



The Lutheran Church in Great Britain

Brief preliminary report of Synod 2013

The Lutheran Church in Great Britain held its annual Synod on Saturday 27 April 2013 at Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH.

Synod comprised the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company and Charity, and the Church Session.

The following report provides a summary of the business covered. Full minutes of both meetings will be circulated to members in due course.

Business during the AGM:

1. Apologies for absence were received.
2. The Minutes of the previous AGM (28 April 2012) were approved.
3. The Trustees' Annual Report and Examined Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2012 were received. The Charity's accountants had raised three points:
 - 3.1. The need for an Investment and Transfer of Funds policy which has now been drafted.
 - 3.2. Update on actions taken to recover funds loaned to a former pastor by the Charity and not repaid, which resulted in a court order requiring repayment, and subsequent action taken against a member congregation, the former pastor's employer, in order to recover the funds. A briefing for Members of the Charity on the actions taken was presented and is available as Appendix A to this report.
 - 3.3. The need to ensure increased income to cover operational expenditure.
4. An examiner of the accounts was appointed.
5. The Trustees were authorized to fix the remuneration of the examiner of the accounts.
6. There were no amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.
7. There were no duly submitted resolutions.
8. An application for membership of LCiGB was received from the Gustaf Adolf Nordic Congregation in Liverpool and they were duly accepted and welcomed as a Member congregation.
9. A resignation of membership was received from Wengielawit Lutheran Church of Eritrea in London, who had decided to adopt an independent constitution.
10. The two longest-serving trustees (Mr David Lin and Ms Annette Higgins) retired by rotation and stood again for election. Elections took place and the following trustees were appointed: Mrs Sarah Farrow, Mr Rakesh Patel, Mr David Lin, Ms Annette Higgins.

Business during the Church Session:

1. Apologies for absence were received.
2. The minutes of the previous Church Session on 28 April 2012 were approved.
3. Matters arising were reported:
 - 3.1. Bishop Martin Lind of the Church of Sweden had indicated his willingness to stand for election as the LCiGB's next bishop. Subject to the completion of



formal procedures and satisfactory practical arrangements being in place, an Extraordinary Synod might need to be convened to consider the election of a bishop before the 2014 Annual Synod.

- 3.2. Mrs Linda Bruch gave a brief update to Synod on the progress of the Strategic Plan, presented to Synod last year, reporting that work is now underway on a draft Business Plan which will provide practical tasks for implementation.
- 3.3. Porvoo Communion: Bishop Walter and Bishop Emerita Jana will attend a key meeting of the Porvoo Church Leaders Meeting in Reyjavik in October, after which there should be a clearer idea of the timescale towards full membership of Porvoo.
- 3.4. The Revd Susan Peterson was welcomed as the newest pastor to LCiGB.
4. Bishop's Reflection:
 - 4.1. Bishop Walter welcomed Gustaf Adolf Nordic Congregation into LCiGB with prayer.
 - 4.2. Bishop Walter's written reflection for the Synod Handbook centred around the theme of our journey onwards to the eternal city – a journey towards life. The full text of the Bishop's report is available in the Synod Handbook.
5. Presentation on Stewardship:
 - 5.1. Bishop Walter gave a presentation on the topic of Stewardship. The Bible has much to say in terms of every aspect of our earthly existence, commanding us to be responsible with our time, our talents and our treasures, which includes taking care of the earth.
 - 5.2. Synod broke into three breakout groups to discuss issues related to Stewardship and then fed back to the full meeting. Discussion points included the difficulty of balancing the need to be an environmentally-friendly church with the associated cost factors; tent-making ministry- advantages and disadvantages; strengthening ties between congregations and members; geographical distances problematic; business skills and good management; accountability; generate team spirit; strengthening inward ties in order to go out; talking is easy – doing more difficult; internal communication as a church; communicating need – get over embarrassment; creating a “skills” bank; seminars on fundraising and stewardship; being responsible and trustworthy; the importance of high principles and objectives.
6. Administration Slot:
 - 6.1. Service details for each congregation were reviewed and the website will be updated accordingly.
 - 6.2. Congregations submitted details of employees and volunteers who worked in regulated activity with young people or vulnerable adults. LCiGB Safeguarding policy is being reviewed alongside developments with the new DBS system.
7. Congregational Issues and Developments:
 - 7.1. Reports submitted by each congregation are available to read in the Handbook. Additionally, Christ the King is planning to open a Sunday school; St Anne's Lutheran Church is moving to a new location; St Mark's Birmingham recently celebrated the baptism of a Polish-Tanzanian baby; and Paulina H will be working with Bishop Walter in Bradford.
8. AOB:
 - 8.1. The Women's Retreat will be held this year at Launde Abbey from 22 – 24 November 2013 and new participants are warmly encouraged.



- 8.2. Churches Together in England have been given notice to vacate the building, and therefore LCiGB will also have to find new office premises in the coming months.
 - 8.3. The Administrator will sadly be leaving LCiGB in order to take up a new job with more hours.
 9. The Church Session closed with a celebration of the Eucharist, with worship hosted by the London Chinese Lutheran Congregation. The service was led by David Lin and presided over by Dean Tom Bruch. Pastor John Evenson preached, and music was led by members of the LCLC.
 10. Thanks were expressed to the LCLC for their hospitality, and Bishop Walter gave a blessing as the day closed.
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Appendix A:

**Report to the Synod of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, 27 April 2013,
concerning a Third Party Debt Order in relation to St Anne's Lutheran Church,
London**

We are aware that Mr Timothy Dearhamer has contacted some members making statements referring to legal action we took against him. However, we do not know who else he may have contacted. Mr Dearhamer's statements are misleading, and we therefore take this opportunity to let members know what has happened.

In October 2009, we loaned Mr Dearhamer £2,000 on an interest-free basis. This was done in good faith. Mr Dearhamer signed an agreement promising to repay the loan by 31 December 2010. The LCiGB later extended the repayment deadline by six months and offered him the opportunity to pay in reasonable installments. Yet he did not repay any part of the loan, and ignored six letters we sent him (over a period of ten months) requesting the loan repayment. Our final letter said we would take court action if we did not hear from him (the Council of the LCiGB is legally obliged to make reasonable efforts to recover debts related to the Church's funds).

In October 2011 we took Mr Dearhamer to court, seeking a judgment requiring him to repay the loan. Mr Dearhamer sent a written defence (prepared by his barrister) to the court. The court rejected the defence and ordered Mr Dearhamer to pay the LCiGB £2,080 (the original loan plus court costs). Mr Dearhamer still did not pay, or contact us about repayment.

We believed that St Anne's Lutheran Church in London, an LCiGB congregation, might owe money to Mr Dearhamer. We asked the court to order the congregation to pay any money that it owed Mr Dearhamer to the LCiGB instead, up to £2,080.

Mr Dearhamer then asked the court to set aside the original judgment, and not to order the congregation to pay the money to the LCiGB. The court did not agree. At a hearing on 27 March 2013 (a date set by the court), the court made the order requiring the congregation to pay £2,180 (including further court costs) to the LCiGB rather than Mr Dearhamer.

'Discharge your obligations to all; pay tax and toll, reverence and respect to those to whom they are due. Leave no claim outstanding against you – except that of mutual love.' Romans 13.7-8a (NEB)