galatians 3:28

Rights. Justice. Action. A reflection for International Women's Day 2026 – For All Women and Girls

Our committee member, the Rev. Rebecca Daniel, Head of Chaplaincy & Development for the Council of Lutheran Churches, reflects on the theme of International Women's Day in light of the biblical understanding of justice.

International Women's Day invites us both to recognise the harsh realities confronting many women and girls as well as remember their resilience, their struggles and their strength as they face these realities. The theme of International Women's Day: 'Rights. Justice. Action – For All Women and Girls' resonates deeply with our Christian faith because it mirrors the heart of God – who is moved by human struggles, hears the cries of the suffering ones and empowers people to move towards transformation.

From the very beginning, Scripture declares that all humanity – female and male – is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This is not merely poetic language; it is a profound theological foundation. To pursue justice is to participate in the Triune God's ongoing work of creation, redemption, and sustenance. Every woman and girl bears the image of God and therefore possesses an inherent dignity that no injustice can erase. To affirm this truth is to affirm God's creative intention itself. Consequently, any

systems or structures that diminish, distort, or wound the equality of women must be challenged and transformed.

Biblical justice is never abstract. It is relational and life-giving. It seeks to set things right so that all may flourish. Today, this call feels urgent. There are more than 130 conflicts across the globe, in which women and children continue to bear the heaviest burdens. Mothers flee their homes seeking safety. Girls lose access to education and security. When women and girls are denied safety, opportunity, voice, or leadership, the whole human family suffers. But when their gifts are honoured and their rights upheld, communities are strengthened and hope is renewed.

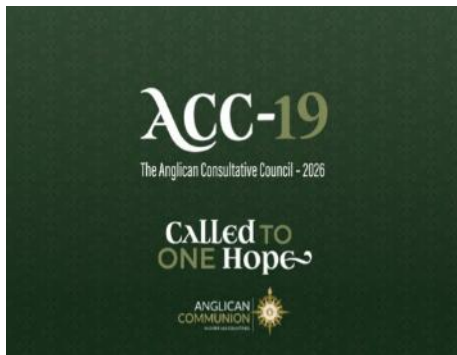
This understanding resonates with the Kenyan concept of *Isirika* – a vision of mutual belonging and shared responsibility. *Isirika* reminds us that we do not live in isolation; we belong to one another. What affects one affects all.

When the dignity of women and girls is wounded, the whole community is diminished. When their rights are protected and their contributions valued, the entire community flourishes. This mutuality reflects the biblical vision of the Body of Christ, where each member's well-being is bound to the well-being of the whole.

"Rights. Justice. Action." challenges the Church to move beyond words. It calls for honest reflection and humble action. How can we transform our structures to reflect the equality we proclaim? How can women's leadership and ministries be fully recognised and supported? How can girls be encouraged to discover their voice and vocation? Justice begins not only in public advocacy, but in daily attitudes, decisions, and relationships.

Anglican Consultative Council to gather in Northern Ireland this summer

Gathering Anglicans from around the world, the 19th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-19) will take place in Belfast, Northern Ireland, from 27 June to 5 July 2026.



Themed 'Called to One Hope' from the letter to the Ephesians, this important international gathering of Anglican bishops, clergy and laity will explore how the

Church can share the reconciling love of Christ in a fragmented world.

On this International Women's Day, we give thanks for women whose resilience sustains families, churches, and communities. We honour their leadership, their unseen labour, their faithfulness in adversity, and their courage in hope. We acknowledge both their immense contributions and the challenges they continue to face.

As we pray with and for women and girls across the world, may our prayer deepen our resolve. May our faith move us beyond comfort into commitment. And may we stand together—in mutual responsibility and solidarity—to uphold the rights, dignity, and flourishing of all women and girls, so that God's justice becomes visible in our shared life.

Church can share the reconciling love of Christ in a fragmented world.

Supported by the Anglican Communion Office and hosted by the Church of Ireland, ACC-19 will also be the first official Anglican Communion meeting attended by Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally.

Meeting every three years, the Anglican Consultative Council is one of four 'Instruments of Communion,' alongside the Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Every member church is entitled to send two to three representatives, which include both clergy and lay people, as well as bishops. The last ACC met in Ghana in 2023.

Anglicans and Lutherans review progress towards full communion

Deepening relationships between Lutheran and Anglicans in different parts of the globe shape new understanding on the way towards full, visible unity of all Christians. Therefore, the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission on Unity and Mission met in London from 4 to 7 March 2026 to explore missional ecumenism.

Communion among Christians of different denominations is "not a static state that is achieved in a certain moment through texts or specific actions," but rather "a layered process that unfolds over time." That conviction is what drives the work of Lutheran and Anglican leaders in different countries across the globe who are engaged in the work for full, visible Christian unity through ALICUM, the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission on Unity and Mission.

Members of the ALICUM Steering Group met in the British capital, London, from 4 to 7 March to hear about the work of various pairs of Anglican and Lutheran bishops and to explore how changing perspectives on mission, experienced in the different local contexts, can influence the way churches approach their ecumenical activities and relationships.



Photo: ©Anglican Communion/Neil Vigers

"An important recognition from this conversation is that relationships of ecclesial communion take different forms in different places," says a communique released at the close of the meeting.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations Prof. Dr Dirk Lange, who serves as co-secretary of the Steering Group, said participants were inspired as they heard from pairs of local church leaders reporting on progress over the past year. "Relationships of ecclesial communion take different forms in different places," he reiterated, "yet they continually evolve over time. A new perspective is opened up on the deep connectivity of unity and mission, or what one might call missional ecumenism."

The Steering Group met at the offices of the Anglican Communion, sharing together in worship, taking part in Sunday services at local churches, as well as attending choral evensong at Westminster Abbey. During the meeting, members held an online session with ALICUM bishops from Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Finland, the Holy Land, Ireland, Malaysia, Tanzania and the United States of America.

Learning from local country contexts

Steering Group members, who are tasked with planning and accompanying the pairings of church leaders, discussed reports from different country contexts, in particular from Canada, where Anglicans and Lutherans have now been

working together in increasingly close relationships, from leadership to grassroots level, for nearly 25 years. They noted that this has raised practical questions, such as issues relating to liturgy, sacraments and governance in the growing numbers (at least 60) of joint Anglican-Lutheran congregations.

Participants also discussed a new 'Augsburg Agreement', signed in Munich in June 2025, between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and the Episcopal Church in Europe, in which the two churches "recognize in each other the sustained existence of evangelical and historical succession," forming the basis for full communion, the joint commune notes. The group also looked ahead to upcoming events, including the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in June and July this year, as well as preparations for the next LWF Assembly to be held in Augsburg, Germany in 2030.

"We had a very fruitful and encouraging meeting, co-chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Kondoia in Tanzania, Dr Given Gaula and retired Bishop Cindy Halmanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada," said Prof. Lange. "We believe that this recognition of the contextual nature of communion enhances the ways in which our ecumenical dialogues, along with bilateral and multilateral communion relationships, are articulated, structured and supported."

Porvoo Co-Chairs Issue Statement on Greenland

As a sign of Anglican-Lutheran solidarity, the Porvoo Communion has issued a statement concerning Greenland, its people, and their right to self-determination, in the

As leaders within the Porvoo Communion of Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe, we express our urgent and grave concern regarding the recent statements of the United States administration in relation to Greenland. Our communion includes the Church of Greenland and we feel compelled by our bonds of shared faith, hope and love to support our sisters and brothers, through our prayerful communion in Christ Jesus, in the power of the Spirit.

We affirm the recent statement of our sister in faith, Bishop Paneeraq Siegstad Munk of Greenland:

People are clearly worried. This is a question of human rights, dignity, and respecting international laws and treaties. We are a small people, but we are not invisible. Our future is not something to be decided over our heads. We have language, culture, ancestors, children, and a future tied to this place. We are people, not property. Greenland is not land to be bought. It is our home and it is not for sale. We must cooperate across national borders, work together and stand up for our rights. And we shall talk to each other in a respectful tone.

In solidarity with Bishop Paneeraq and the people she serves, we affirm the right of the people of Greenland to determine their own future.

context of the worldwide community of faith and shared humanity. The full statement appears below.

Furthermore, we affirm the principles of the United Nations Charter which enshrine the equality of all members, the territorial integrity and political independence of states, the restraint of dominance, coercion and force, and the obligation to settle disputes through peaceful dialogue.

Finally, we emphasise the insights of the Christian faith which we share. In the very first chapter of the Bible, the creation narrative speaks of human beings made "in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26-28) and thus given a fundamental, inalienable dignity which is shared by all human beings without exception. As members of Christ's body, the Church, we believe that we are bound by the Holy Spirit in a communion of faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 13:13), called to "rejoice with those who rejoice", to "weep with those who weep", and to "live in harmony with one another ... peaceably with all" (Romans 12:14-21). This is the noble vocation to which Christ calls his Church and so likewise we urge those in positions of great trust in our world to wield their authority for good, for the well-being of all and for the building up of peace, justice and compassion among all people. As a communion of churches spanning Christian traditions, our public voice and our acts of solidarity are rooted in prayer, and a vision of the kingdom

Michael Jackson + Matti Repo

The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson
Archbishop of Dublin
Church of Ireland

The Rt Revd Dr Matti Repo
Bishop of Tampere
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Toward a common liturgical celebration of the Feast of Creation

During a World Council of Churches (WCC) webinar on 18th and 19th March 2026, global and national church bodies take major step in advancing a shared vision for elevating the annual Feast of Creation of 1st September to a liturgical feast.

Church representatives discuss how September 1st observance can be elevated to a shared ecumenical commitment

Christian World Communions, ecumenical bodies, national churches and congregations have taken a major step in advancing a shared vision for elevating the annual Feast of Creation on 1st September to a liturgical feast. A recent webinar “A New Liturgical Feast, a Gift for the Third Millennium,” highlighted the significance of a unified observance of this feast for greater unity in Christian worship and ecological commitment.

Convened by an International Steering Committee, chaired by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and representing different church bodies, including The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the 18th and 19th March webinar, brought together around 400 registered participants. The event provided a space to reflect on theological foundations, share practical experiences, and discern next steps toward establishing a common day of celebration.

The Feast of Creation has its roots in ancient Christian tradition, particularly within Orthodox churches, where September 1st has long been observed as a day marking the beginning of creation. In recent decades, at the invitation of the Orthodox Church, this tradition has expanded ecumenically, gaining recognition as the starting point of the annual Season of Creation, which runs until 4th October.

Since 2016, churches worldwide have increasingly embraced this broader season, supported by grassroots movements, theological reflection, and international dialogue. The current initiative seeks to deepen this momentum by encouraging churches to adopt a shared Feast of Creation – either on September 1st or on the nearest Sunday – so that Christians globally can celebrate together.

A range of materials was presented to support churches in adopting the Feast of Creation, including theological papers, liturgical guidance, and practical recommendations to assist churches at all levels—from global communions to local congregations—in integrating the feast into their liturgical calendars and common life. These included a joint letter signed by leaders of the LWF, Anglican Communion, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Methodist Council, the WCC and the Middle East Council of Churches presenting proposals from their ecumenical dialogues convened in Assisi since 2024. Inspired by the 2025 ecumenical celebration of the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, they described the possibility of a common liturgical feast of creation “as a precious opportunity for Christians of the new millennium to honour the Triune God as Creator and celebrate the great mystery of the creation of all things through Christ.”

Christian spirituality

Discussions during the plenary underscored the rich theological dimensions of the Feast of Creation. Speakers highlighted creation as a Trinitarian mystery, a sacramental reality revealing God’s presence, and a covenant that includes all living beings. At the same time, participants acknowledged the tension between celebration and lament in the face of ecological crises, affirming that both belong within Christian spirituality. “As we lift up and focus on creation, we do not romanticize it,” noted Prof. Dr Dirk Lange, LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, “creation too is groaning for redemption. It is good but not perfect. The Feast of Creation will need to acknowledge this aspect.”

A recurring topic was the importance of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) as an ecumenical tool that could support the feast’s integration across different denominations. The RCL is already making plans to add the Feast to the liturgical calendar.

Participants also underlined the need to engage liturgical bodies, theologians and church leadership, while ensuring grassroots participation. In breakout groups according to themes and confessional bodies, participants offered insights from national and regional contexts while engaging with the broader ecumenical vision.

Linking national and global processes

“Lutheran voices emphasized the importance of linking national initiatives with global processes, suggesting a role for the LWF in convening further dialogue among liturgists and church bodies to advance the common celebration,” said Prof. Lange.

Participants heard how existing harvest and thanksgiving traditions in Sweden already incorporate ecological themes but stressed the importance of framing the Feast of Creation as a global celebration rather than a local custom. In Italy, there are possibilities for Lutherans and other Protestant churches and organisations to integrate this discussion through the ongoing collaboration on environmental initiatives.

In Germany, the Council of Christian Churches (*die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen – ACK*) was described as the main driving force for further engagement. The ACK’s observance of an annual ecumenical “Day of Creation” (*Tag der Schöpfung*) on the first Friday of September provides something solid to build on for the Feast of Creation, including local synods and congregations.

Contributions also came from participants in Norway, Latvia, Indonesia, and the United States, reflecting diverse approaches but a shared commitment to implementation. Overall, participants reflected on potential steps for moving

forward, including adapting lectionaries, engaging church leadership and ecumenical councils, and expanding access to resources and workshops. Both top-down leadership and grassroots engagement were seen as essential to embedding the feast in church life.

“As the process moves forward, we hope that the Feast of Creation will become a widely recognised and shared celebration – strengthening both the spiritual life of churches and their common response to the urgent challenges facing the world today,” Lange added.

Retreat Gives CLC Clergy a Time Away

In February 2026, the Council of Lutheran Churches (CLC) clergy retreat took place in London. Read about the experiences of participating clergy.



The second annual CLC clergy retreat took place in early February at the Royal Foundation of St. Katherine in Limehouse (London), and offered a diverse group of leaders from our member churches a chance to spend time with colleagues, eat, rest, worship and reflect.

Canon Michael Rawson (Sub-Dean and Pastor, Southwark Cathedral) led several sessions on the theme, ‘Walking with the Servant Christ.’ Canon Rawson shared brief reflections, followed by generous spaces of time where participants chose solitary or communal activity, as desired.

Participants appreciated the flexible time and opportunities to interact with each other. The Rev Rebecca Daniel, who also helped organise the retreat, found herself being nourished as well. ‘People took time to quiet their minds and simply be present. In that sacred pause, I was reminded how life-giving it is to practice stillness.’

South Asia: Walking and growing together as a global communion

From 7–11 February 2026, church leaders from Nepal and India gathered in Kathmandu for a seminar on Lutheran identity. Read on the next page to find out what they found out.



Photo: ©LWF Nepal/Dipendra Lamsal

Participants explored Lutheran theological foundations and identity

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is committed to walking alongside its member churches, enabling them to strengthen their Lutheran identity and build a global communion where every church – whether a longtime member or newly welcomed – feels seen, valued, and connected.

That commitment was at the heart of a 7th-11th February LWF workshop in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu, hosted by the Nepal Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC).

The 45 participants represented LWF member churches in the South Asia sub-region: NELC, and two churches in India that joined the LWF in 2025: the Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) and Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church (MELC) of India.

The workshop focused on foundational elements of Lutheran theology and identity. “In addition to deepening our understanding of Lutheran identity, this seminar also reflected strong collaboration among three LWF departments, the Office of the General Secretary; Department for Theology, Mission and Justice; and World Service, working together in unity and shared commitment,” said the Rev Dr Rospita Siahaan, LWF Regional Secretary for Asia.

Close accompaniment on Lutheran Identity

The workshop embodied the LWF's commitment to deepening Lutheran identity through shared theological reflection – a practice the LWF has engaged in throughout its history. The Rev Dr Songram Basumatary, Principal of Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India, highlighted that as Lutherans, “we are united in our common confession” and saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

“And it is through this liberating power of love that we are freed to serve others,” said the Rev Dr Joshuva Peter, Executive Secretary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCI). These fundamental Lutheran values of freedom, love, and service took on renewed significance in Kathmandu, offering a counter-witness to the

discrimination, exclusion, and injustice present in many societies today.

Participants also reflected on the dynamic nature of Lutheran identity, exploring how a shared Lutheran tradition is embodied through a diversity of languages, cultures, forms of worship, spirituality, service and expressions of public witness.

A vision for grassroots transformation

As one of the newest among LWF's 154 member churches, BELC has embarked on an exciting journey of connecting with the global Lutheran family. Attending the seminar with his team, Bishop Isahak Mosahari expressed deep gratitude to the LWF, saying the experience proved invaluable, equipping his staff with knowledge and resources to strengthen Lutheran identity throughout their church communities.

Mosahari said he returns home with a clear and ambitious vision: to bring teachings on Lutheran identity to every level of church life, from families to pastors to congregations.

Central to this vision is the Small Catechism, which he is eager to introduce into homes and churches throughout their region. “We will use it with all our pastors in the life and ministry of the church,” the bishop shared.

NELC pastor, the Rev Shusila Murmu said: “What we've learned here must shape how we live, serve and relate to one another. As we return to our countries, may we carry this spirit forward - not only in our thoughts, but also in our actions.”

One of the initiatives emerging from the workshop was a commitment by BELC to mark 16 June as an annual LWF Membership Day, dedicating the entire Church to pray for and celebrate their connection to Lutheran communities around the world.

“This workshop reminds us that our communion is strongest when we truly walk alongside one another, learning together, growing together, and equipping one another for faithful witness in our diverse contexts,” reflected the Rev Katariina Kiilunen, LWF Program Executive for Transformative Leadership. “These days together have been a golden opportunity to learn from one another and reflect on what it means to be Lutheran,” she added.

Lutherans and Catholics explore deep ecumenical potential of Augsburg Confession

From 2nd to 8th February, 2026, Catholic and Lutheran theologians met in Slovenia to begin drafting a joint statement marking the 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 2030. Read about the steps they have taken to commemorate this important document and to appreciate its ecumenical significance.



Photo: ©Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia

The launch of the Sixth Phase of the International Lutheran Catholic Commission on Unity bears fruit in Slovenia

“We discerned new perspectives and highlighted the deep ecumenical potential of the Augsburg Confession,” said Prof. Dr Dirk Lange, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, following the launch of a new phase of theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.

Participants in the Sixth Phase of the International Lutheran Catholic Commission on Unity met from 2nd to 8th February, hosted by the Lutheran congregation in the town of Moravske Toplice in northeastern Slovenia. During the week the group met with the Catholic Archbishop of Ljubljana Stanslav Zore and visited Saint Nicholas Cathedral in the capital city. They also met with Slovenia’s President, Nataša Pirc Musar, who encouraged the Commission in its work and stressed the importance of witnessing to dialogue in a very polarised world.

A key focus of this first meeting, noted Prof Lange, was the drafting of a joint statement to mark the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 2030. “Our meeting got off to a very good start as members engaged with two key presentations on the history and content of the Augsburg Confession, its context in 1530 and the history of its reception,” he explained.

Continuing a 60-year tradition of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue

Co-chaired by Bishop Patricia Lull, who leads the Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by Bishop Raimo Goyarrola, who leads the Catholic diocese of Helsinki, Finland, the Commission includes members from all parts of the globe: from Argentina to Australia, from Namibia to Indonesia, from North America and from the three LWF European regions.

Reflecting on the Commission’s work, Lange noted that it continues a long tradition of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue which began over 60 years ago in the wake of the landmark Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church. “In 1965, American Lutheran theologian George Lindbeck approached the then Secretary of the Vatican’s Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Father Jan Willebrands,” he recalled. “Those informal conversations led to the start of the official dialogue between the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church in 1967.”

The first phase of that dialogue produced the [Malta Report](#) that was “visionary in its intent and outlined several trajectories and questions that would define the following phases of the work of the Commission,” Lange continued. Meanwhile, the prolific second phase produced six documents, including the 1980 [All Under One Christ](#), which commemorated the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession.

"A key question that the Sixth Phase of our Commission began grappling with was the changes that have taken place since 1980," Lange said. These include the milestone [Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification](#), signed in 1999 and the document [From Conflict to Communion](#), which paved the way for the joint 500th commemoration of the Reformation in 2016. "Our conversations in Slovenia were lively and generative," Lange concluded, "leaving us with great hope for the coming sessions and for the work ahead."

The launch of the Sixth Phase of the International Lutheran Catholic Commission on Unity took place from 2nd to 8th February, hosted by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia and accompanied by its current Bishop Aleksander Erniša, as well as Bishop Emeritus Leon Novak. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in February 2027.

Bishop Åke Bonnier - a Lutheran and a Focolarian - reflects on decades of unity

Bishop Åke Bonnier, a retired Lutheran bishop from Sweden, has been engaged in the Focolare Movement for more than three decades. He took time to reflect on how he has come to see unity as a lived reality and why, ultimately, the love of God and love for one another are vital.

You recently attended part of a spiritual retreat that kicked off the General Assembly of the Focolare Movement in Rome. Would you like to share your impressions?

Bishop Bonnier: It was fantastic in many ways. The General Assembly of the Focolare Movement is a three-week conference with 320 delegates. It's very special with the Focolare Movement because the spirituality is a lived unity.

Most of the participants were Roman Catholic Focolare members, but there were also a few from other church traditions, such as the Anglican, Reformed, and Lutheran churches. In addition, there was a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Muslim, and a non-religious participant. During the retreat itself, the feeling gradually emerged that the expression "God is not religious but generous" captured something important about the experience.

Part of the retreat was about closeness from a different angle: closeness according to the communion with people around you, as well as with people far away, and communion with God and also communion in other ways. After the retreat, we were divided into groups to discuss different subjects, and there were preparation documents. This assembly decided about some type of plan for five years ahead. There were 317 suggestions!

How did you first become involved with the Focolare Movement?

Bishop Bonnier: I met the movement in 1988 - which is quite long ago now - for the first time at a concert in Stockholm. The Focolare Movement has a group of traveling male musicians called Gen Rosso, and a group of female traveling musicians called Gen Verde. On that day in 1988, I had never heard of them at all - but I was interested to hear more. So some days after the concert, we went to a meeting, and after that my wife and I, and our two daughters, went to family meetings. As you go further into the Focolare Movement, it becomes a personal vocation.

What was the next step that drew you more deeply into the Focolare community?

Bishop Bonnier: I was asked if I would like to be a "volunteer," which is not normally what we think of when we hear about volunteers.

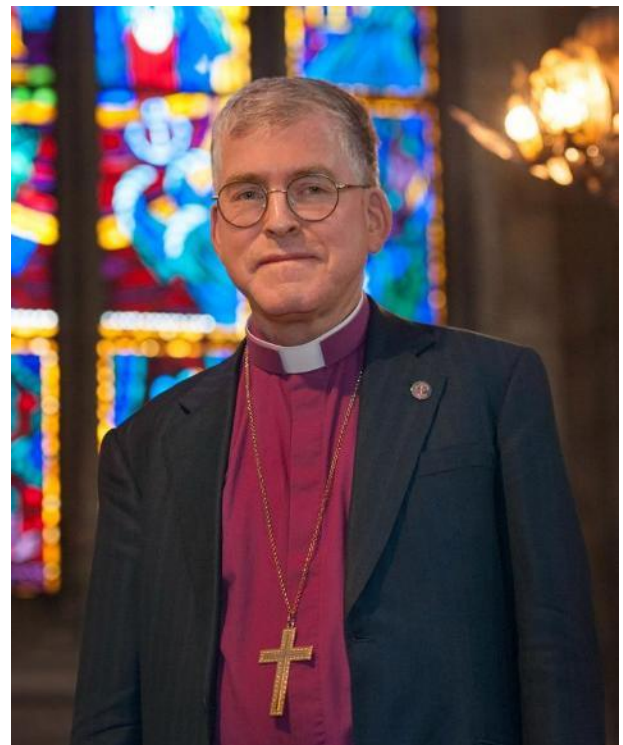


Photo: ©Carla Karlsson/Church of Sweden

It's more of a contact person between society and Focolare. I then served for two years in a pre-volunteer group. It is always a process. You have to start and then first you are in a pre-group, then you go to a next step, and a next step. I was longing for something more but I didn't say so much about that. One time I was asked by a regional responsible person to come to my local Focolare community, and I thought, "Well, he's going to say, 'You are not living this spirituality very well, please go home now.' " But instead he asked me if I'd ever thought of being a "married" Focolare, which involves an eternal promise in which you are actually connected for the rest of your life. That is quite a big step! My heart said "oh yes!" but my brain said, "calm down." A journey started that lasted at least 10 years during which I realized I can belong fully in this community and I don't need to become someone else. They are happy because I am who I am. That is important, especially being a Lutheran priest belonging to a very Catholic movement.

Would you like to reflect on what the Focolare spirituality means to you?

Bishop Bonnier: It's a spirituality of unity, a spirituality of love, a spirituality that finds a way to reach out to each other without trying to convert each other. There is something in the movement called "the art of loving," and there are different aspects to loving. One of the aspects is that you should be the first to love – take the initiative. Love me most when I deserve it least. In this way, it is not only about those who love you – it is about everyone, without exception. I must admit, I'm not sure I do that every day! It is to see there must be something good in every person. There must be something – and we need to concentrate on that something. Another point in the art of loving is to see from the other person's point of view, for example, a colleague with whom you don't share an opinion. If you try to see from his or her point of view – which means you have to formulate it – then someone can say "yes, you really understood me."

What are some additional aspects related to the art of loving?

Bishop Bonnier: To love your neighbour as yourself. Do I love myself? How can you love another person if you don't love yourself? In the same way that you love your self you should love your neighbour. Another aspect is to see that, when you meet another person, you meet Jesus himself. It is really interesting because you are called to see this, and called to love Jesus in the other person. So when you see a beggar on the corner, it is Jesus who is sitting there. When you meet someone who you don't like, when you meet a problematic person, it's Jesus whom you meet. That can challenge you in many ways.

Another aspect is to love your enemies. It goes back again to those people you don't really like, to try to love them, to try to see the positive things. We have to start again and again with this. It is the art of loving.

[Learn more about the Focolare Movement here](#)

Bossey graduates celebrate "the hard and beautiful work of bridge-building"

A graduation event held on 28th January 2026 at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey began with a student-led Prayer for Thanksgiving in the chapel that included music, followed by a graduation ceremony with speeches, and ending with a banquet celebrating the milestone for all. The Ecumenical Institute is sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and situated at Château de Bossey near Geneva. Read about this joyous event [there](#).



Photo: @Grégoire de Fombelle/WCC

Throughout, students shared humour, gratitude, and a sense that their work is not yet done.

They earned Certificates of Advanced Studies in Ecumenical Studies or Complementary Certificates in Ecumenical Studies after studying, living, praying, and laughing together.

As student Johan Wahlstrom from Sweden said, "It is now time to bring forward the many things that we as students are grateful for."

On behalf of the student body, Wahlstrom and student Charlotte Fritz, from the Federal Republic of Germany, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hanover, joined in a humorous dialogue featuring their favorite quotes from their peers.

In moments of seriousness, they also offered a heartfelt thanks to their professors. "You taught us to never stop

asking you questions, that listening is sometimes more important than talking," said Fritz.

The students also expressed gratitude to local churches for giving them a spiritual home during they stay at Bossey.

Fr Dr Lawrence Iwuamadi, academic dean of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, reflected that the students have shared not only knowledge but hope as well.

"We have just returned from Rome," he reflected, referring to the recently completed annual study trip in conjunction with the Week of Prayer of Christian Unity. "You are the first group to meet Pope Leo."

He added that, as Bossey approaches its 80th anniversary on 6th October this year, this graduating class now becomes part of a legacy that spans over generations. "You are stepping into a story much bigger than yourself, and you carry it forward with grace, humour, and a remarkable ability to adapt," he said. "As you leave, remember that your journey with Bossey does not end here."

The Rev Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba, WCC programme director for Unity, Mission, and Ecumenical Formation, reflected that the graduates are celebrating not just an academic conclusion, but the fruition of a transformative journey on the Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity.

"You, our graduates, came here from every corner of the world and every corner of the Christian family," she said. "You brought your distinct stories, your theological accents, and your liturgical rhythms."

The students learned that unity is not uniformity, but "the hard and beautiful work of bridge-building," said Nalwamba. "You have been immersed in the ecumenical

method, seeking truth together in love, believing we see God more clearly through the eyes of our neighbour."

The students are practitioners of reconciliation, she added. "Carry this Bossey spirit with you," she said. "Be translators between divided communities."

The road continues, Nalwamba advised. "There will be setbacks," she said. "Carry the fire of dialogue into cold prejudice. Carry the water of shared understanding into parched landscapes of division."

'Such a joy' - how I joined the Ministry Experience Scheme

Rachel Akodu is part of a record intake this year of more than 100 young adults to the Church of England's Ministry Experience Scheme. Read about her experiences in Guildford and Brussels.



A biomedical science graduate from the University of Surrey, Rachel loved working at her local church, St Saviour's in Guildford, in student and young adult ministry. "At University I really connected with the Anglican Church and I wanted to serve in whatever ways I could," she said.

"I loved being part of student and young adult ministry at St Saviour's, where I worked for a year, and had the opportunity to walk alongside others in their discipleship journeys.

Prof. Dr Cristophe Chalamet, dean of the Autonomous Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Geneva, expressed great joy over what the students have achieved.

"It is a gift that you have received, I think, in coming here to Bossey and sharing the life, and sharing studies," he said. "I have been coming to Bossey for over a decade and I have witnessed also the difficulties of arriving. But there's a lot of beauty in the encounter of differences among a shared faith, a shared baptism. The journey does not end here, of course."

"My supervisor at the time mentioned the [Ministry Experience Scheme](#) and I applied, saying I'd like to have experience of working in the Church outside the UK. I have been working in Brussels, in the Diocese in Europe, at the pro Cathedral, Holy Trinity, in the city. They are providing amazing loving service to their community and it has been a joy to be there. There is so much to do at Holy Trinity, including volunteering at the food bank which serves 140 people a week and the [community kitchen](#) where they prepare thousands of meals every week for refugees and asylum seekers."

Rachel, 23, (pictured, above, addressing the Ministry Experience Scheme annual conference) is now spending a three-month placement at St Clare's Church on the Park Barn housing estate in Guildford before returning to Brussels in April.

She said: "I have been at St Clare's for two weeks, and it already feels like a really welcoming community. I've been encouraged by their heart for evangelism and desire to see those in the area come to know Jesus. Hearing the stories of those who are new Christians has been such a joy; there is so much life there, which has been an encouragement to my own faith."

Sudan : Challenges in Providing Higher Education

Dr Eeva John, one of our members, is Vice Chancellor of The Episcopal University which is being established in South Sudan. She first told us about it in January 2024 in issue 135 (article xxv) of The Window. Here she describes some of the ups and downs encountered since then in creating higher education opportunities in this new nation.

The Background

The first 14 years of South Sudan's independence from its northern neighbour, Sudan, have seen little progress. Criminality, frequent eruptions of localised conflicts, the impact of climate change, and opposition parties in government in a seeming stalemate, continue to thwart dreams of peace and prosperity. Furthermore, having already endured a civil war of its own between 2013 and 2018, this newest country has since become a refuge for people fleeing war-torn northern Sudan as it reels from one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.



The Beginning

Back in 2020, the community of Rokon – a small town 50 miles northwest of Juba – donated 16 km² of land outside the town to build a central campus for The Episcopal University. The site was surveyed, water was found and a substantial fence erected. On the 14th September 2024 the University celebrated the completion of the fence and gateway.

From the start the University planned a sustainable agricultural project on some of the land there. It will serve as a model for practical learning, research, and community engagement, integrating modern and traditional agricultural practices, fostering innovation and self-sufficiency while addressing food security challenges in the region. This project has now started in earnest and the vision is to provide more nutritious food for staff and students, to sell produce to support the administration costs of the university, and eventually to use the campus for agricultural studies.

Financial Pressures

The present academic year has been packed full of action and good news, including sources of funding for projects and lots of new students - and scholarships for them!



The Gate of the Rokon Campus

However, the financial situation is challenging and now, in 2026, in the short term TEU will have to lose some staff and reduce the salaries for existing staff. The long term plan is for the University to be financially self-sustainable through income generating projects and student fees. So in the meantime one or two major partners who believe both in the vision and also in the criticality of higher education for the country's peace and development are being sought. So, if you know any possible major partners, please get in touch with us.

But every little helps; generous individuals and grant makers have enabled more students to study and key projects to be completed that are making TEU better every day.

Teaching and Learning

One important task is upskilling our lecturers. Huge congratulations to Abraham Maker. He is Acting Dean of Bishop Gwynne School of Theology.

He has a PhD from Uganda Christian University (UCU), to the Principal of St John's College, Wau, a PhD from St Paul's Limuru and to Vicky Alur, Director of Finance, TEU, who gained an MBA from UCU. Completing these further degrees whilst working at TEU is no mean feat. New cohorts of daytime and evening class students have been admitted to both the Schools of Law and Theology in Juba. A joyful induction was held for all students on 2nd February, 2026, with music and food, as well as important information about how they can make the most of their time at TEU, working for a better tomorrow, today!

Thanks to the generosity of several partners and individual donors, more students are able to study at TEU. This includes ten for theology from Anglican Aid, six for theology from the Church Association for South Sudan & Sudan, three for theology from Local Leaders International, six for law from AFRECS and Methodist Women, fifteen for theology from Samaritan's Purse and three for women for theology from individual donors. Could you consider giving \$2,000 (£1,500) to TEU for a scholarship? Your money would enable someone who couldn't otherwise afford to study to have the opportunity to be a residential student at TEU, covering all their costs for a year.

A better tomorrow begins today

Workshops at Bishop Gwynne Campus in Juba have been held on pedagogy for online learning, and creating and using a Learning Management System. Eleven staff from three TEU, campuses and twelve from Juba attended who received some excellent learning and a determination to embark together on digitisation of academic administration and online learning. It also cemented positive relationships between staff and colleges around common goals.

Thanks to a grant from Local Leaders International internet provision now connects campuses in Maridi, Wau, Kajo Keji and Yei to each other and enables online learning. Solar panels and batteries run it, as well as screens in classrooms for the presentation of teaching materials. Thanks to the Anglican Communion Fund a total of 28 laptops have now been distributed among the campuses. These things represent a great step towards enabling students access to resource and tools we in the developed countries take for granted.

Finally, The School of Law is still fairly new and has made huge strides over the past couple of years, ensuring students have the resources to learn. This has been further helped by 12 boxes of books collected and shipped by the International Law Book Facility.

In Conclusion

Please pray for the staff now working on only 50% of 2024 salaries, for our students, our vision and our determination to provide the people of South Sudan with a vibrant higher education environment.

Education: a catalyst for change in church and society

The following two articles discuss the significance of LWF scholarships. The first reports about this year's programme and how it strengthens the global Lutheran communion. The second outlines how LWF scholarships inspire students to strengthen awareness about inclusion and justice in their churches and communities.

LWF approves new scholarships for 46 theology students and 54 people pursuing diakonia-related studies

"Education serves as a catalyst for positive change, extending far beyond the classroom and transforming not only individuals, but also the churches and societies in which we live."

That's the conviction of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Programme Executive for Capacity Building and Leadership Development, the Rev Katariina Kiilunen, who is responsible for overseeing the annual scholarships which are offered to students of theology and diakonia-related studies.

At a meeting last December, the LWF Scholarship Committee approved new scholarships for 46 theology students from 34 member churches and for 54 students pursuing diakonia-related studies in 35 member churches.

Through LWF's scholarship programme, Kiilunen said, the global communion "continues its long-standing commitment to supporting good-quality education that advances responsible theology, fosters critical thinking, and strengthens the Church's public witness in society as advocates for justice and peace."

Since the 1950s, more than 4,000 women and men have received training through LWF scholarships. Candidates are selected through a rigorous process that seeks to provide a balanced regional representation. Over half of all scholarships this year have been awarded to women, and the majority of successful applicants are aged 30 or under.

Over the past five years, LWF has introduced new activities and platforms linked to the scholarship program, bringing scholarship holders together across the communion and creating spaces for joint reflection and exchange of ideas. Alongside leadership development, the program places particular emphasis on building and sustaining networks among current scholars and alumni.

Strengthening these connections has also opened new opportunities for scholarship holders to contribute to the life of the global communion and to serve as resource persons in various activities and events.

Leadership training for theology scholarship holders

LWF conducted a leadership training session for theology scholarship holders from 19th–24th April in Wittenberg, Germany, offering a space to nurture transformative leadership that is grounded in responsible theology.

Participants explored the concept and practice of church leadership in their different intercultural and intergenerational contexts, reflecting critically on the kind of church and world they help shape through their theology



Photo: ©LWF/K. Kiilunen

and practice. The programme emphasised value-based leadership and seeks to strengthen participants' understanding of church leadership as both spiritual and organizational. "This training is essential to support the holistic formation of emerging leaders, helping them to grow and develop the skills and discernment needed to serve their churches faithfully and creatively in these challenging times," Kiilunen said.

Strengthening the global Lutheran communion

New scholarship holder P. J. Hanekom, a member of the Northeastern Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa and a PhD student in Missiology at Stellenbosch University, expressed gratitude to the LWF for investing in emerging scholars and pastors and for embodying a vision of shared responsibility for the Church's mission worldwide.

"I intend to use this scholarship diligently and faithfully—not only for academic growth, but for the strengthening of the global Lutheran communion," he said. "I hope my research will contribute to holistic missional reflection that is theologically sound, ecumenically aware, and practically applicable, both locally and across diverse contexts within the Lutheran communion."

Scholarships open new ways to serve across the Lutheran communion

Participants share how church and community contexts influence studies

As Ishaku Sunday starts the second phase of undergraduate classes at the University of Jos, it marks a significant step in his endeavour to use modern knowledge and design to strengthen education that incorporates challenges faced by people with disabilities. "It will enable me to support inclusive education, particularly for persons with special needs and to contribute meaningfully to the development of church-based educational programs that promote equity, dignity and service to the community," Sunday remarked.



Photo: ©LCCN

A member of the [Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria](#), Sunday is among the nearly 100 students awarded scholarships by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in [2026](#). The study grants include a category for persons living with disabilities.

Prior to enrolling at the university for a bachelor's degree in education administration and planning, Sunday attended the Special Education Centre in Jada, Adamawa State. His early education was in mainstream primary and junior school, until he lost hearing following illness in 2005. "This new knowledge will strengthen my professional capacity to design and manage effective educational initiatives," he said.

At the first LWF-hosted online gathering for the new scholarship holders on 24th February, Sunday and other students shared the contexts of their studies. The Communion Office staff facilitating the event introduced them to the Lutheran communion's history, vision and mission, and strategic priorities. "The strength of our communion is found in its diversity — each person's unique gifts are essential to fulfilling our shared mission," said the Rev Katariina Kiilunen.

Giving back

From Indonesia, the Rev Muliathy Briany, [Pakpak Dairi Christian Protestant Church](#), said she is preparing to begin her PhD studies in theology at Jakarta Theological Seminary, where she will research how the role of women in diakonia during the Great Zending era (1815-1940) missionary activities has shaped theological reflection and practice.

"I hope this contribution will not only serve my own church but also provide valuable historical insights for churches across Indonesia," she said.

In Brazil, Gabriela Giese, who serves as communication and public relations coordinator at the [Evangelical Church of the](#)

[Lutheran Confession in Brazil](#) (IECLB), will study media practices in managing crises in religious organisations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul. Her research will examine how churches, especially the IECLB, use media to respond to institutional, social and environmental crises, and the role of communication in expressing faith, particularly in times of tension.

"Transparent, ethical communication and active listening are not only management strategies but ways of witnessing to the gospel. In this light, a crisis can become an opportunity to reaffirm mission, care for life, and strengthen public trust," Giese explained.

Shared calling to serve

Kiilunen said the online meetings have become a valuable space for students to network and engage LWF staff on thematic aspects of their study programs. Held quarterly, they gather participants from the two scholarship categories: theology and diakonia related fields. "Coming together allows us to celebrate what we have in common, embrace our differences as Lutherans, and renew our shared calling to witness to the gospel, serve people in need, address injustice, and advocate for peace in this world," she added. Future sessions will focus on topics such as leadership formation, freedom of religion, child safeguarding, and social media.

Since the 1950s, the LWF has supported the academic formation of more than 4,000 people. Through its scholarship program, it aims to strengthen member churches by equipping leaders committed to service, justice and public witness.

The students from Lutheran churches across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean will study theology and diaconal-related fields in 2026. Most are women and youth, preparing to strengthen their churches and communities.

Latin America: Young people as sowers of hope in challenging times

Latin America's traditional youth camps are signs of hope, offering space for sharing and healing, nurturing spirituality and hands-on service to neighbour and the environment. This article sets out what young Lutherans from the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) experienced during their summer camps. So read on.



Photo: ©Jóvenes IERP Paraguay

Summer camps in Argentina and Paraguay aim to build a young, creative, committed and deeply communal church

At the start of 2026, young Lutherans from the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) gathered in one of their most historic and significant spaces: the district summer camps. More than just recreational gatherings, these camps are a living expression of a faith that is built in community, with physical presence and a shared spirituality that continues to shape generations of believers.

“Latin American countries are currently experiencing very challenging political, economic and social situations that create a hopeless environment for young people,” said the Rev Sonia Skupch, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Regional Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America. “Violence and lack of meaning are unfortunately widespread. In this sense, the IERP summer camps, like all youth camps in the region, are signs and paths of hope, both for the young people who participate and also for their communities.”

In Argentina’s Misiones District, more than 80 young people gathered in the city of Eldorado under the theme: “It is necessary to celebrate.” Reflecting on the parable of the prodigal son, they engaged in deep conversations about mental health, the expectations imposed on young people, and the need for a home environment that is supportive. In

times of increasingly fragile family and friendship bonds, the camps become a space for healing and belonging. “At the camps, we experience spirituality in our own way: with music, hugs, activities, and prayer together,” many participants said.

This search for community was also experienced in Paraguay, where young people from different congregations gathered in the southern city of Hohenau, inspired by the verse “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). The camp combined games, workshops, and biblical reflection, reminding participants that Christian love is not an abstract idea, but a concrete practice that is learned by living with others, and caring for one’s neighbour.

In Entre Ríos province, in northeastern Argentina, the motto “Walking with faith” accompanied around 50 young people who gathered in the town of Crespo. There, they explored issues of trust, of taking the first step on a journey, and the certainty that God guides us, even in the midst of uncertainty. One participant, Augustina Eichmann, highlighted a hopeful sign that she witnessed during the encounter: “Many boys and girls who didn’t speak up at the start were encouraged to share their experiences.” Faith was seen to be a path to be travelled together, sharing stories out loud, she reflected.

Linking spirituality to practical commitment

Another camp held in the Western District focused on the relationship between spirituality and practical commitment. Under the theme, “Justice, peace, and care for creation”, young people experienced a gathering where reflection turned into action: from devotionals to hands-on activities related to environmental care. Valentina de Paul summed up the challenge facing participants: “We were encouraged to address these issues in a way that even children could experience them, not just hear about them.”

Finally, in the Metropolitan District, which includes communities in the city of Buenos Aires and surrounding areas, the camp’s theme, “Strengthening our spirit in communion” expressed a common need: to support each other in the face of difficulties experienced by many communities. Ludmila Gutiérrez explained that the theme arose from a shared concern: how to be together in the

midst of adversity. The closing ceremony, which included painting shared hugs on T-shirts, symbolised what participants had experienced: youth who do not think of themselves as alone, but woven together in bonds of friendship.

“Young people in our region are sowers of hope,” Regional Secretary Skupch reflected. “They have brought and continue to bring new perspectives, new forms of leadership, new paths in faith and a renewed commitment to their neighbours. In a world that is often dark and hostile, their presence and commitment are a light on the path.”

The IERP summer camps continue to be much more than a tradition. They are spaces where young people practice being Church: a young, creative, committed, and deeply communal Church. At every campfire, workshop, worship, or shared laugh, participants come away convinced that individual faith is strengthened by walking together.

New “Mapping Migration” Report views trends, role of Churches across Europe

Members attending our Conference in September, and those who are not, may be interested in this new Report as Europe prepares for a new phase in migration policy.

The fourth edition of “Mapping Migration” was launched in April at a meeting of the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe Executive Committee (CCME). Dr Torsten Moritz, CCME’s General Secretary said, “It has been deeply shaped by the response to displacement from Ukraine, by ongoing care for refugees from other countries, and by Romania’s position at the external borders of the European Union.”

That position is becoming even more significant as the EU Asylum and Migration Pact is set to take effect in June this year. It is expected to introduce stricter border procedures and screening mechanisms, with countries like Romania likely to see an increasing number of people held at external borders. “This will mean that through screening and border procedures, Romania will see lots of people being stuck at the external border,” Dr Moritz noted. “It is very important that Churches are responding to that.”

“Migration work brings the Churches together in witness,” he continued, pointing to the way shared humanitarian challenges can transcend theological differences. Against this backdrop, the launch of “Mapping Migration, 4th Edition” takes on particular significance. It has been produced in collaboration with the World Council of Churches, and provides a comprehensive overview of migration trends and the evolving role of churches across Europe. It shows how migration is not only reshaping societies but also transforming the churches themselves — in many cases it is reshaping them with new forms of worship, leadership, and community emerging, often driven by migrants themselves. In this sense, migration is



The fourth edition of “Mapping Migration” documents how Churches across Europe are responding to one of the defining issues of our time.
Photo: CCME

presented not only as a challenge to be managed but as a force renewing Christian life in Europe.

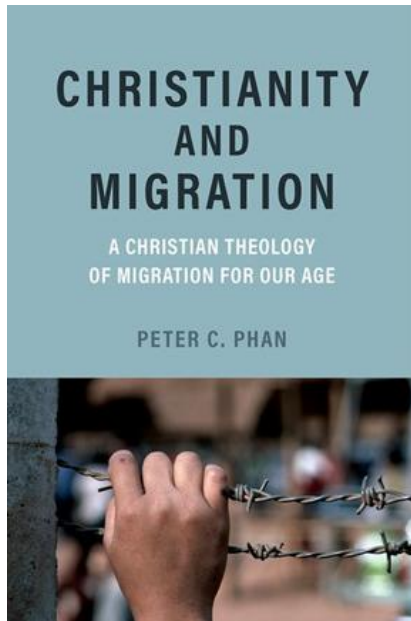
“Mapping Migration” is an important tool, building on years of research tracing both movement patterns and institutional responses, examining how different denominations, in varied national contexts, are supporting people on the move — whether through humanitarian aid, advocacy, or community-building initiatives. It highlights not only the scale of Church engagement but also the challenges: issues of integration, belonging, and racism continue to shape the experiences of migrants and the responses of host communities.

You can download the Report at <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/mapping-migration-4th-edition>

Book Reviews

‘Christianity and Migration’

Fr Phillip Swingle, the Roman Catholic Observer on our Committee, thinks this book by Peter Phan (Oxford University Press, 2025) will be valuable for all our members, but especially those attending the Conference in Hamburg



I strongly recommend this new book by Peter Phan. He himself is a refugee and migrant Vietnamese American, and he sets out a Christian theology of migration for our age. I believe it will become a classic – it is outstanding.

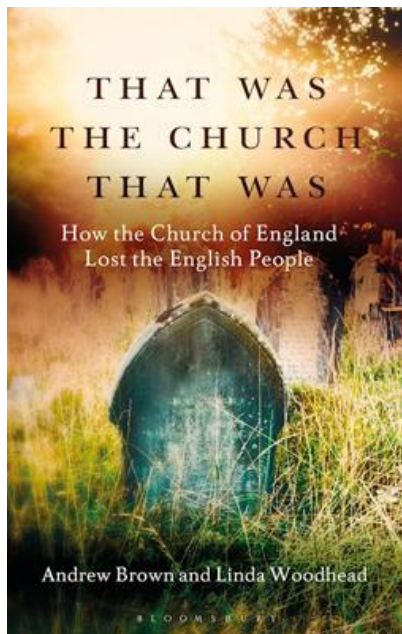
Our time has been dubbed the “Age of Migration” and as such it demands a fresh and systematic retelling of Christian beliefs from the perspective of migration. The book begins with a discussion of the nature and method of Christian theology, human mobility as a permanent feature of human existence, the categories of migrants and types of migration, arguing that migration transforms Christianity.

The second part of the book introduces God the Father as the Primordial Migrant, the Son as the Paradigmatic Migrant and the Holy Spirit as the Personal Power of Migration. Then the author describes the Church as an Institutional Migrant, worship and popular devotions in the lives of migrants, the ethics of mutual hospitality, the theology of land, the duty of migrants to remember where they came from, why they must remember and how they must remember. He ends with reflections on the connection between migration and eschatology.

It’s a challenging read offering a new approach to a pressing moral issue. It’s available in paperback and as an ebook.

A Wake-Up Call for English Anglicans

Fr Phillip Swingle, Roman Catholic Observer on our Committee, recommends a book to get people thinking.



For those in the beloved island Church of England I recommend a challenging, impassioned description of the contemporary nature of that ecclesial grouping, its foundations and influence on society. It is a furious wake-up call by two Anglican Church of England authors, and is amusingly entitled ‘*That was the Church that was: how the Church of England lost the English People*’ (paperback, 2018, Bloomsbury Publishing). The authors are Andrew Brown, a life-long religious commentator, and Linda Woodhead, Christian Sociologist and Professor at Lancaster University and the Institute for Social Futures.

The Church of England still seemed an essential part of Englishness, and even of the British state, when Mrs Thatcher was elected in 1979. The decades which followed saw a seismic shift in the foundations of the C of E, leading to the loss of more than half its members and much of its influence. In England today 'religion' has become a toxic brand, and Anglicanism something done by other people. How did this happen? Is there any way back?

This 'relentlessly honest' and surprisingly entertaining book tells the dramatic and contentious story of the disappearance of the Church of England from the centre of public life. The authors watched this closely, one from the inside and one from the outside. *That Was the Church, That Was* shows what happened and explains why.

The Window

supports members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society in better understanding our different traditions and social contexts so that we can more faithfully proclaim together God's love and justice in the world

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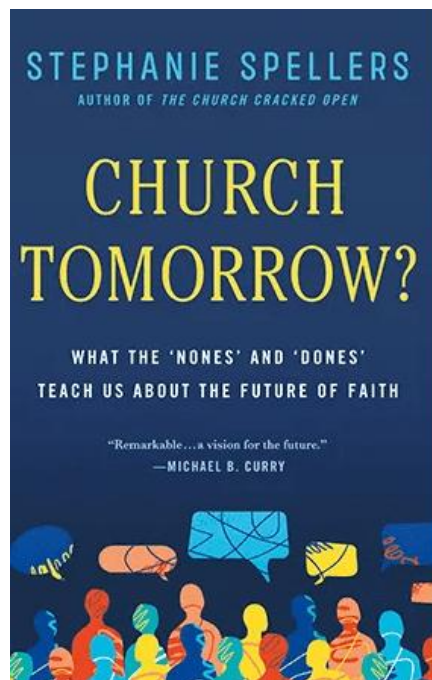
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Church Tomorrow?

The Rev Canon Stephanie Spellers Charts a New Way Forward



Why are many in younger generations turning away from the Church for meaning? More than a few Americans claim no affiliation: those who are done with church, who never belonged, or who identify as spiritual but not religious, especially among Millennials and Gen Z.

In her book *Church Tomorrow?* the Rev Canon Stephanie Spellers creates a path toward renewal by posing urgent questions to clergy and lay leaders about shaping the future of the Church. She shifts the conversation from *Where did people go?* to *Where does the church go now?*, pointing toward revival grounded in listening, adaptation, and resilience.

Drawing on interviews with dozens of young adults across the country, she traces the surprising places where spiritual curiosity is flourishing: yoga circles inside San Francisco's

Grace Cathedral, secular gatherings such as Sunday Assembly in Atlanta, and college students experimenting with mysticism.

These stories reveal not apathy among the religiously unaffiliated, but a fierce hunger for community, authenticity, and moral purpose – yearnings that many traditional institutions can satisfy.

Long recognised as a trusted voice in The Episcopal Church and beyond, Canon Spellers has helped communities navigate transformation through books including *Radical Welcome* and *The Church Cracked Open*. With *Church Tomorrow?* she extends that work, equipping leaders to face disruption with creativity and hope, not fear.

This book has earned praise from leaders throughout the Church, including Julia Ayala Harris, President of the House of Deputies, who says that “Spellers amplifies the voices of seekers, sceptics, and spiritual dreamers too often ignored,” and that *Church Tomorrow?* calls us to live with authenticity, courage, and love, reminding us that the Spirit still breathes new life into dry bones.”

The Very Rev Winnie Varghese, Dean of the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine in New York, commends the book as “a rich dive into the voices of spiritual young adults who do not find belonging in Christian Churches” and “an important read for those of us who seek to serve them from the Church.”

Available now through Church Publishing's Morehouse imprint, [Church Tomorrow?](http://ChurchTomorrow.org) is an indispensable companion for the journey ahead.