

TOGETHER

The magazine of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway

JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2023



The theme
of this issue is
'Reconciliation'

Who's Who

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The diocesan website is www.europe.anglican.org, and the Church of England's website is www.cofe.anglican.org.

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From the Senior Chaplain

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5.18 NRSV)

To be involved in reconciliation is a central part of our Christian calling. We have a part to play which may otherwise be missing. As we have recently been reminded, "The world needs the voice of the churches." Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who is the new moderator of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee, was reflecting on the urgency of churches working together to overcome the daily suffering of the war in Ukraine, and how this is both a spiritual and ecclesiological question.

"Let us open ourselves up to Christ," he urged, "whose love moves us to reconciliation and unity."

Reconciliation is the theme of this issue of Together. It touches our own lives and relationships and those of our communities and countries. It's a concern which is at the heart of the Christian Gospel. Whenever St Paul reflects on reconciliation, he speaks foremost of God's act of reconciling the world to himself in our Lord Jesus Christ. The ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us comes out of God's act. As the Swiss theologian Karl Barth writes in his Doctrine of Reconciliation, our task is to bear witness to the reconciliation which God has brought about in Christ.

The practical outworkings are the subject of reflection in Revd Kirk Weisz's article on his visit to the Berlin Wall with colleagues from the Cathedral Parish in Bergen. "How we can cultivate reconciliation," he asks, "in the face of the inevitable conflicts and disagreements we encounter in life and ministry?" Revd Sheila Rosenthal draws not only from St Paul, but also from Winnie the Pooh and St Mark's Gospel, and she notes our need to be reconciled by love where reason alone fails.

Rumi Achiye, Stavanger Treasurer and recently re-elected to Chaplaincy Council, writes of how transforming it can be to overcome fear with hope. To put our trust in God can aid our whole well-being as we recall God's word through the Prophet Isaiah, "Do not be afraid, because I am with you."

The Church's seasons of Lent and Easter have been an intensive time of reflection with Lent study groups around our congregations, including Home away from home: hearing God's voice in a foreign land on which both Dr Esther Brownsmith and Owen Thomas offer their insights. Meanwhile, preparation for Confirmation was focused in three groups, with Chaplaincy-wide online courses provided for both young people and adults, and an in-person group focussed around Kongsberg and Drammen for members of the South Sudanese Maban community who have been seeking Confir-

mation within the Anglican Church. Gratitude to everyone involved. It was a great joy when these preparations all came to fruition with Bishop David Hamid presiding over Confirmations on 23rd April in St Edmund's, Oslo, in English in the morning, and in a mixture of English, Arabic and Maban at Bragemes Church, Drammen, in the afternoon. At the latter, interpretation was ably provided by Pastor Isaac Moma, himself one of those resettled to Norway in recent years from refugee camps in Ethiopia. Our prayers continue for those affected by the tragic events in both Sudan and South Sudan.

We were proud that in Holy Week, Susan Boyd, Reader in Trondheim and our Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer and Trainer for the Diocese, was chosen to be one of those to receive Maundy Money from King Charles in York Minster on the first such occasion of his reign. Only a month later, King Charles' Coronation has been marked around our Norway Chaplaincy with both festivities and prayers.

Our congratulations to those recently elected at the Chaplaincy AGM, including Barbara McIntosh and Juliet Chukwuma who will serve as Chaplaincy Churchwardens for the coming year. The full list you will find on page 2 under Who's Who. We are very grateful to all who serve our Chaplaincy in different ways, most of whom do so in a completely voluntary capacity. Special gratitude to Terry Bevan, our outgoing Chaplaincy Churchwarden, with our love and prayers for his full recovery to health.

In all we do, we look to Christ, our source of hope and reconciliation, rejoicing that the violence of the cross was unable to have the final word.

Revd Canon Joanna Udal, Senior Chaplain

Bergen notes

Greetings from Bergen! It has been a very eventful



spring for us in ministry. We are pleased that the small youth group for teenagers that we started up last year has continued into the new year. In early February, we held a youth gathering for teenagers that focused on dreams and aspirations for the new

year. The gathering also included a Lenten quiz, and a ping pong tournament, and craft time to make medals for our Shrove Sunday pancake race and flipping contests. As we moved into Lent, we put a lot of energy into our Shrove Sunday pancake lunch this year. A good efforts were rewarded with

a wonderful turnout of both children and adults. Lots of yummy pancakes were consumed!

On Ash Wednesday we came together with the Norwegian congregation of Mariakirken for an ecumenical service as we do each year. A real highlight to Ash Wednesday this year was the soup dinner after the service in Mariastuen put on by our dear Ukrainian friends who have found a spiritual home in our congregations. We also read a wonderful Lenten devotional by N.T. Wright that led us through the Gospel of Matthew. Holy Week was an important time of reflection, prayer and worship as we joined St. Edmund's for Maundy Thursday, a Good Friday Tenebrae service in Mariakirken, and we celebrated joyfully on Easter morning with the Mariakirken congregation. During the Easter period, we enjoyed live coverage of the Coronation of King Charles III in Mariastuen with lots of British goodies!

The spring came to end on a sad note however, with the passing of long time member Hilda Mary Sefton. A native of Edinburgh, Scotland, Hilda was a faithful member of the Bergen congregation since 1974. Prior to relocating to Bergen from a job assignment in the very far north of Norway, she spent 1964–65 as a member of St. Edmund's Church in Oslo. She was known here locally for making embroidered towels, many of which were used at infant baptisms to dry the baby after baptism, and then given to the family as a gift. Hilda was a great friend to many and she will be deeply missed.

We have much to look forward to as we move into Pentecost. We are looking forward to a new Pentecost Festival in Bergen on Whit Monday. We will also be moving our coffee hour on Sunday 11 June to longtime member Paddy Hanevik's house, who turned 95 this past year. There will be food, fellowship and games to play in her garden. Lastly, we are looking we look forward to our attendance numbers increasing dramatically with the many tourists throughout the summer. Wishing the entire Chaplaincy a happy and restful summer!

Rev'd Dr Kirk Weisz, Bergen Assistant Chaplain

Stavanger notes

In peaceful Wales, facing the sun and the rolling green hills from a pink deckchair in one of the Hay Festival's open spaces, Stavanger Anglican's assistant warden provides a rather short update of the year so far, up to and including May. Without clergy to lead one of the services in late January, the Stavanger Anglicans (via Senior Chap-

lain Joanna) were kindly and enthusiastically invited by Rev'd Øivind to participate in a Communion service at St Petri Kirke. We received a very warm and inclusive welcome, illustrated by an offer for us to read a lesson and assist in the giving of Communion wine. Naturally, the service was in Norwegian! However, as the order was, of course, not dissimilar to our own, it was not difficult to follow, even for those of us whose Norwegian (despite a 400 day Duo Lingo streak and... several years of residency) was not up to par! This was a joyous experience which we hope to repeat when the opportunity arises. We have once again been privileged to welcome Senior Chaplain Joanna to Stavanger a number of times since the beginning of the year. On the occasion of her February visit, Felix and Beatrice led us, a capella, in a wonderful Malawian hymn in the Chichewa language - Ndine Mkhristu. In April, the Stavanger Anglicans organised and hosted the ecumenical Good Friday service at St Petri, led by "our" Rev'd Geir whom we were also blessed to have on Easter Sunday. A little later in April, we sadly bid farewell to André, our lay worship leader, assistant safeguarding officer and good friend as he had to move back to the United States after a handful of years in Norway and as many as a steadfast and active member of our congregation. Stateside news is that André is well, settling in, and has been busy substitute teaching. Towards the end of April, at the Chaplaincy AGM, Juliet from Stavanger was elected as a second Chaplaincy warden, alongside Barbara from Bergen. Mark was re-elected as the Deanery Synod representative, and Jane and Rumi as Chaplaincy Council members. A big thanks to all the above folk for their willingness and dedication! Our usual worship venue, Domkirke og St Petri Menighetshuset, was unavailable to us on 7th May, so we joined St Edmund's special Coronation service remotely. Jo and Ben White generously opened their home for those who wished to join the service with them (and nibble on Coronation fare afterwards).

Another important event took place on 7th May. Mark Hamer's son Oskar was confirmed at the Hunvdåg church. Congratulations Oskar!

Rev'd Sheila, with husband and four dogs, bobbled

all the way from Trondheim to Stavanger to lead a wonderfully participatory Sunday service on 14th May. It was a treat for us all to welcome her and her family! Last, but not least, the Stavanger Anglicans were invited once again to lay wreaths on the Commonwealth graves at the Eiganes Cemetery as part of a 17th May memorial service.

Sarah Denieul, Stavanger

Trondheim notes

If Oslo is obliging, Bergen is blessed and Stavanger is steadfast, then Trondheim might be said to be tiny for nothing much happens here. We plod, we put one foot in front of another and along the way we meet as Christians and we 'do' life.

Lent was a mix of meetings with an online study group on the Lent collects. Who knew such everyday prayers could be so full of meaning and scope? Maundy Thursday was the foot washing and communion service with our good colleagues in the cathedral and preceded by some of us joining the Bymission for lamb roast and street theatre - an imaginative take on the women after the Last Supper clearing up and then having Peter burst in with bad news of the arrest of Christ. On Good Friday we had more drama with readings performed by 3 of our congregation based loosely on the Stations of the Cross. This was followed by a walk around the city, also based stations of the cross, with readings and sustenance provided by us in the form of Hot Cross Buns. Easter is one of those times when the regular church members leave the city and we are joined by irregular tourists and travellers: all are welcome. Shortly after Easter we most of us joined a massive service in a totally packed cathedral to say thanks you farewell, God bless and God speed to Ragnhild Jepsen, formerly our Dean and now gracing Bergen with her gifts and talents as Bishop there.

Sunday School / Messy Church activity remains small but steady and a couple of families learn about different aspects important to our faith – such as the character of Jesus and what it means to be His follower. This all takes place in the Waisenhuset where we also meet again now for after-church coffee twice a month. Pentecost will, as is the tradition here, be held in the morning at Fjellseter, just outside the city. May can be notori-

ously unpleasant weather wise but there is a good fireplace there as well as lovely areas for picnics.

We are blessed with very talented people here – as are all our chaplaincies of course. The downside of this is that they are often busily engaged in their work at all times and in all places and so our congregation seems small at times. The upside though is that when we do come together we make a glorious noise in our singing and the warm conversations between friends. Christ calls us to be His friends, not a competitive team, a company of money-makers or guild of specialists, just friends that come and go and pick up where we left off however long the time between meeting. We do as Christians do, break bread, drink wine, sing songs of praise and pray for the world – and quietly, a lot of other things too.

Revd Sheila Rosenthal, Trondheim Assistant Chaplain

Oslo notes

Just as daily life is marked by the change of seasons, with spring bursting forth before giving way to summer, so the seasons of the Church's year significantly mark our worship and activities. Lent has offered us an intentional time to attend to our life of faith and desire to follow Christ. At St Edmund's, Lent lunches have reminded us of those who look to us for support, particularly the Shearly Cripps Children's Home in Zimbabwe. We're very grateful for everyone's support and to all those who filled the gaps on the sign-up list for making delicious soups to spur our giving. We were also very grateful to Dr Esther Brownsmith who broadened horizons through our Lent Study groups focusing on the biblical experience of diaspora and how this can speak to us today. It was very rich reading together the Book of Esther as well as passages from the psalms, Daniel and the lesser known story of Suzanna. (See separate articles). During Lent we also enjoyed having Oksana's art exhibited in the crypt and celebrating the opening of her exhibition "Through Ukrainian Eyes, a celebration of Art and Community." During Holy Week both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday were kept at St Edmund's this year, the latter service held jointly with the American Lutheran Congregation and their pastor, Sherri Fredriksen, focussing on the symbols of Christ's passion. We also enjoyed fellowship afterwards in the crypt over coffee and hot cross buns. We have

yet to hold an Easter Vigil and hope this may be something of interest for the future, but it was nevertheless a great joy to light the Paschal Candle on Easter morning and to bless the Easter Garden. It has also been a great joy to have a growing number of children at church and they much enjoyed their festive Easter activities after the Easter service.

Amidst our Easter joy we have been very aware of several of our congregation who have been seriously unwell and have been very much held in our prayers. Our love and good wishes to each of you. We are also aware of the continuing conflict in Ukraine and the commitment of those trying to support families and help the many people injured or displaced. We continue to pray for everyone's safety and for a just peace. We're also aware of other refugee communities resettled to Norway, including the South Sudanese Maban community many of whom have been resettled from Ethiopia where there has been a significant Anglican presence in the refugee camps. It was a joy to have an Easter celebration at Bragernes Church in Drammen for those resettled in the surrounding region. It has also been a great encouragement to work towards confirmations, with 23rd April becoming a day of great festivities with Confirmation services both at St Edmund's in the morning and Bragernes Church in the afternoon, both presided over by our Bishop David Hamid. Our prayers continue for much needed peace in Sudan and South Sudan.

The Drammen Ladies Guild continues to meet every other month in Bragernes Church with a service of Holy Communion in English after a short midday prayer in Norwegian. These are followed by a further time of fellowship over a shared lunch. Like the St Edmund's Ladies' Guild, the Guild members continue to look out for each other and are delighted to welcome others who would like to join them.



The Coronation big lunch at St Edmunds

The Coronation of King Charles was celebrated with a Festival Service on Sunday 7th May with a fine string ensemble accompanying the choir, and

the new British Ambassador, H.E Jan Thompson, reading the first lesson. We were blessed with fine weather, allowing the Big Lunch after the service to be held outdoors in sunshine behind the church as well as inside in the crypt. Many thanks to everyone for the splendid spread which was provided, and especially to Pamela Brooks for her welcome instruction in the art of fine sausage roll making which will also be of great benefit to future St Edmund's Bazaars! We look forward to spring moving into summer and to a summer picnic planned on Sunday 18th June after the morning service. Wishing a blessed summer to you all.

Revd Canon Joanna Udall, Oslo Chaplain

Maundy Coins

Receiving an email to be told I had been nominated to be present at the Maundy service in York Minster was a shock! After quieting down, I felt it was an unexpected honour and rather humbling.

Coming from Trondheim it felt a bit daunting to leave one's duties at this busy time of Holy week, but with great encouragement from family and priest, flights, trains and hotel were booked.

What was I thinking about? Well...why me! There are so many who do wonderful work for our Churches, the Diocese. I also do not know who put my name forward and will take this opportunity to say thank you.

I arrived at the South door with one of my sisters



who happened to be in York! Our identities were efficiently checked, and we were handed a detailed service program and kindly guided to our seats. All preparation and timings seemed to run very smoothly.

The service took one hour and was filled with great music and hymns ably led by the cathedral choir. We all shook hands with the king in turn and as he congratulated each one of us, 74 women and 74 men, and handed out two pouches, red and white with special coins in each. Many had little parts to play in this impressive service and a Roman Catholic Bishop also took part. The experience of being



in this beautiful Cathedral, with so many colourful uniforms and processions, beautiful singing and organ playing will be remembered for a very long time.

Susan Boyd, Trondheim

Congratulations Confirmands!

We are thrilled to see so many of our congregations across Norway who were confirmed in April and May. Your names are written on the palms of God's hands, and we wish you all the best in your continued journey in faith, hope, and love.



*Confirmations in
Bragernes Church,
Drammen*



Confirmand Oskar



Group trip to Gol Church, Bygdøy



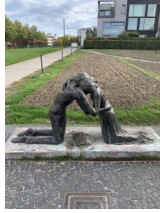
Bottom two: Confirmation service at St Edmunds, Oslo



| | | | Oslo | | Bergen | |
|-----------|----|--------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|
| JULY | | | | | | |
| Sun | 04 | Trinity Sunday | 11:00 | All age worship/Sung communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 11 | Trinity 1 Barnabas The Apostle | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 18 | Trinity 2 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Service of the word |
| Sun | 25 | Trinity 3 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| JULY | | | | | | |
| Sun | 02 | Trinity 4 | 11:00 | All Age Service/ Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 09 | Trinity 5 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Service of the word |
| Sun | 16 | Trinity 6 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Service of the word |
| Sun | 23 | Trinity 7 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Service of the word |
| Sun | 30 | Trinity 8 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| AUGUST | | | | | | |
| Sun | 06 | Trinity 9 Transfiguration | 11:00 | All Age Service/ Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 13 | Trinity 10 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 20 | Trinity 11 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Service of the word |
| Sun | 27 | Trinity 12 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| SEPTEMBER | | | | | | |
| Sun | 03 | Trinity 13 | 11:00 | All Age Service/ Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 10 | Trinity 14 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Fri | 15 | | 17:00 | Choral Evensong Oslo Kulturnatt | | |
| Sun | 17 | Trinity 15 | 11:00 | Sung Communion | 11:00 | Holy Communion |
| Sun | 24 | Trinity 16 | 11:00 | Sung Communion Harvest Festival | 11:00 | Holy Communion |

| Readings | Stavanger | | Trondheim | |
|--|-----------|----------------------------------|----------------|--|
| JUNE | | | | |
| 2 Corinthians 13.11-end Matthew 28.16-end | 10:30 | Family service TBC | 11:00 18:00 | Online Morning prayer Evening prayer Chapter House |
| Acts 11.19-end John 15.12-17 | 10:30 | Family communion | 18:00 | Holy Communion HC Chapter House |
| Romans 5.1-8 Matthew 9.35-10.8 | 11:00 | Joint service w Bergen/zoom | 18:00 | Holy Communion/ Cathedral |
| Romans 6.1b-11 Matthew 10.24-39 | 10:30 | Holy Communion TBC | 18:00 | Holy Communion Chapter House |
| JULY | | | | |
| Romans 6.12-end Matthew 10.40-end | | No service | 11:00 18:00 | Online/ Morning Prayer HC Chapter House |
| Romans 7.15-25a Matt 11.16-19,25-end | | No service | 18:00 | HC Chapter House |
| Romans 8.1-11 Matthew 13.1-9,18-23 | | No service | 18:00 | HC Cathedral |
| Romans 8.12-25 Matthew 13.24-30,36-43 | | No service | 18:00 | Evening Prayer Chapter House |
| Romans 8.26-end Matthew 13.31-33,44-52 | | TBC | 18:00 | Evening Prayer Chapter House |
| AUGUST | | | | |
| Daniel 7.9-10,13-14 Luke 9.28-36 | 10:30 | TBC | 11:00 18:00 | Online/Morning Prayer HC / Chapter House |
| Romans 10.5-15 Matthew 14.22-33 | 10:30 | TBC | 18:00 | Holy Communion Chapter House |
| Romans 11.1-2a,29-32 Matthew 15.21-28 | 10:30 | TBC | 18:00 | HC / Cathedral |
| Romans 12.1-8 Matthew 16.13-20 | 10:30 | Family Service Menighetshuset | 18:00 | Evening Prayer Chapter House |
| SEPTEMBER | | | | |
| Romans 12.9-end Matthew 16.21-end | 10:30 | TBC | 11:00 18:00 | Online/Morning Prayer HC/Chapter House |
| Romans 13.8-end Matthew 18.15-20 | 10:30 | TBC | 18:00 | HC Chapter House |
| | | | 18:00 | HC/ Chapter House |
| Romans 14.1-12 Matthew 18.21-35 | | TBC | 18:00 | HC Cathedral |
| Philippians 1.21-end Matthew 20.1-16 | | TBC | 18:00 | Evening Prayer Chapter House |

Reconciliation: visiting the Berlin Wall



This past September, I had the wonderful opportunity to join my colleagues in the Bergen Domkirke Menighet (BDM) in the Church of Norway on a three day trip to Berlin, Germany to explore various theological and practical aspects of reconciliation. We visited a number of historical and cultural sites related to this theme and also reflected on how to cultivate reconciliation within our own faith communities and contexts. The sokneprest of the BDM, Hans Jørgen Morvik served as our tour guide and provided rich insight and thoughtful reflection throughout. The trip was more, however, then a revisiting of the reconciliation between East and West Germany, but touched upon the important ongoing work of reconciliation in the realms of interfaith dialogue and ecumenical relations.



The House of One

On the first day of the trip, we visited the future site of The House of One. This is a significant interfaith project started in 2011 with a vision for peaceful relations between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The House of One will be a place of worship under one roof for these three monotheistic religions with a mosque, synagogue and church. It will also serve as a meeting place for interfaith dialogue. A global architectural competi-

tion and fundraising project began in 2014 and construction will take place once adequate funding is secured. One of the primary goals of this project is to foster respect and curiosity toward different religions, and to highlight theological similarities while also acknowledging distinct differences.

On the second day, we turned our focus toward the act of remembrance in the process of reconciliation by visiting the Jewish Museum Berlin, not far from the Berlin Wall. The Jewish Museum Berlin invites people of various backgrounds to engage openly and actively with Jewish history and contemporary Jewish life in Germany. The museum is dedicated to the preservation and transmission of German-Jewish cultural heritage and opposing antisemitism and all forms of discrimination. The visit to the museum was an important reminder that true reconciliation always begins with a thorough evaluation of the injustices of the past. Upon leaving the museum one must go down a rather long staircase that winds around to the exit. The walls of the staircase are covered in pictures of famous Jews throughout history including Albert Einstein, Salvador Dali, Elie Wiesel, and even Jesus of Nazareth.

On the third day, we started the morning with a service of Holy Communion at the Chapel of Reconciliation, a modern chapel, which stands on the site of the old Church of Reconciliation built in 1849. With the division of Berlin in 1945, the church building found itself within the Soviet sector, with most of the parishioners in the neighbouring French sector. This meant that when the Berlin Wall was constructed in 1961, it ran directly in front of the church on its western side and behind it on the eastern side, preventing access to everyone except the border guards, who used its tower as an observation post. Snipers often shot at escapees from the church's tower. The church was eventually demolished by the East German Government (GDR) in order to bring, "order, cleanliness and security" to the state border with West Germany. The new chapel was built with ecological sensitivities in mind along with the themes of remembrance and reconciliation. The chapel is recognised as part of the Berlin Wall Memorial and is included in Coventry Cathedral's Community of the Cross of Nails: a world symbol for recon-

ciliation and peace in which the Bergen Domkirke Menighet is a member.

After our morning Eucharist in the chapel, the rest of the day was spent exploring the Berlin Wall Memorial and Museum. It was both a somber and inspiring experience. It was a somber experience as we walked past a memorial with pictures of every person who lost their lives while trying to cross the heavily guarded border between 1961 to 1989, at least 140. At the museum, it was inspiring to watch TV footage on the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. This monumental day, marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War and, eventually, the Soviet Union. Soviet-occupied East Germany was reunited with West Germany on October 3, 1990. What struck me the most during the visit to the Berlin Wall Memorial, was how German reunification was essentially a history of great political leadership in the face of great skepticism among many European leaders that a united Germany was possible. It was essentially about key players (Bush, Gorbachev, and Kohl) who developed trusting relationships and helped the Soviet Union not see reunification as a defeat, but rather as the making of a new Europe, with the hope that the Soviet Union, later Russia, would be a part. Unfortunately this hope has not yet come to be, and the need for reconciliation between Russia and Europe is needed more than ever.

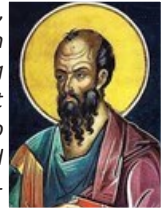
The trip raised more questions for me regarding reconciliation than it provided answers though. It was mostly a time of remembering and reflection. Theologically, it reminded me that reconciliation is at the heart of our faith. Jesus Christ came into the world to reconcile our broken world to Himself. In fact, one could argue that Jesus's entire public ministry was to foster and encourage reconciliation with his final commandment to love one another. Practically, the trip raised many questions regarding how we can cultivate reconciliation in the face of the inevitable conflicts and disagreements we encounter life and ministry. When conflicts or disagreements arise, do we push our own way or do we seek to understand the other and work toward compromise? Are we willing to look at the past honestly to see where we have failed others and then do our part to make reparations? Do we offer forgiveness when we have been hurt by another or do we hold on to grudges, bitter-

ness, anger or even seek revenge? I commend these questions to each of you for your own reflection, as we follow and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Revd Dr Kirk Weisz, Bergen Assistant Chaplain

Reconciliation: Winnie the Pooh meets St Paul

2 Corinthians 5 17-18 *17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*



Καταλλάξαντο in Greek, or in English transliteration 'katallaxianto' is translated as 'having reconciled' or as the King James Version has it, 'hath reconciled'. Personally, the resonance and use of *olde English* in the KJV (also known as the Authorized Version because it was King James that authorized its use in the Anglican church – and not all versions are authorized) is quite superb and much more fulsome than some of the more modern versions. 'To wit', that phrase much loved from Winnie the Pooh's owl, becomes a plain 'that' but it means so much more. Wit is a matter of the brain, to know, to be salty, to be quick and sometimes humorous, sometimes sharp. Sarcasm, they say, is the lowest form of wit but it takes a witty one to beat it. I digress. To reconcile is to 'exchange hostility for a friendly relationship' according to the dictionary on my desk just now. It is the function of a judge or ambassador/diplomat to be the mediator – which raises the question for the Christian as to who is being hostile to whom – us to God or God to us, and why?

We are brought to peace with God because of what Jesus did. We are hostile to God – read grumpy, arrogant, disillusioned, unimpressed, disbelieving etc etc – and Jesus gives us cause in

His words and actions to reconsider our behaviour. To wit, when we realize what we are like – sinners in need of grace, mercy and forgiveness – these gifts are given to us freely and liberally when we turn against our own behaviour, stop looking at our shadows as a true picture of our self and look towards the light of Christ. God on the other hand, is said sometimes by some, to be hostile to us because of our sinfulness – but how can this be so when ‘God so loved the world...’? Maybe we could say God is saddened by ‘our ignorance our weakness our own deliberate fault’ and so in order to reconcile creation to Creator, God gives us Christ. Having been so reconciled we in our turn are to help others find Christ that they too might be forgiven, healed and given peace – from evangelised to evangelist is the transition we all must make.

Doesn’t always work though does it? We all of us know people who will not be brought to faith and will argue the toss about God and Christ and all related things. Some think they have it all sussed and others think it’s all nonsense. What do we do with such attitude-laden folk?

Jesus is always a better reference point than Paul and gives us a different angle on those who turn their face against rather than towards God. In Mark 10 the rich man comes up to Jesus asking all the right questions and giving all the right answers but he fails on the giving up of that which he loves – to wit, the easy life that goes with wealth. He turns away grieving, the bar is too high. And Jesus *lets him go* to think and to chew and to come again another day – or not. How do we reconcile these 2 different approaches? Jesus gave the man time, as Winnie the Pooh said, to ‘think it over, think it under’. He also said (Winnie the Pooh that is, not Jesus) ‘It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn’t use long, difficult words but rather short, easy words like “What about lunch?”’ St. Paul was fond of his brain but St. John said that the heart drives God’s behaviour – God *so loved...* not – God *thought* about it... Heart and brain are not mutually exclusive but at the point of decision reason fails us and we are reconciled to God through love not argument. Let them walk away, they’ll come back, or, as A. A. Milne said ‘Rivers know this. There is no hurry. We shall get there, someday.’

Revd Sheila Rosenthal

Home away from home: hearing God’s voice in a foreign land

This Lent, I had the pleasure of facilitating a Bible study series at St. Edmund’s Oslo about diaspora in the Bible. My inspiration for this series was twofold: first, my professional research into biblical stories of diaspora (particularly the Book of Esther), and second, my personal experience as an American living in Oslo for over two years. Over the course of five weeks, I watched as participants came together to read biblical stories and poems about living in exile, then reflected on our own experiences of finding home and worshipping God in distant lands.

But what is “diaspora”? The word comes from Greek—the same Greek root as the word “disperse.” It means being scattered, dispersed, in a place far from your own home, usually because some great trauma has sent you away from your ancestral land. In the Bible, the Jewish people experienced multiple waves of exile and expulsion. As a result, diasporic Jewish communities thrived throughout the ancient world, from Egypt to Babylon to Rome.

Even though these Jewish settlements may have started unwillingly, not all of them viewed diaspora as an inherently negative state. One text from the Babylonian Talmud (a collection of Jewish documents compiled around 500 CE) says, “The Holy Blessed One only exiled Israel among the nations in order that converts will be added to them. As it says, ‘And I sowed her in the land’ [Hosea 2:25]. Does a person ever sow a peck except to harvest several bushels?” In other words, diaspora represented an opportunity for the Jewish people to grow and flourish across the world, revealing God’s goodness to the nations. New homes mean new ways to share God’s love.

This mindset touches on a fundamental tension in diaspora life: the tension between adapting and adopting. When you’re living in a host culture different from your own, you face constant choices: do you adapt your own ways to make sense in a foreign land, or do you adopt the ways of your host culture? There’s no right answer here—only a series of decisions that, taken together, reveal your resistance or openness to assimilation.

Indeed, one of the prime characteristics of diasporic life has always been ambiguity. We see this in the biblical story of Esther, where Jews were so indistinguishable from native Persians that Queen Esther could hide her Jewish identity—but that same Jewish identity was used to mark her

people for death. Esther had to decide whether to adopt the privileged identity of a Persian queen, or adapt her position to advocate for her Jewish kin. In the end, she listened to God's call to heroic bravery, using her privilege and her heritage to save the lives of Jews throughout the empire.

As Anglicans in Norway, we can all relate to Esther's mixed commitments. Where is God calling you to step up and use your hybrid identity for good? How can your unique experiences contribute to building God's realm? Living in diaspora means a life marked by longing for the home we left, while integrating ourselves into the new home we found here. May that experience of being outsiders inspire us to welcome other outsiders around us, as we search together for a place to call home.

Dr Esther Brownsmith, Oslo



Lenten Bible Study 2023

This past Lent we had the privilege of having Dr. Esther Brownsmith lead our study of *Diaspora: Worshipping God in a Foreign Land*. It was a five-week study that included an average of seven people in person and a half dozen on Zoom. Our Senior Chaplain Joanna was also present, who was an encouragement to persevere with our fascinating study. Our first study took place in the crypt of St. Edmunds, where we studied the Book of Susanna, found in the Apocrypha. In the Book of Susanna, the story is based on the lives of those who were living in Babylon and striving to be observant Jews and be faithful to the traditions of their ancestors. This happened at a time when the Jewish people were struggling to maintain their own culture and identity without a Jewish temple or center of worship, making their struggle even more difficult.

Our second study was based on the Book of Esther, a book in the Old Testament Canon, which takes place in Persia during the 5th century B.C.E. A Hebrew woman named Hadassah, (whose name comes from the Hebrew word for 'the concealed God') also known as Esther, providentially becomes queen of Persia, and thwarts the attempted genocide of her own people. At the end of our study Joanna served us some typical pastries for the Jewish feast of Purim, which happened to fall on the very date of our Bible study! In our third study we took a closer look at the fourth chapter of the Book of Esther, and examined what it means to be Jewish in this story - following the

Torah, suffering persecution, and expecting God to bring deliverance to his people. The interaction between Esther and Mordecai in this chapter is especially interesting, as they take turns assuming a leading role in this story.

Our fourth study was based on Psalm 137, or 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' We were asked if there was anything that resonated with our own experience, as strangers in a strange land here in Europe, which gave us much to reflect on. Our fifth and final class was based on a portion of the Book of Daniel Chapter 3.24-45, called the Psalm of Azariah, which does not appear in the Hebrew scriptures, as it appeared initially in the Greek Septuagint. This portion includes the prayer of Azariah, one of the companions of the prophet Daniel, just before he and his two colleagues were thrown into the fiery furnace, and spared by the hand of God.

We were very grateful for this intriguing study given by Dr. Brownsmith, and for all those who contributed to making this a memorable Lenten time of reflection.

Owen Thomas, Oslo

Hope for us amid fear

We all must learn to deal with fear in our lives, and if you think about it, we currently live in a very fearful time in history and in society full of fear. People are afraid of losing their jobs, their homes, their health, their family, their friends, their position etc. Lots of things happening around us cause us to fear: news, war, sickness, diseases. Despite all of these, God's children are not to live in fear.

So how did we get to this position in the first place? The book of Ecclesiastic 12:13 says **"Fear God, keep his commandment, for this is everyone's duty"**. But we have decided not to do this, we end up living the way we want and ignore the principles of God and as a result; we are a nation and people full of fear. How are we to live in a society that is full of fear? Isaiah 41:10-13 says **"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies; you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at**

all. For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you."

What is fear? Fear is an uneasy feeling, feeling of dread, feeling of an alarm warning us, or of threat from something that we may or may not have control over. There is fear that is "bad fear" and there is fear that is "good fear". When the bible says, "Fear the Lord", it does not mean to be afraid of God. It means to acknowledge him, revere him, and respect Him. God is holy and righteous. Proverb 1:7 says, **"The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom."** That is a fear that all of us should enjoy in life and should experience. But then why are we still afraid? There are lots of reasons that people are afraid. If you can't identify your fear then it can be difficult to handle. But your fear does not come from God, as it says in 2 Timothy 1:7, **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."**

1) *One of the reasons we are afraid is because we learned fear early in life. When a mother tells her child not to go close to a river as the child may fall and drown, the mother is showing her love and concern to her child. But the little child could grow up with a fear of water being dangerous. So our parents, out of love, have engrained things in us that often cause fear of things around us.*

2) *Imagination. Some people are afraid of things that they have created in their imagination. For example, some can create imaginations of fear of darkness. Our imagination is a great tool, but it can also get us in trouble if we let it control us.*

3) *Ignorance can cause us to be fearful, when people are taught error, it can create a great deal of fear in their lives.*

4) *Doubt. If you doubt God, you doubt He loves you, you doubt He has forgiven you your sins. That can also create fear in people's lives as they make think God hasn't forgiven them of their sins.*

These fears cause serious consequences in our lives:

1) *It divides your mind. You can't concentrate on something if beneath the surface of your emotions you are afraid.*

2) *It can stifle one's ability to think and act reasonably.*

3) *Indecision. It will often make you struggle to make good decisions.*

4) *Procrastination. The fear of be unable to get something done perfectly could result in an individual delaying to initiate ideas and thus being unable to achieve their potential in life.*

5) *Fear can enslave a person with a feeling of uncertainty. For example, it's one thing to run away from a poisonous snake but then it's another thing to have a continuous fear of say finances.*

Living in fear will result in a decline in one's spiritual growth with God. Think about this, God has a will for our lives, but when we are afraid to step out, we fail to realize this. Many people who have challenges in life have been told they could not do somethings, but they end up doing things miraculously. When somebody tells you, you can't do something, the question for you should be God what do you want me to do? He is the one who knows you. He has equipped you and built you. Most of us can do far more than we realize if we just trust God. It's only when we let other people use their yardstick for measurement in our lives, we end up lacking confidence and becoming fearful at times to achieve our potential.

Fear will affect our physical health, because there is no question our emotional wellbeing affects our physical body. Research has shown that anxiety, which can often be caused by fear, is linked to cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, digestive disease, headache, skin disorder, stress, ulcers.

How to deal with fear:

1) *Acknowledge the presence of fear in your life. The fear of loss of finance, good health, or the loss of loved ones or family.*

2) *Identify the root cause: where does it come from, why am I afraid of what I am afraid of today, is it something somebody built into my thought processes, or is it something I have done, and I am now afraid of the consequences.*

3) *Change focus on that fear to the most powerful weapon you can have in the time of fear and that is the word of God. If you focus on any fear, the fear is not going to get any smaller. The longer you focus on your fear, the bigger part of your life it consumes. So, you must change your focus and get it on God. So, we go back again to Isaiah 41:10, **"Do not be afraid, because I am with you."** If you believe what God says, then you need not carry that burden any longer.*

Rumi Achiye, Stavanger



Upcoming events



Chaplaincy

In person Chaplaincy meeting 1-3 Sept in Oslo
Deanery Synod 29 Sept-1st Oct , Copenhagen

Oslo

Church barbecue 18 June
Choral evensong for Oslo Kulturnatt, 15 Sept
Harvest Festival, 24 Sept
Christmas Bazaar, 18 Nov

STOP PRESS

Norway's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has reported to the Norwegian parliament on 1 June. This investigates the Norwegianization policy and other injustices against the Sámi, Kven/ Norwegian Finns, and Forest Finns:

- to lay the groundwork for recognizing the experiences;
- examine the repercussions today; and
- propose measures for further reconciliation.

We are proud that Dr Pia Lane from St Edmund's has been a part of the Commission and look forward to learning more.



Our chaplaincy wardens Barbara McIntosh and Juliet Chukwuma!

From the registers

BAPTISMS



Oslo

19th February 2023

Freya Onyedikachi

23rd April 2023

Ceridwen Irwin, Kristiansand

Kate Elizabeth Laubscher, Bergen

CONFIRMATIONS

Oslo 23rd April

Angel Okeke, Oslo

Ceridwen Irwin, Kristiansand

Kate Elizabeth Laubscher, Bergen

Nick Pearson-Wood, Oslo

William Pearson-Wood, Oslo

Fruzsina Onyedikachi, Oslo

Eirik Gjerløw, Oslo

Drammen 23rd April

Tula Chenga Lwada

Rahos Joseph

Mapisa Joseph

Zenab Silomon

Buta Luke Noge

Lydia Negen

Nama Luke

Martina Luke

Nama Barnaba

James Matthew Bolla

Elizabeth Bulus Yusef

Konya Isaac Moma

Rebecca Nyana Bulus

Andrew Isaac Moma

Mark Isaac Moma

Welle Isaac Moma

Samiya Luis

DEATHS

Virginia Siger, Oslo

Hilda Mary Sefton, Bergen

THE ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY IN NORWAY, SUSAN, IRIS & NORAH INVITE ALL CHILDREN TO
Choom, Children's Zoom
ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 9.40—10.15



You are welcome to join us
wherever you may be
in Norway.