

TOGETHER

The magazine of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway



FEBRUARY–MAY 2021



Carol singing at St Edmund's in December 2020

The theme of this issue is 'finding hope amid the global pandemic'

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www.stavangeranglicans.no, and www.trondheimanglicans.net.

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

**Even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.** (Psalm 139:12)

The short winter days make an impression on any newcomer to Norway like myself. Already as I write, the days are getting noticeably longer. My soul now rejoices to find it not yet completely dark at 4 o'clock in the afternoon! Yet the darkness becomes part of our experience too.

A time of seeming darkness has become the experience of the much of the world these past months. When we thought the pandemic may have been abating, this has been followed by second and even third waves. We have had to adjust and readjust our perspectives to take account of extended restrictions, closed borders and uncertain prospects for so many. We still have no real idea of what the human cost around the world will be.

But we have also learned that we can nevertheless find hope amid the pandemic. This issue of *Together* shares some of these hopes and will I hope encourage all of us to look out for such hope ourselves.

I'd like to mention here the hope we are finding as the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway in discovering new and creative ways of working together. Advent Sunday saw our first Chaplaincy-wide online celebration using Zoom - a joy-filled occasion as the first candle of the Advent wreath was lit in Trondheim, the Gospel proclaimed in Bergen, the intercessions led from Stavanger and the sermon preached from Oslo. We began 2021 with an Epiphany all-age celebration in which the story of the wise men captured hearts young and old as families around Norway joined together on Zoom to follow the star. All these festivities have been enriched by our musicians whose talents have been shared more widely than ever.

We've found new possibilities together in offering Confirmation preparation across the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway, enabling two online groups to be formed for adults and teenagers respectively with participants who due to geography would never have been able to participate otherwise. It has also been possible to tailor an online Safeguarding training programme for the needs of our Chaplaincy and particularly our Norwegian clergy colleagues who support us so generously with their help.

Psalm 139 reassures us of God's presence with us in both light and darkness. We are also discovering for ourselves how with God's presence, even the darkness can become as light.

*Revd Canon Joanna Udal
Senior Chaplain*

Bergen notes

It is hard to believe the changes that have taken place since the global pandemic began nearly a year ago. We were happily moving through Lent last March, we had everything lined up for Holy Week and Easter, only to see our plans unravel right before our very eyes. As we all remember, anxieties were running high at the beginning of the pandemic, and while anxieties and uncertainties remain even today, we seem to be floating now, held in the air, and trusting that God won't let us fall any further. One of the things that I have observed in moments of crisis and loss, is how such troubling times have a particularly powerful way of reminding us of how much we need God and one another. They almost serve as a kind of spiritual jolt to remind us what is most important in life. We also realise that if we are going to get through this crisis or loss, we can't get through it alone. The hope that I am experiencing these days, the feeling that we will get through these troubling times, is the hope we find in God's promises to help us in our times of need. As the prophet Isaiah wrote, 'Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint' (Isaiah 40:31).

And I have witnessed God's faithfulness at work in countless ways since the pandemic began, but most clearly through the way in which our Bergen congregation, and the entire Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway as a whole, have come together to share resources, listen and learn from one another, to pray for and support one another.

In renowned author and American Episcopal priest John Claypool's book *The Hopeful Heart*, he describes well the kind of hope I have been experiencing, a realistic hope that won't disappoint as we seek God's grace to help us during times of trouble. Claypool writes, 'Occasionally, God chooses to break in and solve our problems for us, but at other times, God moves alongside us and invites us to join forces with Him in bringing about a solution to our trouble ... we are offered

the opportunity to combine our skills, insights and energies with those of God to resolve our problems.’

I have witnessed this kind of ‘divine collaboration’ unfolding in our midst in recent months as members have offered their skills, insights, and energies to move our ministry online. And it’s not just the younger members of our congregation! I have been particularly inspired by the wisdom and resiliency of our oldest members, some of them in their 90s, who have navigated the ins and outs of Zoom in order to join the congregation each week for worship and to support one another through virtual means. Again Claypool writes, ‘Again and again, the Holy One invites us to use our own creativity and resourcefulness in finding solutions to our problems. God honours our maturity by asking us to partner with him in collaboration, rather than allowing us to remain in an infantile stance.’

My dear friends, I can understand the feeling of wanting a miracle to take the pandemic away or at least a pill or a vaccine that will make it all better! However, times like these call for us to give equal value to own strength, wisdom and maturity that God has given to us to be active participants in the solving of our troubles. My hope is that we will all continue to let God renew our strength and to use our gifts and graces to collaborate with Him, and one another, as we make our way through these strange and troubling times, which we will!

*Revd Kirk Weisz
Bergen Assistant Chaplain*

Trondheim notes

The congregation in Trondheim started the past year with only the continuing grace of God as an item of particular note. As with most of Europe, we entered lockdown in March. For the rest of year, our activities were scaled down but less impeded than perhaps in many other places. We were able to set up virtual services relatively quickly, and our services were well-attended, including by friends living further away who otherwise would not have been able to worship God with us.

We are quite thankful that from the end of the first lockdown all the way through to the end of the year, we had been able to meet in person, albeit in smaller numbers. We had also had occasions when we almost had to turn people away because of reduced capacity where we met. Some of our regular communicants have

sadly to remain shielded and apart, while others had found it challenging to worship together over the internet when we were meeting online.

For most of the year have been unable to meet at Var Frue Church due to the pandemic, but were able to worship at the Archbishop's Chapel at the magnanimity of the Cathedral. The monthly Cathedral English services carried on, and we were also able to meet at Fjellseter Chapel for our Harvest Service. As a congregation we were able to enjoy barbeque and walks together at a meeting in summer at the Assistant Chaplain's house. Like the wider Anglican community in Norway, we had the pleasure of welcoming our new Chaplain in the autumn. Taking ample precautions, we held our Christmas fair and carol service in early winter. Throughout the year we also participated in various services and functions at the invitation of the Cathedral, including the Opening of Academic Year Service, Cathedral tours for incoming students.

Recognising that many have been much harder hit both in our city and overseas by ongoing troubles, further compounded by the pandemic, and finding ourselves fortunate enough to be able to contribute to their alleviation, we made donations to the *Bymisjon* in the autumn, and resolved to nominate two charities a year going forwards to make contributions towards their work.

As we stand on this side of the gate of 2021, we look forward as a congregation to treading forth with our hands in His..

*Peter H C Pang
Trondheim Assistant Churchwarden*

Stavanger notes

For the Stavanger congregation, the year drew to an end with two wonderful services. That they happened at all in the current context is surely a demonstration not only of hope, but also of faith, love and community.

The first was our traditional ecumenical service of Nine Lessons and Carols on 23 December in St. Petri Church and live-streamed via the Cathedral's Youtube channel. André, lay worship leader in training, Stephanie, congregation member and viola player, and the group of gospel singers put in a great deal of hard work upstream. The support of artistic adviser Einar and verger Artur from the Cathedral and St. Petri was invaluable. We were also grateful to all our readers, to the organist Tim, the musicians and to Revd Tracy who led the service. This service

has always been one of the highlights on Stavanger's calendar and has been important in nurturing relationships between Anglicans, other Christian churches and the wider Stavanger community. The current St. Petri is a beautiful red brick church built in 1866 in the 'long church' style and we felt blessed to be able to hold our service there.

The second was Christmas Day Family Communion led by Revd Geir at our usual place of worship. We knew in advance that attendance would be modest, and doubts were voiced as to whether we should bring Geir out for a mere handful of people. His response settled it for us: 'I recall that someone said once that where two or three are gathered in his name he would be among them.' (And he was)! Geir and four congregants celebrated the birth of Christ with a lovely informal service, closing with responsibly distanced fellowship, chocolate and coffee.

While in no way minimizing the horror of the pandemic, we can truly say that we feel some good has come out of this common experience. One small but valuable illustration of this has been the opportunity, afforded by online services, for the Anglican congregations in Norway to come together, with growing technical expertise, under one virtual roof. Four congregations, one Chaplaincy. Post-pandemic, why not consider retaining all-Chaplaincy virtual services from time to time?

Despite last year's arch-villain loitering and settling into this new year with us, we have good reason to hope that 2021 will see it conquered or at least tamed, and life will get back to the long-awaited 'new normal' for all. Happy New Year from Stavanger!

Sarah Denieul-Lalljee
Stavanger Assistant Churchwarden

Oslo notes

Public worship may for periods have been suspended, but the work of God and the worship of the church continue. We have just had to use all our collective ingenuity and technical talents to try to connect as widely as possible using other means. We're blessed with a capable and enthusiastic team, with John Glazebrook as chief cameraman in church and Greg Norton on technical back-up, with Terry Bevan our able Zoom master and John Chapman bringing to our

worship uplifting music recorded by our choir on different occasions over the past year.

Zoom has now become a regular feature of our worship. It provides a welcome opportunity to see each other's faces and a way by which people can participate who would otherwise be staying away. It has also given a chance to those further afield to join us, whether in Norway or abroad. Many have appreciated being able to join in the Eucharist through Spiritual Communion while being unable physically to receive the sacrament. The opportunity to share virtual coffee has also been widely welcomed and given good occasion to chat after the services.

We had very much hoped for a lifting of restrictions for our Christmas services. In the event we had to make the best of the new Oslo limits of just 20 persons allowed at any service. We were fortunate that with Ingeborg's meticulous organisation this proved more manageable for us than for many larger churches who decided to cancel live Christmas services altogether. In addition to carol-singing outside, we decided to offer as many people as possible the chance to attend a service in church over the Christmas period, with four services of Holy Communion over the 8-day period as well as the eagerly awaited Carol service which finally could take place at St Edmund's on 20 December. What a joy it was having the church reopened and the tree decorated and the Christmas crib in place beside the pulpit. Hearing the story of our salvation retold in lessons and carols brought joy and new hope to us all. The choir responded marvellously to the very limited possibilities for rehearsing, and our technical team did their utmost to enable live-streaming, only for the quality feed to disappear somewhere into the ether – a reminder to us all that the ascent of our worship to God is our primary calling.

Revd Canon Joanna Udal
Oslo Chaplain

Diocesan Synod Report online, 10–11 December 2020

The zoom meetings were well run and interesting with breakout rooms for discussion. Days began and ended with worship involving many clergy and lay people from across the Diocese. Many important topics were talked about and some decisions were made.

‘Breathing life – racial justice’ – was presented by a working group led by our Archdeacon, Leslie Nathaniel. Every human life equally matters regardless of race and colour. We are asked in the next three years to do an audit on our mission, ministry, and practices to see how inclusive we are, how do we view others different from ourselves? Do we have a fair representation of our congregations on our committees?

‘Setting God’s people free’ was about enabling all people to live out the good news of Jesus from Sunday to Saturday.

Several years ago, the Diocesan Synod voted on becoming an eco-Diocese. Diocesan environmental officer Elisabeth Bussmann has been asking us to take up in our congregations how we can reduce our footprint. We are asked to have a member from our chaplaincy to champion environmental issues. We aim to be carbon neutral by 2030!

The Clergy covenant on Clergy Care and wellbeing has now been formally adopted.

Living in Love and Faith is about how to be a welcoming and inclusive church, showing respect to all. LLF Advocate for our Diocese is Canon Prof. Jack McDonald, Holy Trinity Brussels.

The financial plan up to 2024 was agreed at Bishop’s council and it was agreed to freeze the Common Fund contributions for 2021. Small increments will be made in the following years. As travel and face- to-face meetings have been greatly reduced, some good savings had been made and with the added bonus of reducing our carbon footprint. The Financial working group will continue working for transparency and fairness across the diocese. We have a representative from Norway in this group, Jill Almvang. There are also professionals looking at the implications of Brexit on for example GDPR. It is felt that small changes will be needed to allow information to cross borders.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, was invited to say a few words about how he thinks the future could look. This was summed up in the words ‘Simpler, Humbler and Bolder’. We need to be more of a Christ-centred church. Bishop Robert said that we remember in Europe that we are not the only Church; we are very dependent on our ecumenical partners. Concern was expressed on how to welcome newcomers in lockdown and keep contact with all ages. There are many good ideas around.

New free web courses in communication are one way to help us in this work.

Safeguarding training information was given by Grace Fagan, the Diocesan Safeguarding manager. Updated Safeguarding information is to be found on the web and dates of when the virtual level C2 course for leader training takes place. Everybody is welcome to take the online C0 and C1 courses. Let’s help to make our activities as safe as we can.

The Annual review of European Anglicans can be found online on the Diocese in Europe webpage. It is a good read and will give you more information about the topics above: <https://europe.anglican.org/main/latest-news/post/1636-european-anglicans-annual-review>

*Susan J Boyd, Diocesan representative
for the Nordic and Baltic Deanery*

My introduction to the Anglican church in Bergen



I am Jacinta, born and raised in Norway with no connection to England besides the language. I have no family there, no ancestors. But I am a member of the Bergen Anglican Church.

Like many Norwegians, I was baptised into the Norwegian Lutheran church as a baby and went to Sunday school. Fast forward the next 25+ years, I spent time in the Baptist church, a Pentecostal church; I dropped by two conservative Lutheran churches, and was a registered member of the Roman Catholic church for a good few years as well. But I reached a point where I didn’t feel at home in any of them. All of them required me to be someone I was not. It was expected in one church that I even should vote for the political party they supported, a party I have never voted for at any time in my life! So I spent a few years watching various services online. I figured ‘there is just no place for me anywhere.’

Then came Easter 2017, and I was watching TV one morning – Agatha Christie’s Marple, the lovely old spinster-sleuth in the quaint village of St. Mary Mead. The episode was ‘Murder at the Vicarage’, and Miss Marple was portrayed by the lovely Geraldine McEwan. I was enthralled: close-ups of her putting on her hat and gloves, putting the hymn book in her pocket, and going to church. The scene featured the entire village

singing a hymn loudly in church; the men in suits and the women in gorgeous dresses, hats and gloves. I felt a nudge within me. I wanted to experience that again, I wanted to experience worshipping together with people again. But where could I go? There was no place for me! Still, the thought of going to church kept nagging at me. So I looked up 'Miss Marple' on Wikipedia, and under 'character profile', I found 'Religion: Church of England (Christian)'.

I wondered about the difference between the Church of England and the Church of Norway, so I looked it up. I liked what I read. We weren't asked to believe anything wildly outrageous. A few more rounds on Google, and I found out about St. Edmund's Church in Oslo. But I live in Bergen, and quickly decided that I was not going to take the train for eight hours just to attend church! I saw there were services held in Mariakirken in Bergen, and I decided to go.

I was greeted at the door by three people. One of them was, to my delight, autistic (I had never experienced anyone with autism or indeed any kind of handicap being involved in any service in any of the other churches I had been to). The rhythm of the service was almost identical to a Roman Catholic Mass, which was comforting. It was a Service of the Word, led by lay reader Iris Evans-Bjørnø. 'Good,' I thought, 'a woman leading the service. They're not that conservative!' Then came the Peace. As a former Catholic, I was familiar with it but here something new happened: everyone walked out into the aisle and shook hands with one another. Everyone came and shook hands with me and wished me God's peace. 'Is this because I'm new here?' I wondered.

I returned the next Sunday ... and the Sunday after that, and the Sunday after that, and the Sunday after that ... you get the picture. I was quickly included during coffee hour; a lovely lady sat down to chat with me, to make me feel welcome. (She does this to all newcomers, I've learned!). One Sunday, maybe 5 or 6 times after my first visit, I was talking to a visitor who could not believe I was not a native English speaker. The Sunday school teacher suddenly called from the kitchen: 'But she is one of us!' That settles it, I thought. I'm joining. And I have not regretted it for a split second. I have heard the Gospel preached for the first time here. I have made friends ... actually, no I haven't. I have found my Family here. I am free to be who I am, and I am still welcome to the ser-

vices. They know and laugh at the fact that a murder mystery brought me to church – but they also know that if I show up to church wearing lace gloves, I've spent too much time watching Miss Marple!

*Lene Jacinta Martinussen
Bergen congregation*

Hope in times of darkness



I have been active in the Oslo congregation in different ways since 1989, when I arrived in Norway from South Africa as a student. At the time South Africa was locked in a state of emergency, and the cold war with all the

proxy wars, including western support for the apartheid regime, a fact of life. But all that changed, thankfully, and in the case of South Africa thanks in part to ill health. President PW Botha had a stroke, and his party replaced him with FW de Klerk. The Berlin wall fell. Apartheid was no longer useful to fight a proxy war in Africa. The rest is history, and president Nelson Mandela and archbishop Desmond Tutu were able to lead the huge task of reconciliation. Restoring hope.

While I was studying medicine, first in Cape Town and then in Oslo, HIV was the big fear, a killer. There was no treatment, only stigma and death. We were also aware that TB and hepatitis were endemic and potential killers. In many cases TB was resistant to all therapy, but we accepted the risk and hoped we could get treatment if we were infected. HIV has become a fully treatable disease, as has hepatitis B and C. Medical research has shown itself to be a source of hope.

Medical history is full of periods where health personnel put their lives at risk to help others, and I have experienced times in Norway when older doctors and nurses have taken on patient responsibilities in order to shield younger colleagues who have children. The last time we were met by a pandemic which affected younger people hardest was the swine flu, but that lasted a short time, as the vaccine producers were able to mobilise in time before Europe got hit hard. Relatively few patients died, but I met and treated patients then and sadly some died, leaving behind a partner and small children. But we seem to forget tragedy quickly, we move on and

All service details are provisional, dependent on COVID-19 restrictions

			Oslo			Bergen		Readings		Stavanger		Trondheim	
FEBRUARY													
Sun	07	2nd before Lent	11:00	All Age Service	11:00	Zoom Service of the Word	Proverbs 8.1,22-31 John 1. 1-14		10:30	Zoom service	11:00 18:00	Morning Service Archbishop Ch Ho Evening Worship Chapter House	
Sun	14	Next before Lent	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Zoom Service of the Word	2 Kings 2.1,1-12 Mark 9.2-9		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
Wed	17	Ash Wednesday	11:00	Sung Communion	18:00	Joint service with BDM Mariakirken	Isaiah 58.1-12 John 8,1-11		TBA	Ash Wednesday Service		TBA	
Sun	21	Lent 1	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Zoom Service of the Word	Genesis 9. 8-17 Mark 1.9-15		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Cathedral	
Sun	28	Lent 2	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Zoom Service of the Word	Genesis 17.1-7,15-16 Mark 8.31-end		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
MARCH													
Sun	07	Lent 3	11:00	All Age Service	11:00	Service of the Word	Exodus 20.1-17 John 2.13-22		10:30	Zoom service	11:00 18:00	Morning Service Archbishop Ch Ho Evening Worship Chapter House	
Sun	14	Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Exodus 2.1-10 John 19.25b-27		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
Sun	21	Lent 5	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Jeremiah 31.31-34 John 12.20-33		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Cathedral	
Sun	28	Palm Sunday Lent 6	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Isaiah 50.4-9a Mark 15.1-4		10:30	Service NMS	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
APRIL													
Thu	01	Maundy Thursday	19:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Joint service with BDM Johanneskirken	Exodus 12.1-4, 11-14 John 13.1-17,31b-35		TBA	Maundy Thursday service	TBA	Cathedral	
Fri	02	Good Friday	10:00	Joint Service with ALC Meditation on the Cross	11:00	Tenebrae Service	TBA		TBA	Good Friday service	TBA	Good Friday Walk	
Sun	04	Easter	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Joint service with BDM Mariakirken	Acts 10.34-43 John 20.1-18		10:30	Easter Celebration NMS	11:00 18:00	Archbishop Chapter House	
Sun	11	Easter 2	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 4.32-35 John 20 19-end		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
Sun	18	Easter 3	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 3.12-19 1 John 3.1-7		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Cathedral	
Sun	25	Easter 4	11:00	Sung Communion followed by AGM	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 4.5-12 John 10.11-18		17:00	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
MAY													
Sun	2	Easter 5	11:00	All Age Service	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 8.26-end John 15.1-8		10:30	Zoom service	11:00 18:00	Morning Service Archbishop Ch Ho Evening Worship Chapter House	
Sun	9	Easter 6	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Act 10.44-end 1 John 5.1-6		10:30	Zoom service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	
Thu	13	Ascension Day	19:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 1.1-11 Luke 24.44-end		TBA	Ascension Day Service	TBA	TBA	
Sun	16	Easter 7	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Acts 1. 15-17, 21-end John 17. 6-19		10:30	Zoom Service	18:00	Evening Worship Cathedral	
Sun	23	Pentecost	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00 11:00	Pentecost service of the Word Ecumenical service Kristkirken	Acts 2.1-21 John 15.26-27, 16.4b-15		10:30	Pentecost service	TBA	TBA	
Sun	30	Trinity Sunday	11:00	Sung Communion	11:00	Service of the Word	Isaiah 6.1-8 John 3.1-17		10:30	Zoom Service	18:00	Evening Worship Chapter House	

we adapt to new circumstances. Sometimes a bit too quickly, as we forget our vulnerability, forgetting too the beacons of hope that kept us going while the storm raged.

I have had my lucky (and unlucky) breaks in life, at times preceded by periods of doubt and despair. Finding St Edmunds in 1989 and being welcomed into the Tuesday fellowship group. Completing my medical studies at the University of Oslo, and in time becoming a specialist in internal medicine. Joining the Department of Acute Medicine at Oslo University Hospital Ullevål in 2004 was a huge break, an answer to prayer, and a privilege. I work in the medical ICU, also with Covid patients. This is inspiring work, and it is not least a privilege to be part of such a great team. I believe the work the ICU team does genuinely brings hope to the seriously ill and their relatives.

When Covid 19 surfaced a year ago, we were met by a disease so serious that there was no treatment and no vaccine in sight. The pictures on BBC from Wuhan were terrifying. Then came Italy, and so on. For health personnel this was very new, as amongst other things we were used to having proper personal protective equipment for all conditions. Ebola happened only in Africa ... Now the west was also under siege. For all people in vulnerable positions such as taxi drivers, teachers, shop assistants, cleaners, health workers and vulnerable parents with children, this has been and still is a major threat either to their own health or the health of loved ones. At work I also have leadership responsibility for doctors fresh from medical school. These doctors were not prepared for this kind of event through their studies and had no inkling that such a situation could even arise, but they have shown a resilience and resourcefulness I truly admire. They care for each other and rise to the challenges of working under stressful conditions and do so cheerfully. What a team! Not that all days are easy, or all doctors super-human, but I think they reflect the general approach and strengths we have seen in our church congre-

gations and committees. The pandemic has brought new forms of communication, collaboration, and outreach throughout the chaplaincy. A big thankyou to all responsible persons. This brings hope for the present, and the future.

Sadly, at time of writing the pandemic is getting worse daily as the numbers of seriously ill patients increase worldwide and Europe goes into a new period of tighter restrictions. The winter solstice was in December, the vaccines are being rolled out, this should be a time of hope and expectation. But is it? The raw science and technologies behind these vaccines is beyond my comprehension. The concerted and combined efforts of public and private organisations to produce the vaccines is new, and the UK is cooperating with Russia, even after the novichok and polonium 'episodes' ... There is indeed hope.

The vaccines are being rolled out, and some vaccines can even be adjusted in a matter of weeks to meet new Covid mutations if needed. This is indeed revolutionary in the world of vaccines.

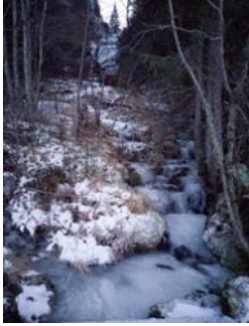
I have had my unlucky breaks too – most recently literally breaking my neck, by falling off a roof, not trying to avoid Covid! But in all of this I have been very lucky, the break could have been fatal or worse. I have a caring family, friends, church and colleagues, and have been upheld by the prayers of many. I have had time to reflect – forced reflection – as I think many others have had during the present pandemic. Time to reflect can put life and faith in perspective. I must say I can look back on many times when my faith has been what has carried me forward.

Sadly, we need to hang in there a while. It takes time to vaccinate large populations and achieve herd immunity. Until enough people are vaccinated, and one sees the real results in the form of infection control over time, then and only then can we relax. I urge everyone to err on the side of caution – maybe you won't get too sick, but you never know who you may infect, or if that person will survive. I know many are feeling the toll of both self-imposed and officially imposed isolation strategies. Here we have a responsibility to stay in contact, support and encourage. As a church we are called to love our neighbours and look after the weak. Not spread disease. We need to collectively walk that extra mile. We must be patient – but there is hope.

Dr Andrew Lane
Secretary, Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway



The thaw will come



This photograph, taken on our morning walk, shows a frozen mountain stream. To me, it is a perfect picture of the present covid pandemic.

Everything seems frozen and solidly not part of moving, living life. It is cold in spirit as well as isolating and threatening.

It is stubborn and cannot be seen into. It is winter, forbidding and harsh. Try to get near and you risk slipping and doing harm to yourself.

What the picture cannot show is the sound. Underneath the stream it's possible to hear the soft but constant sound of water trickling down the mountain under the ice and on its way to the fjord below us. In a few weeks' time the sun will be back in strength and the ice will melt. From underneath, from above on the mountain melt waters and from the spring rains, the stream will fill again with living, flowing water.

Underneath all the great stress and fear – the harsh hard ice of covid – is the sound of prayer and community, of hope and determination, of stamina and endurance and friends holding tight to the love that binds and supports. From deep within, underneath, around and above, warmth and movement will return and society will flow again, bringing life and reflection. Just as in the melted ice we will see the sky and wood reflected, when we look back on these covid days we will reflect on what made us as strong as thick ice and which runs deeper than the griefs and losses of these lockdown days.

Ice is no joke, it trips us, flattens us, intimidates us and is capable of great damage (think Titanic!). Like covid, it must be treated with respect and distance but it is not the final everlasting thing in our world. Winter yields. Christ rises.

Revd Sheila Rosenthal
Trondheim Assistant Chaplain



How has the experience of COVID-19 strengthened the Christian Church?

I felt somewhat indignant with this question at first, when many churches had been forcibly closed during lockdown, and so many lives had been lost and livelihoods undermined. But on searching deeper, I found the church being strengthened in several important ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a very testing time with so much loss for people all over the world. But I'd like to suggest three aspects in which the Church has had the opportunity to be strengthened.

The first is in faith. There's a very apt translation of the first Beatitude from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are those who know their need of God.' The pandemic has undermined so many of our daily routines and plans. Back in March, Pope Francis described it as 'a storm' which 'exposes our vulnerability.' But we discover there our need for the Lord. We're invited to abandon our self-sufficiency and to relearn how to live by faith. In these testing times, we discover Christ's power to save. And we cling to his cross, so we may face the hardships in his strength.

In faith, we seek the Holy Spirit's wisdom and imagination for creative ways to respond. We've seen this in self-giving service towards neighbours; and in the creative use of technology to connect people with Christian worship and with one another.

The second aspect in which the Church has been strengthened is as one Body of Christ. COVID-19 is a global pandemic. But the world has struggled to respond in a mutually co-operative way. St Paul is clear that when one member of Christ's body suffers, all suffer.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has reminded us of our Christian vocation 'as the household of faith,' that 'we are called by God to support one another.' The Anglican Communion is well positioned to enable resources to be shared. The Anglican Alliance has set up an impressive COVID-19 Resource Hub, sharing reliable facts and best practices for ways in which churches can respond. These go beyond a simply 'Anglican' identity, in encouraging the local church to come together, like in identifying the marginalised most in need of support.

The Christian Church will have been strengthened if we've come to recognise our

identity as one Body of Christ, called to live that identity wherever we are and in communion with the whole.

The third aspect in which the Church is strengthened is in its focus on the Kingdom. The pandemic has given the opportunity to reimagine the world. Perhaps you've heard some of BBC Radio's Rethink programmes, in which people share their vision for rethinking work, institutions, nature, even rethinking normality! The Christian Church is strengthened through having a revitalised focus on the Kingdom. 'Strive first,' Jesus says, 'for the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' In this opportunity for rethinking and reimagining, we have the chance to set our priorities towards God's new future; to be liberated from self-interest and prejudice to work towards the dignity and well-being of every person and the whole of God's creation.

Such a revitalised focus on the Kingdom not only strengthens the Church but puts it in solidarity with creation's eager longing, and gives us hope in the fulfilling of God's loving purposes through all things.

(This article was first prepared for the Chaplaincy interviews in September 2020).

Revd Canon Joanna Udal
Senior Chaplain

Mary's Book at the Annunciation: what is it about?

A Zoom Seminar for us

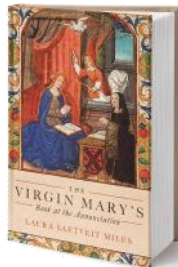
You might have noticed that in pictures of the Annunciation Mary is often depicted reading. What is she reading? What does it mean?

Bergen parishioner Laura Saetveit Miles recently published a book on this topic, and will lead an informal seminar for us on Zoom all about the intriguing motif and its medieval history. A zoom link and some optional reading materials will be announced by email closer to the date.

Date: 25 March 2021

Time: 18:30-20:00

Laura's book: *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation and Devotion in Medieval England.*



Some Lent Resources for 2021

For such a time as this: Lent study course with perspectives from the global church to help us consider our local and global mission in a time of crisis.

The Anglican mission agency USPG has prepared this study course in six sessions looking at creation and the fallen character of our human nature, as well as the remedy in the biblical narrative of salvation and its challenge to us to play our part in the process of redemption and re-creation. This course looks at the implications for our daily lives both as individuals and as communities of faith and hope.

USPG⁺ PARTNERS IN GLOBAL MISSION

The course can be downloaded free at the following link: United Society Partners in the Gospel | Study Courses (uspg.org.uk)

Way Through the Wilderness: Experiencing God's Help in Times of Crisis by Paula Gooder. This can be ordered as a book or ebook at Way Through the Wilderness by Paula Gooder – Paperback (chpublishing.co.uk)

Living His Story: Revealing the extraordinary love of God in ordinary ways: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2021 by The Revd Dr Hannah Steele


This can be ordered as an ePub at Living His Story by The Revd Dr Hannah Steele - Paperback / softback (hymnsam.co.uk)

From Bishop Robert

In the Diocese in Europe, Bishop Robert has encouraged chaplaincies during the pandemic to offer a safe place where challenging life questions may be addressed:

Sunday

Family, friends and loved ones



We lift to God those we hold in our hearts – praying for their health, their well-being and their sense of hope.

We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together they would not feel apart.

We ask for God's help in our communicating and our caring.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy, in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

COVID-19 has reminded us of our need for our togetherness; it has prompted many to ask deep questions about the ordering of our lives and societies; and in some it has generated a new openness to the life of the spirit. As we begin a new term, I hope our churches and chaplaincies can be places of fellowship and care, places where the hard questions of life are addressed, and communities where people are able to find answers to spiritual questions through encounter with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Extract from letter from Bishop Robert Innes
September 2020)*



Building Hope Together

Report highlights Anglican Communion responses to COVID-19

A report released in December 2020 by the Anglican Alliance puts the spotlight on the active and hope-filled way in which churches have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic around the world. The report begins with this encouraging assessment:

‘Churches in every part of the Anglican Communion have been affected in some way, with church buildings shut, gatherings restricted, leaders facing deep challenges, church and clergy incomes impacted. And yet, throughout the Communion, churches have responded to the COVID-19 crisis with courage and compassion. They continue in prayer, constantly adapting patterns of worship to changing circumstances. They remain a committed, loving and active presence in their communities, even in lockdown: praying, comforting, informing, connecting, feeding the hungry and affirming gospel hope. Christians are coming together as the Body of Christ, responding as God’s Church for God’s World.’

Further reading: full report free online:

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2020/12/building-hope-together-report-highlights-anglican-communion-responses-to-covid-19.aspx>

Church Elections



Are you registered to vote?

If you would like to vote at the AGM of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway, you must be registered on the Electoral Roll. The same applies if you would like to be a candidate for election to the Chaplaincy Council.





Joy in Bergen during the pandemic

Top and middle right
The baptism of Chiamaka

Bottom row
The marriage of Molly and Einar

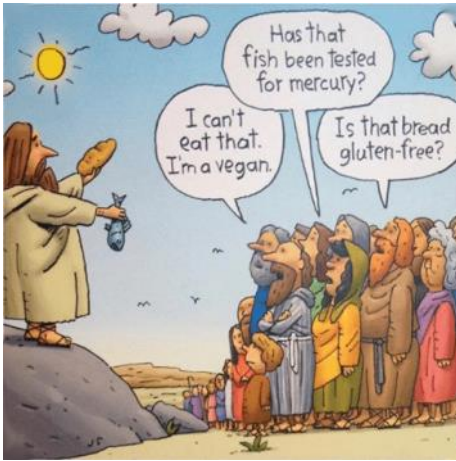
Top left

Kirk preaching to his entire jubilant
congregation (they're at home on Zoom)



Please submit material for the next issue of *Together*
no later than **Monday 3 May**

Feeding the 5 000 anno 2021



Upcoming events



Online

Thu 25 Mar: Zoom seminar on Mary's Book.
18.30–20.00

Sun 25 Apr: Chaplaincy AGM
Oslo

Sun 9 May: Confirmation service, subject to covid restrictions.

Balestrand

Sun 23 May: Opening av season at St Olaf's church.

Anywhere else?

As long as there is space, we should be able to include any upcoming event of interest to *Together* readers. You never know who is where.



From the registers

BAPTISM



Jodi Hudson
St Edmund's Church, Oslo
2 February 2020
by Revd Darren McCallig
Chiamaka Emilia Obike
St Mary's Church, Bergen
22 November 2020
by Revd Kirk Weisz

MARRIAGE



Molly Rydstrom and Einar Eliassen
St Mary's Church, Bergen
11 December 2020
by Revd Thor Brekkeflat

DEATHS

of faithful church members
in 2020

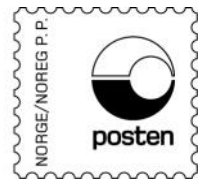


Sian Rebecca Andrianaivoravelona
February 2020
Vera Louise Hiorth
December 2020

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

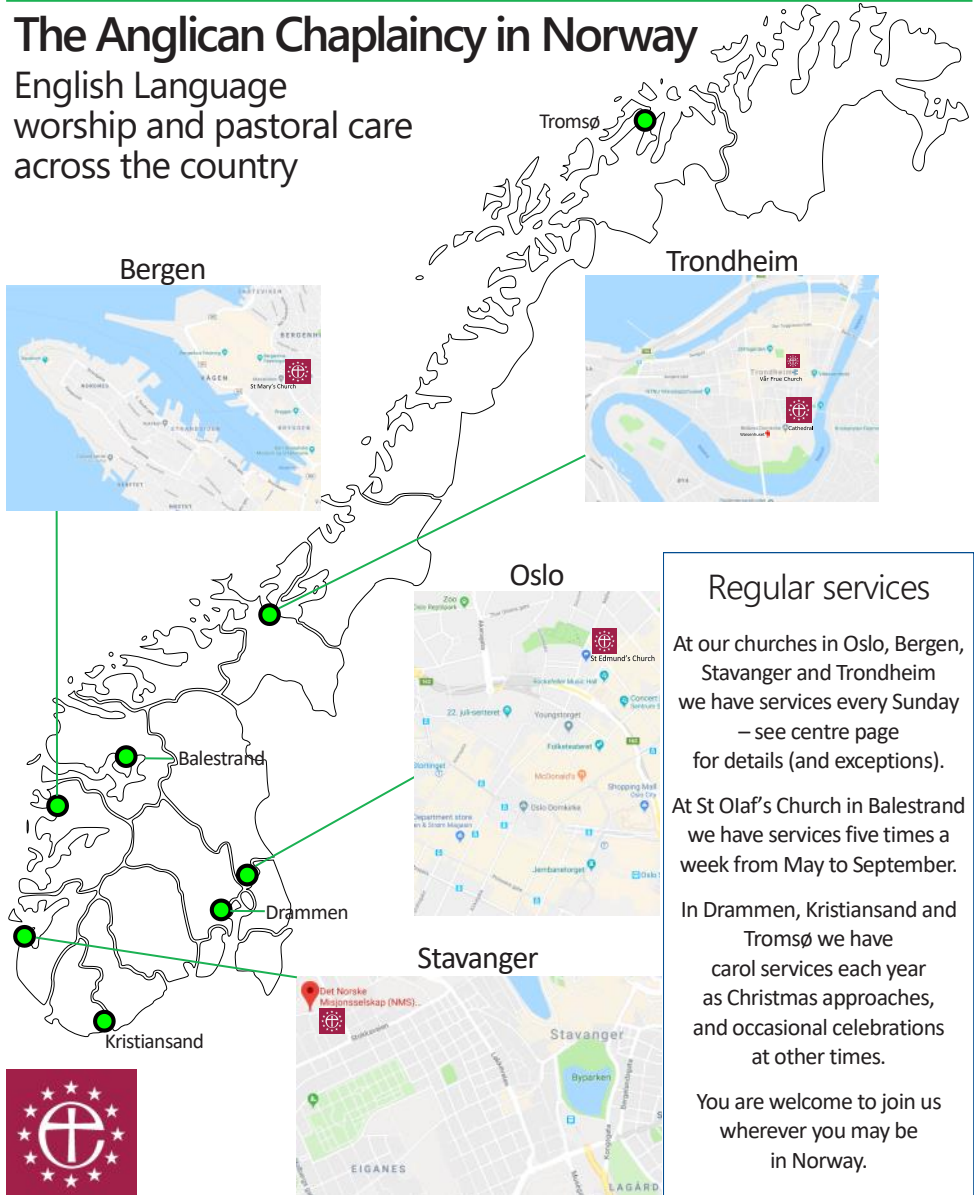




Retur: British Embassy,
Postbox 4005 AMB,
0244 Oslo

The Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway

English Language
worship and pastoral care
across the country



Regular services

At our churches in Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger and Trondheim we have services every Sunday – see centre page for details (and exceptions).

At St Olaf's Church in Balestrand we have services five times a week from May to September.

In Drammen, Kristiansand and Tromsø we have carol services each year as Christmas approaches, and occasional celebrations at other times.

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