



Winter/Epiphany 2010 **ISSUE 3**

- Women's Retreat **p2**
- Anniversary of Polish Lutheran Church **p2**
- Women's World Day of Prayer **p3**
- Pastor Mahler's Visit **p3**
- Book Review: *The Hammer of God* **p4**
- Congregational Affiliation Fees **p4**
- The Pilgrim's Way of Lent **p8**
- Feeding the Hungry **p8**
- A Month with the Bishop **p9**

10th Anniversary of Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea in London: How Did it All Start?

On 10 January, 2010, the Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea in London celebrated their 10th anniversary. The special service took place at St Andrew's URC Church in Frognal. The photo above is of the ministers who presided at the service, Pastor Ezra, Pastor Fetsum from Sweden, and Bishop Jeruma-Grinberga. In the following article, founding members Selamawi Zere and Daniel Natnael answer the question: How did it all start?

Introduction

For the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the birth of Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea in London we have been given the daunting task of putting down our recollections of how it all started ten years ago. We found it difficult to remember details of every event that led to the establishment of the first Tigrinya speaking Evangelical Lutheran Church in London. We had a lengthy telephone conversation to cross-reference our memories, and at the end of our conversation we came to an agreement that we should not get too much carried away and put ourselves on a pedestal, as so many members have been working hard selflessly for the wellbeing of our Church. To put our name at the forefront in this historical event would simply be to steal the show from those who are serving the Church with dedication, as well as the Eritrean Community at large. It is not our objective to glorify ourselves as church founders but to share and witness how God spoke to us through vivid experiences. We thus seize this opportunity to testify that the call of God can be as real today as it was in Biblical times. More often than not God uses ordinary experiences to speak to people; perhaps in our case it all began through contact with lay individuals as well as ordained ministers from various congregations.

The Idea Comes First

One day in the summer of 1999 we both bumped into an old pal, Yeman Mengistu, on the streets of London. Our acquaintance of course goes back to Eritrea, where we were all members of the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Church. The three of us in particular have a lot of good memories from our youth group ministry back home in Eritrea. Thus, when we met Yeman, who had already been living in the United Kingdom for quite a long time before us, he kindly took some time off to show us around London. After having been engaged in long walks on the streets of the city, we finally ended up sitting in a Chinese restaurant – in Chinatown at the centre of the West End. Though we had talked a lot on different subjects, the most poignant topic we had raised and discussed avidly was the need for the continuity of our Christian journey. With particular reference to this issue, we came to a consensus that there should be an urgency to start some kind of Christian Community that practices a worship adhering to the Evangelical Lutheran tradition in our own language and culture with a view to bring many other Eritrean Lutherans in the Diaspora closer. Even though at this moment in time we believed that God had endowed us with an inspirational vision, we didn't really take into account all the practical aspects that would be necessary for our desire to become a reality, such as financial injection, clerical expertise and personnel requirements. Nonetheless, although not an expert, Daniel was the only person among us that could be described as an experienced person in ecumenical and ecclesiastical church affairs. The problem was that he was living more than 100 miles from London, in Watton, Norfolk, while Yeman was also working and residing in

continued on page 5 ►

Women's Retreat 2009

The past couple of years have been incredibly busy at St Anne's, so in 2008 when the encouragement came to attend the Lutheran Women's Retreat I let the opportunity slip arguing 'I haven't got the time'. More fool me; my life embodies the very reason we need Christian Retreats! Praise God that last November I came to my senses and made the journey North with Rita and Emily from St Anne's to the beautiful Bawtry Hall to enjoy the fellowship of my Lutheran sisters from across England.

The weekend was seamlessly hosted by Pastor Libby Toomsalu from Trinity Lutheran Church in Nottingham. The focus was 'Christian Women in a Post-Christian Culture'.

Friday night began with a general discussion around the question, 'Can we define a post-Christian culture?' This led into a series of discussions, devotions and worship throughout the weekend which touched on famous New Testament and early Christian women, as well as Christian women today and our own faith journeys. Saturday afternoon included the contemplative merits of slowly melting chocolate on one's tongue and an episode of the Vicar of Dibley based around the eponymous temptation. I personally can resist both chocolate

and the TV series but there was something about being away on this totally relaxed, low-key, faith-restoring and fun weekend that raised my appreciation levels and I came away laughing and loving with the rest of them.

I think that quite often we can feel isolated or even unconnected in our small congregations within the not so very big Lutheran Church of Great Britain. I know that the Lutheran Women's fellowship movement has always made efforts toward reconciling this situation and I feel that the LCiGB leadership is also instrumental in supporting unity. Together we can grow where God plants us.



Photo of attendees of the 2009 Women's Retreat at Bawtry Hall by Livija Upmalis, St. Lukes Lutheran Church, Leeds

So convinced am I by the restorative and nurturing benefits of a Women's Retreat that I volunteered St Anne's in London to host the next retreat where we will be exploring the theme of Grace. The retreat will be held on 19-21 November 2010 with the venue to be confirmed, but hopefully somewhere in South London with easy links from the North.

Tracy Maroske
St Anne's Lutheran Church, London

60th Anniversary of Polish Lutheran Church

On the 10 October 2009 Bishop Jana Jeruma Grinberga attended and preached at the 60th anniversary service commemorating the founding of the Polish Lutheran Church in Cambridge. Bishop Emeritus Walter Jagucki and four other Polish pastors celebrated the service. A choir from the town of Cieszyn in Southern Poland (a stronghold of Polish Lutheranism in Poland) sang during the service and later during the reception. The anniversary was planned and organised by Pastor R Wojtowicz and was a great success. People came from all over Britain and almost filled the church.

A Mach
St John's Lutheran Church, Cambridge



Clergy at St John's for 60th Anniversary of the Polish congregation. Photo Courtesy of Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga.

Women's World Day of Prayer 2010

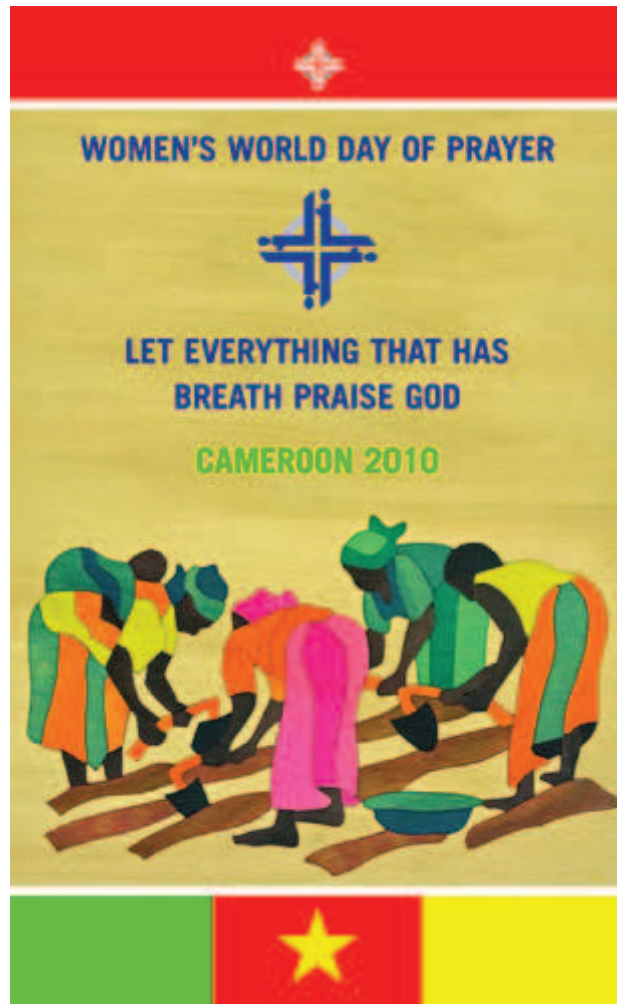
Friday, 5 March, 2010 is the day when over 3 million people from all over the world will be holding services and praying. Every year a different country is chosen and given a theme and over the following five years they prepare on their given topic. In 2010 it is the turn of Cameroon and their topic is 'Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God'.

Emma Wilcock, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said:

'This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girls' School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

Although the services have been written and led by women it is a service that anyone can attend, whatever their age or Christian denomination. The movement has increased in number since it first began over 75 years ago.

Please look to see where the nearest service to you is taking place at www.wwdp-natcomm.org and take time to join other Christians throughout the world in prayer.



Margaret Pickford,
Member, National Committee of Women's World
Day Of Prayer

Pastor Mahler's Visit to Trinity Lutheran Church

In December, Pastor Wilfried Mahler and his wife traveled with over 20 people from Germany to Nottingham to attend the production of Handel's 'Messiah' at the Royal Concert Hall. After confirming a Sunday service at Trinity for Sunday, 6 December, he volunteered to participate. Lay Minister Marlies Adam led the service and Pastor Mahler preached.

After the service the group met in the Church Hall to socialise over a cup of tea or coffee and refreshments. It was fascinating to hear other peoples' stories and amazing to think we met as strangers but in a very short time felt as though we had a lot in common.

Pastor Mahler was once the pastor of the German congregations in the East Midlands. He also once lived above the Church Hall in Nottingham. Every year he would encourage the American students, who stayed above the Church Hall from October to May, to join in with the activities of the church. He held services in English once a month and has always encouraged Lutherans of all backgrounds to mix. Pastor Mahler holds a special place in the heart of the Lutheran community in Great Britain and we were so glad to welcome him back to Trinity.

Margaret Pickford
Trinity Lutheran Church, Nottingham

The Hammer of God by Bo Giertz

The Hammer of God is one of the most famous books in the Lutheran literary canon (if there is such a thing). Originally written in Swedish by Bo Giertz in 1941, it was published in an English translation by Clifford Ansgar Nelson in 1960. However, *The Hammer of God* has been out of print for many years, despite being a required text for some Lutheran seminaries, and despite its author being compared to C S Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a Christian apologist. Now it has been re-published by Augsburg Fortress in a revised edition with the final chapter translated by Hans Andræ. One curiosity of the original English translation was that it was incomplete, containing only eight of the nine original chapters. One reason heard was that the publishers ran out of space, which seems absurd, especially as the author intended a Trinitarian structure of three groups of three chapters.

So it was an exceptional pleasure to obtain a copy of the new edition. The book tells the story of a rural parish in Sweden at three points in history (1810, 1870 and 1941).

Reviewer Philip Pfatteicher accurately describes it as a historical and theological novel. Using realistic scenarios, drawn from everyday parish life, Giertz (himself a pastor and later a Bishop)

illustrates various seminal ideas of Christian faith from a specifically Lutheran perspective – Law and Gospel, justification by faith, the role of grace in ministry and life, the work of the Holy Spirit and so on. This makes it sound rather dry and boring, but the real achievement of this marvellous book is that it is easy to read, painting an evocative and touching portrait of the lives of pastors and their flocks. Many of the characters are well-observed, and details of their homes and environments make them spring to life. The description in the first section of a bone-chilling Swedish winter, for instance, was extremely vivid. Against this background, the stories bring theological truths to life in a way that is memorable and easy to understand.

The Very Rev'd Michael Persson, Rector of the Swedish Church in London, told me he has read this book three times since being given it as a confirmation present, and I would highly recommend it to anyone wishing to understand more about faith, Lutheranism and the Christian life.

The Hammer of God, Bo Giertz (Augsburg Fortress, 2005), ISBN 9780806651309.

Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga

Congregational Affiliation Fees 2010

You may remember that the LCiGB Council is considering alternative methods for calculating congregational affiliation fees to ensure a fair distribution of charges to congregations. These fees provide the income that pays for the central church's administration, but so far income has fallen short of the amount needed. At its December meeting, the Council of the LCiGB looked at various options for fees based upon a percentage of congregational income. However, the research failed to indicate a clear, viable and sustainable solution, so after some deliberation it was decided to take further time to consider this complex question.

It is important to note that the current charging structure presented at the last Synod meeting in April 2009 that indicated the LCiGB Budget for 2010 shall be retained for this year. We ask congregations to review their budgets for 2010 in accordance with the figures distributed for the affiliation fees. For 2010, we ask that you make a valiant effort to meet the charge indicated for your congregation.

The decision to take further time to consider this complex issue is made possible by another generous grant from the Lutheran Council of the amount of £10,000 for 2010. The grant was made to the LCiGB to help cover central administration costs. The Trustees of the Lutheran Council recognise that more support and time is needed for the LCiGB to develop systems and procedures that will provide a quality central service to its congregations. Work continues in a variety of areas to achieve this. While these efforts continue, the LCiGB Council will work on the complex question of how to sustain the central function of the church's administration financially. LCiGB's congregations will need to play a key role in the future to ensure an effective administration in the LCiGB, including the crucial area of legal compliance. Part of this continuing responsibility will include the requirement for realistic financial contribution. The LCiGB Council would appreciate hearing any views you might have about this subject.

Linda Bruch
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Eritrean Congregation cont

Oxford. That left Selamawi who was the 'least experienced' person, having only arrived in the UK a few months before and still learning to live and adapt to the new environment. Some time passed without any progress made to our visionary discussion, but the excitement of the idea of having our own traditional church services in our own language and culture remained deeply rooted in our minds. 'The time was not right' we thought, but *God's power is made perfect in our weakness.* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Our meetings had a fundamental impact on our personal lives and shaped our outlook as we began to look for solutions in our own separate ways.

Idea into Reality

Previously, Daniel had served alongside and established a good relationship with Rev'd Derek Elton, who was once serving as Chaplain at St George's Anglican/Episcopal Church in Asmara which was operating in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea. A few days after our initial meeting, we (Selamawi and Daniel) arranged to visit Rev'd Elton in his hometown of Cromer, in Norfolk. We didn't hesitate to share our dreams of starting our own Tigrinya Church in London and requested his support to this end. Providentially Rev'd Derek had a call to serve at St Alban's Church in London during an interregnum, and thus he agreed to speak to the Bishop of London to allow us conduct our meetings.

In the meantime, as we patiently waited for the outcome to our plea, we started to build up a portfolio of contacts, people whom we thought were Eritreans of Evangelical Lutheran background. Our efforts paid off and we were pleasantly surprised to discover a number of brethren who showed similar aspirations. The desire of having a Church was shared by all the people we had spoken to, but again the fear of failure had gauged them from initiating the idea. We had learnt that most of them did not have full membership with any of the Churches that they were affiliated to, and some had even felt uncomfortable with the practices of worship in their adopted Churches. The news had spread to some whom we had never had a chance to meet before. Many cast doubts about our envisaged scheme, while others offered their prayers and encouragement.

Throughout we consistently kept in touch with Rev'd Derek until one day in November when he came to us with the good tidings that he had successfully secured a place in St Alban's Church for us to meet up for the first time. That day was Sunday, 10 October 1999 in a cold room of the

church in Holborn. Our meeting was well attended and we were able to see that the waiting was nearly over. At this time, Eden Ghebreab, Biniam Hiruy, Yared Gedam and Meseret Hiruy were among the group who tirelessly worked in support of the idea of starting up an Eritrean Lutheran Church in the UK. They committed themselves to the establishment of this new congregation and contributed immensely to its shaping up as a genuine Evangelical Lutheran Church that works its affairs in line with the mother church in Eritrea. During our first meeting, they led an exemplary and leading role, with music, the selection of hymns, prayer themes, the tidying-up of meeting places and so on, proving that they were, and continue to be, the backbone of our newborn Church.

Parallel with the success of the nascent established congregation, problems started to crop up that would seriously hamper its growth and halt its progress. At our first few meetings, the first obstacle arose from St Alban's Parochial Church Council (PCC), the executive body of the parish of the Church of England, who aired their concern that they had some reservations with regard to our growing congregation for fear that we may cause damage to the historical Church and its many valuable artefacts. They could not quite trust us and leave their doors open every Saturday evening for us. With hindsight it also expressed the view that because our affiliation is with the Lutheran Church, there was no historical connection with the Anglican Church nor did we have a character reference as such here in London apart from our relationship with their temporary priest Rev'd Derek. The decision was passed and there was nothing we could do but search for another Church where we could be welcomed. It was also suggested that it would be a good idea if we could start to contact a Lutheran Church down the road with a similar background. We did not anticipate a rejection in such a short period of time but, as advised, we visited St Anne's and met with Rev'd Paul Schmiede, the managing Pastor with whom we had a long discussion.

At St Anne's

St Anne's was one of the busiest Churches in Central London and was always occupied for various meetings and social activities. We petitioned the Church to let us meet in their building for which they obliged with the proviso that the only time they could offer us was every other Saturday from 6.00–8.00pm. We did not have an option but to accept the offer and in such a way fit ourselves to the prescribed time slot. Among other things, we were given a condition that before reaching a full agreement we would

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Eritrean Congregation cont

have to prove to the pastor that we were a genuine group who would abide by the Lutheran tradition. He requested to meet with us on the Saturday, 5 February 2000, when our 'Lutheran-ness' was demonstrated and our suitability to use St Anne's premises as a venue for our fellowship

established. At this meeting we called for volunteers who would act as a steering committee as well as a group who could be summoned for responsibility of the congregation's deliberations. To this end, Bereket Woldelessie, Desta Beraki, Eden Ghebreab, Brikti Menghistu, Biniam Hiruy and Selamawi Zere were put in place to represent the congregation. With that representation we informed our established and potential members of the new arrangements regarding the venue and time of worship, which everyone agreed upon with cooperative spirit. In this environment, we started to conduct our meetings in St Anne's in the presence of Rev'd Schmiede.

With some trepidation our ensuing meetings continued to successfully initiate and conclude the Saturday programmes, and it was encouraging to see people attending, even from outside London. The logistical aspect, even though difficult, was somehow met by our members regardless of what they had to endure. Despite the fact that we had to work hard to realise our vision, it had been encouraging and a blessing experience to be among a congregation that had similar dreams and ambitions. Soon afterwards the practical reality of running a church kicked in. One of the most challenging aspects was to find a way to work together. Even though we shared a common faith none of us were qualified to take the leading role. The unknown territory felt strange but we managed to come to some sort of consensus in order to create routine and formality in our worship, including producing templates of an order of service and a quarterly rota for various activities for each weekly service. This set up though without the congregational participation would have been a futile exercise and therefore a lot of encouragement was needed for many members to actively engage in various activities. The women dedicatedly organised themselves to prepare tea and light food for every service under the stewardship of Eden Ghebreab. They played an even bigger role in giving us all impetus and a sense of community, so much so that the men were steered to play their part in other activities, such as setting up the chairs, tidying the church and so on. Though most of the activities did not require any qualification or past experience standing up on the pulpit intimidated every one of us. A few people rose to the challenges of reading Scriptures and leading the musical worship in front of the congregation but preaching was never a popular choice. Most of us believed sermons

had to be delivered not only to a certain standard but also with the aim of passing on a meaningful message. Only a handful dared to rise to the task, nevertheless they sometimes faced heartless criticism from fellow members. To overcome our shortcomings we started to invite guest preachers from other congregations and churches even though we knew some of them did not share the same theological standpoint. In hindsight it was realised that it is not best practice to fill pews rather than provide sound teaching and guard the 'orthodox' faith.

The departure of Rev'd Paul from St Anne's brought about unrest even before we were officially introduced to the interim pastor, Rev'd Jana. At first we did not know how the transition period would affect our weekly meetings, but we were continuously prayed that whoever replaced Rev'd Paul should at least leave the door open for us. The departure of a priest usually creates a sense of ambiguity in the life of a Congregation. All the familiar leadership patterns and relationship dynamics needed to be adjusted. Having met Rev'd Jana in our first few gatherings it did not take any time to endorse her as our own Pastor. The dynamic nature of Rev'd Jana broke the ice and also hearing her story as a descendant of Latvian refugees was most intriguing and we saw some. Growing up within a bilingual and multicultural family and society, she was supportive and sympathetic of our needs. Leaving us free to find our own identity as people and as a worshiping community, Rev'd Jana did everything possible to advance our desire to worship in our Lutheran tradition and continuously engaged with us. It was not long before she found us a permanent Church at St Mary Aldermary not far from the vicinity of St Anne's, and there we were able to worship on Sundays instead of Saturdays.

There were also other people who were instrumental in our foundation. We accepted an invitation from Bishop Walter to officially join the LCiGB synod. The synod made plans to support us in all the duties that required an ordained minister, such as weddings, baptisms, Holy Communion and confirmation. As a result we were introduced to Rev'd Roy Long who had played a major role in the growth of our congregation. He had to endure a long journey by train every month to be with us and preside over communion and preach sermons. All these contributed to making us feel part of the LCiGB family and we gratefully acknowledge those who stood by our side.

Being part of the LCiGB brought its own challenges. We not only required fluency in language to communicate with the rest of the

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Eritrean Congregation cont

LCiGB members effectively but we also needed someone from within our community to help us interpret and explain the procedures of the LCiGB and other related Church issues as we ventured out into a larger domain. We were blessed to have Desta Beraki, who worked tirelessly to be our ambassador in putting forward our concerns and to bridge the gap between the LCiGB and us. The contributions of Bereket Woldelessie are also unequivocally worth mentioning for his intensive research and drafting

of our first constitution. This important piece of work has been endorsed as our constitution and voted in favour by all LCiGB Synod members.

Our sense of community had been growing despite the many challenges at St Mary Aldermary. However, the most remarkable day in our history was when 15 of our young people were confirmed after a yearlong course led by Rev'd Long.

The Church had also played a major role in bringing together long lost families and friends, developing new friendships and giving the younger generation a sense of belonging and identity. There was also a feeling in some members that we could not have an Eritrean gathering without our delicious traditional food. To that end, the women started to organise themselves in catering for the major Christian festivals. Though it was a great thing to share a meal after the services, the strong aroma of the Eritrean cuisine, however, became an issue to the host church leadership. After getting several polite requests, we were asked to leave.

But God, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power

that is at work within us, (Ephesians 3:20) enabled us to move and settle at St Andrew's Church, Hampstead. For the first time, we were given the freedom to express our true identity. Rev'd Jonathan and his congregation were and still are such welcoming hosts and gave us the tenure of a Church. Through God's blessing and under the newly elected committee we maintained the momentum of both spiritual and numerical growth.

In its short ten-year history, Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea in London has gone through an extraordinary journey with lots of twists and turns on a sometimes bumpy road. St Andrew's United Reformed Church Hampstead and Pastor Jonathan have indeed provided us with myriad opportunities that allow us to be transformed into our God given potential. Here at St Andrews the congregation has been able to conduct eight infant baptisms and seven youth confirmations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Almighty God for giving us the privilege to dream but also see our dreams come true. We acknowledge that this privilege is not because we deserve it, but because God works through the last, the least and the lost.

We would also like to heartily thank all those who gave their time, talent and treasure to make this a reality.

And finally, we are confident of this ... *He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus* (Philippians 1:6)

Selamawi Zere and Daniel Natnael
Eritrean Wengielawit Lutheran Church



Anniversary service of the Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea at St Andrew's URC Church in Frognal. Photo by Bereket Tesfai Menghistu

Walking Once More the Pilgrim Way of Lent

The Lutheran Church in Great Britain is, in many ways, a marvellous church. Our small size means that we are not impersonal, we are less inflexible than bigger churches, and we see ourselves as having a community or family ethos. However, there are also drawbacks. Among them is the fact that, as we are geographically scattered and do not have resident pastors in every place, some of our congregations can only meet once or twice a month, and are not able to celebrate all the holy days and festivals of the church year. So important days like Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in Lent and Holy Week, or Ascension (which always falls on Thursday) fall by the wayside.

In an ideal world, all our members throughout the country would be able to worship together on these special days: and as a step towards this, we are going to organise joint services for all LCiGB congregations in the London area at the Church of St Anne and St Agnes, home to St Anne's Lutheran Church. The plan is that St Anne and St Agnes would become the Central Church of the LCiGB, where we can hold these services in co-operation with the Lutheran congregations who worship there. The first of these will be on Ash Wednesday this year, 17 February at 7pm. Our preacher will be the Dean of the Church, Very Rev'd Tom Bruch, and music will be provided by the Sweelinck Ensemble and the Furaha Choir



(from St Anne's Swahili Congregation). Readers and prayer leaders will be drawn from all our congregations in the London area. The service will include an act of repentance and reconciliation, imposition of ashes, time to meditate and renew our closeness to God as we set out on the pilgrim way of Lent towards the Cross and the Empty Tomb. We will conclude with Holy Communion.

I hope and pray that eventually we will be able to organize similar services in other centres, so that this will enable many of our members to worship together, to follow the rhythms of the Church Year, and to engage more deeply with the Gospel message.

In the meantime, we warmly invite all of you who can to join us at St Anne and St Agnes on Ash Wednesday, when we will pray this prayer together:

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga

Feeding the Hungry: Lutheran Chaplaincy Perspective from Leeds

In the afternoon, before leaving for work, I go to the local shop and buy five loaves of bread, apples, oranges and grapes. This food will feed the hungry this evening, when we will have an International Students club meeting at Emmanuel Centre Chaplaincy.

This club is organised and run by about ten Christians from different churches in Leeds and by some Chaplains at the two universities in Leeds. It was started 23 years ago by St George's Anglican Church and has provided friendship and support, based on Christian hospitality, the 'welcoming of strangers'. There are no strings attached and students of any cultural and religious background are welcome. It is a place where students from all nationalities can make friends, practise their

English, learn more about life in Britain and in other countries. Also, for those who are spiritually hungry, there is the opportunity to study the Bible and find out more about Christianity after the club.

The club meets every Wednesday throughout the year (except one week around Christmas) starting at 6 pm with refreshments: toasted bread, fruit and nuts, cakes and biscuits, hot and soft drinks.

The social and cultural program starts at 6.45 pm. Normally there are themes, such as 'cultural exchange', 'barn dance', 'Indian evening', 'international quiz', 'karaoke and music', 'international food', 'salsa dancing', 'fair trade'

continued on page 10 ►

A Month with the Bishop: October

People quite often ask me what it is that a Bishop actually does. The answer, it turns out, varies from bishop to bishop: some, particularly those whose ministry is in large churches, spend a lot of time on the road, visiting parishes, leading meetings and taking part in various ceremonial events. For German bishops, life consists of executive functions to a greater extent. For the LCiGB's second bishop, the role and the work that needs to be done is still being worked out. What has become clear during this first year is that by far the most enjoyable part of the ministry for me has been the visits that I have been able to make to several of our parishes and chaplaincies. It enables me to get to know congregations and their members, and – of course – the reason for going is usually a happy event. It is a great privilege to be able to share in the joys and celebrations of our pastors and congregations – and indeed, in the sorrows and difficulties, too.

October 2009 was a particularly rich time for visiting. Within that month, St John's Polish Congregation celebrated its 60th Anniversary in Cambridge (in the welcoming surroundings of the Chapel and Hall at Westfield House, run by our 'cousins', the Evangelical Lutheran Church in England). Perhaps the most encouraging factor of what was a joyful day was the way in which both the older generation of Polish people, founders and sustainers of St John's for so many years, and the younger generation of recent arrivals from Poland worship and find fellowship together. Rev'd Robert Wojtowicz led the service, together with Bishop Emeritus Walter Jagucki, Pastor Roman Dorda and Rev'd Alfred Bieta, for many years Pastor of St John's. A visiting choir from Poland sang beautifully, and the chapel was packed with worshippers.

Then there were the two installations of pastors – Rev'd Libby Toomsalu at Trinity in Nottingham, and Rev'd Timothy Burkett Dearhamer at St Anne's. Trinity is one of our

smaller congregations, which has for many years not had a resident pastor. For several years Pastor Mark Hardy travelled three hours from Darlington to lead services once a month; and Lay Minister Marlies Adam has done an amazing job in keeping the congregation together, alongside Margaret Pickford and other stalwarts. Despite their small size, Trinity regularly contributes more than its affiliation fee to LCiGB, as well as being very generous towards special offerings. The congregation has a real family feel, welcoming everyone with true Christian hospitality. Pastor Toomsalu was installed on Sunday, 17 October 2009.



Pastor Timothy Burkett Dearhamer with daughter, Mercy. Photo by Laila Grinberga.

On the eve of Reformation Sunday, Saturday, 23 October, Pastor Tim Dearhamer was installed at St Anne's; his parents had travelled over from the US to be present at a 'real St Anne's event'. The Furaha Choir sang; the church looked lovely in red (the liturgical colour for Reformation) as the congregation celebrated the end of a long time of vacancy. St Anne's is perhaps the best known Lutheran congregation in the UK, and draws people from all over the world for longer and shorter periods of time; we ask for God's blessing on Pastor Dearhamer and his family (wife Beth and daughters Grace and Mercy) as he works in this important, interesting and challenging ministry.



Dedication service of Imani Lutheran Church in Reading. Photo Courtesy of Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga.

And on Reformation Sunday itself, we dedicated a new Mission Congregation in the LCiGB – Imani Congregation in Reading. The community in Reading are drawn mostly from East Africans, and began to meet together in October 2008, led by Rev'd Tumaini Kallaghe and her husband, Felix (who was also licensed

as a Lay Minister for Imani at the service). A large congregation met to celebrate the day, and to bless the work of the new Church Council. Afterwards, we all enjoyed a lovely African meal – pilau, plantains, meat, salad and chapattis. Imani already have a choir, meet twice a month for worship, and every week for Bible study and prayer. May God bless them and their efforts to reach other Lutherans in the area.

Feeding the Hungry cont

and 'Chinese New Year'. We also have visits to Leeds Town Hall and walks in some of the beautiful parks in Leeds during the summer term. We celebrate Christmas and Easter and at the end of the academic year we have a barbeque. We hope to maintain a family atmosphere and say individual 'goodbyes' to students when they leave.

One Indian student confessed, after his studies had finished, that he came to the club just to eat! This shows how important the simple act of offering food for the hungry may be. One Brazilian student described the club as 'a home away from home' when she was in the club for the last time.

This tells us a lot about the importance of the social meetings that take place in the club. An international student whom my colleague, Laurence Pusey, met after the Christmas holidays a few years ago, said he had even become suicidal, feeling so isolated when everybody had left for their holidays and he was left alone completing his assignments in his room.

At normal club evenings in the autumn we may have between 60 to 100 or more students. As spring and holiday times we can have between 20 to 50 students. An Italian student, whom I met on campus, told me that her research paper on Japanese movies was accepted for publication. She was excited and wanted to tell someone. So we also become like surrogate mums and dads for international students, allowing them to tell us their joys and sorrows. One Iranian student asks me to pray for him, his studies and for his family every time I meet him.

In both Leeds' universities there are about 60,000 students and from these about 8,500 are overseas students. In the Leeds Christian Ecumenical Chaplaincy Team we have about 12 people and all the staff will help overseas students, but three of us have more defined responsibilities for the well being of the international students.

The vision and aim of the Optional Bible studies is to share God's love through friendship and hospitality and by offering the Word of God to those who are hungry to get to know God. Clara Ong, the leader of the intermediate bible discussion group, explains:

'It is exciting to see so many people from such a range of backgrounds, nationalities and faiths come to the club. People who come from the countries where the gospel is not readily available, or cannot be preached, have the opportunity to find out more about Christ and are especially open and ask challenging questions in "the Explorers Bible study".

'In this study we normally use a short Bible text, which we discuss together with the help of some pre-prepared questions. We also often use illustrations and films that dramatise the Bible to help the students to understand more about the big picture of the Bible, as they are often language students who still struggle with English. It is especially satisfying to see students who become Christians get to know Jesus personally and grow in their faith. Several students have given their lives to Jesus and have been such a blessing, particularly as they in turn pass on the message of the gospel to their friends and families. Those students (and sometimes University staff members) who already know basic Christianity discuss deeper issues in the "Intermediate Bible study group".

'Some students have gone on to serve and help out at the club, either by helping set-up or serve refreshments and clearing up, and some have become Bible study leaders as well. For those students we provide a short course on "How to lead a Bible study". Quite a few students will visit a church for the first time in their lives through contacts made at the club.'

Feeding the hungry is not only done by offering actual food but by offering social contacts or spiritual food for those whose hunger is deeper.

The aim of biblical diakonia work is always to seek those who need the most help and whom nobody else is yet helping. At times this is very challenging as it needs to be done with discernment and wisdom. We constantly need God's Holy Spirit to lead us in the right (His) direction; we also need to do it together as nobody can bear the weight of the needs of the world alone. Biblical diakonia work is often pioneer work and it lives on the cutting edge. It should not become complacent as the work is always changing since the world always changes. It seeks a way to connect the unchangeable Scripture into contemporary language for today's people. In this way it is always in the front line seeking new opportunities, new ways to serve and love the Lord Jesus Christ who first served and loved us by giving His life on the cross so that we could live. He is the real Bread of Life who feeds us all.

Deacon Seija Frears and Team

This article was first posted on 10 November 2009 on the LWF Eleventh Assembly Women's Pre-Assembly Blog. Deacon Frears has kindly let 'The Forum' reproduce this article.

Services in Amharic

London

St Anne's Lutheran Church
 Services held at St Vedast Church, Foster Lane,
 London EC2
 Services every Sunday: 15:00
 Website: www.stanneslutheranchurch.org

Services in Chinese

London

London Chinese Lutheran Church
 Services held at The American Church in London,
 79A Tottenham Court Road, London W1T
 Services every Sunday: 14:00
 Website: www.lclchurch.org.uk

Services in English

Birmingham

University Chaplaincy
 Services held in the Worship Room, St Francis
 Hall, University of Birmingham Main Campus,
 Edgbaston, Birmingham B15
 Services every first and third Sunday of the
 month: 11:00
 Website: www.chaplaincy.bham.ac.uk

Bradford

St Matthew's Lutheran Church
 Services held at 70 Little Horton Lane, Bradford.
 Services every first Sunday of the month: 12:00
 Contact: Mrs Halina Martin (telephone 0113 267
 7679)

Corby, Northants

St Paul's Lutheran Church
 Services held at Church of the Epiphany,
 Elizabeth Street, Corby, Northants NN17
 Services every first and third Sunday of the
 month: 11:00

Edinburgh

St Matthew's Lutheran Church
 Services held four times a year
 Contact: Arkadiusz Kilanowski arkil@poczta.onet.pl

Harrogate

St Luke's Lutheran Church
 Services held at St Peter's Church, 19-21
 Cambridge St, Harrogate, HG1
 Services every third Sunday of the month: 17:00
 Contact: Mrs Joan White (telephone 0113 278 5075)

Leeds

St Luke's Lutheran Church, 9 Alma Road,
 Headingley, Leeds LS6
 Services every Sunday: 10:30
 Website: www.stlukeslutheranchurch.org.uk

London

St Anne's Lutheran Church, Gresham Street,
 London EC2V
 Services every Sunday: 11:00 and 18:00
 Website: www.stanneslutheranchurch.org

Manchester

St Martin's Lutheran Church
 Services held at Martin Luther Church, 9 Park Rd,
 Stretford, Manchester M32
 Services every first Sunday of the month: 15:00
 Contact: 0161 865 1335

Nottingham

Trinity Lutheran Church, 67 Homefield Road,
 Aspley, Nottingham NG8
 Services every first and third Sunday of the
 month: 11:00
 Website: www.trinitylutheran.org.uk

Services in Oromoo

London

Services every Sunday: 14:00 – details to follow
 Website: www.lutheranchurch.co.uk

Services in Polish

Cambridge

St John's Lutheran Church
 Services held at St John's Abbey Church,
 Newmarket Road CB5
 Services every first Sunday of the month: 12:00

High Wycombe

St John's Lutheran Church
 Services held at St John's United Reformed
 Church, London Road HP11
 Service second Sunday of the month: 14:30

Leeds

St Luke's Church, Alma Road, Headingley,
 Leeds LS6
 Services every first Sunday of the month: 9:30
 Website: www.stlukeslutheranchurch.org.uk

London

Christ the King Lutheran Church
 Services held at Christ Church, Montpelier Place,
 Knightsbridge SW7
 Services every fourth Sunday of the month: 14:00

Milton Keynes

Please contact Pastor Robert Wojtowicz by email
 at rowojtowicz@yahoo.com

Manchester

St Martin's Lutheran Church
 Services held at Martin Luther Church, 9 Park Rd,
 Stretford, Manchester M32
 Services every first Sunday of the month: 15:00
 Contact: 0161 865 1335

Reading

St John's Lutheran Church
 Services held at St John's West Methodist
 Church, 448 Oxford Road, RG30
 Services every third Sunday of the month: 12:30

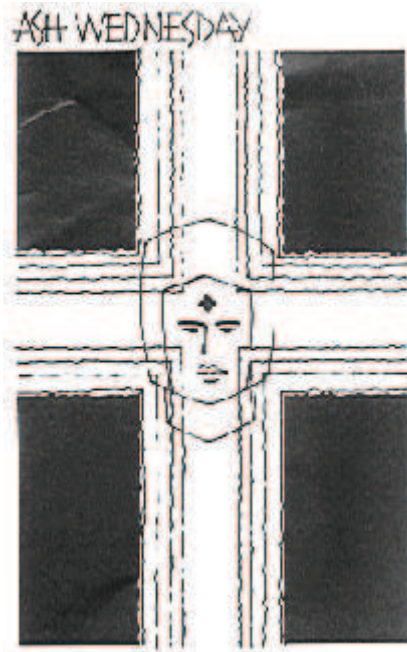
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Quotes ...

Give me a pure heart
that I may see Thee.
A humble heart
that I may hear Thee,
A heart of love
that I may serve Thee,
A heart of faith
that I may abide in Thee.

Dag Hammarskjöld
(1905–1961)

Upcoming Events



Lutheran Church in Great Britain Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday 17 February 2010 at 7pm

at the Church of St Anne and St Agnes, Gresham
Street, London EC2V 7BX

Preacher: Very Rev'd Tom Bruch, Dean of LCIGB

Music by Sweelinck Ensemble and Furaha Choir

Begin the Lenten journey in fellowship with
Lutheran brothers and sisters

The service will include an act of penitence and
time for contemplation, and will conclude with Holy
Communion

LCiGB Directory Cont

Services in Swahili

London

St Anne's Lutheran Church, Gresham Street, London
EC2V

Services every first and third Sunday: 14:00

Website: www.stanneslutheranchurch.org

Reading

Imani Lutheran Mission Church

Services held at Oddfellows' Hall, Oxford Road,
Reading RG1

Services every fourth Sunday of the month: 14:30pm

Services in Tigrinya

London

Eritrean Wengelawit Lutheran Church

Services held at St Andrews, Frognall Lane, Finchley
NW3

Services every Sunday: 13:30

Website: www.wlcl.co.uk



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The Lutheran Church in Great Britain is a member
church of the Lutheran World Federation