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*He will command his
angels concerning you*

From the Chairman



Rev. George Samiec
Chairman of the ELCE

Here in the UK, when people see my clerical collar, they are generally polite towards me. But occasionally the opposite happens and people are offhand or brusque. Once I received a tirade of sustained foul language and, no matter what I tried to say, there was no stopping the bile. This was in a hospital car park and it very quickly dawned on me that I wasn't the target. It was the collar he was yelling at, not me.

We live in the tension that we are responsible for our behaviour in the world, while at the same time believing that there is more to this world than meets the eye. A few weeks ago, we finished hearing the Apostle Paul's words to the Ephesians in our lectionary: of the whole armour of God and that "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). The Festival of Michael and All Angels on 29 September reminds us of the spiritual realm and the unseen forces at work – demons and angels – not to give us an excuse for our behaviour (the devil made me do it!) but to give us an awareness of this reality so that we can live wisely. And in the centre of this unseen realm is always the Lamb who was slain but who stands – who lives! He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who has conquered (Revelation 5:1-5).

The existence of spiritual creatures relates mainly to worship – the angels want to help us, while the demons want to hinder us. Each Divine Service I hear words and see bread and wine (and sometimes water), and trust that there is more here than I see. I join the angels in singing the Gloria in Excelsis and the Sanctus but all our focus (mine and the angels') is on Jesus who comes to serve us – yes, even you! – in the Divine Service, so that we might live wisely today in our relationships by following the hidden Jesus. Jesus wants us to live life to the full, and we need to be aware of what we see and what is unseen in order to do so.

I don't know who the fellow in the car park 'saw' when he sounded off. I didn't get a chance to say much, except to say that no matter how bad religions or priests might be, the God who died for him loves him and Jesus will never hurt or abuse anyone. Did he hear? I hope so and that such words bear fruit. Did I hear him – that people might not have had God or Jesus presented in the best light? I hope so. And so I remain careful that I don't trip up others in meeting Jesus. And in this spiritual reality, both of us can benefit from Jesus' victory over the powers of sin, death, and the demonic. There is more to this world than meets the eye!

*Thank you, Jesus, for your presence
and life with us – and your support,
both seen and unseen.*



SIR JACOB EPSTEIN, ST. MICHAEL AND THE DEVIL — COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

Photograph: Herry Lawford (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/herry/2989152034>). Used by permission.

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Centre panel of

‘Altarpiece of St. Michael’

Gerard David (c. 1460–1523)

Source: KHM-Museumsverband,
Vienna. Reproduced with permission.

Lord of the Armies

It was hoped that this issue would be ready for distribution at the ELCE Synod at the end of September, in time for the feast of St. Michael and All Angels (Michaelmas). That Synod will take place later this autumn (see p. 19), and by the time you read this, Michaelmas will also have come and gone. Thankfully, as with all the major festivals of the church year, the theme of angels and their presence in the lives of Christians is not a once-a-year reality but one that is true and relevant every day. Our need of the service of angels, and God's promise of that service, are always there!

In the liturgy of the Divine Service, we acclaim God as either the "Lord God of Hosts" (LSB Settings 1 & 2) or "Lord God of Sabaoth" (Settings 3 & 4). What does it mean? What are 'hosts', and what is 'Sabaoth'? One word is English, the other Hebrew, but if my experience of pastoral conversations is anything to go by, to most people the translation makes little more sense than the original. What are we saying about God when we call Him that?

The Hebrew word 'Sabaoth' simply means 'armies' – and that is one old-fashioned meaning of the English word 'hosts' as well. In modern English, then, we could translate that line thus: "Lord God of Armies".

What are these armies? In the Old Testament, the armies of Israel are

often portrayed as the armies of God, since Israel is His people and the king at their head is the shepherd established by God to lead and guide His people.

But the Bible reveals another, more comforting reality: that regardless of the state of the armies of Israel – regardless of whether there is such an entity as the kingdom of Israel – God remains the God of the armies.

These are not armies of flesh and blood, with swords and shields. These are the heavenly armies ('heavenly host') who serve at God's command to fight His battles, which are not primarily against flesh and blood but "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

It is these armies that God uses to defend His people Israel, and it is these armies that defend the Church and her members. When Elisha was surrounded by the army of Syria, the army of Syria was surrounded by the heavenly army – and Elisha walked away unharmed (2 Kings 6:8–23). When Peter was in prison, waiting to be executed, an angel rescued him from prison (Acts 12:6–19).

Jesus tells the disciples that should He have wanted to be rescued from death in Gethsemane, he could have had the assistance of twelve legions

of angels (Matthew 25:53). He did not make use of those legions – but He tells us that our angels see our heavenly Father’s face (Matthew 18:10).

These armies of God are His servants who do His will. We, on the other hand, are God’s children! The servants may be more powerful, wiser, purer than the children. But they nevertheless serve the children.

When you enter into conflict with the powers of evil, you can stand up tall against every adversary threatening to overpower you and demand, “You and whose army? My Father is the Lord, God of Armies.”

When we sing praise to the thrice-holy Lord God of Hosts/Sabaoth, we are confessing His power and might – which He puts to use for our salvation. That power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), for when the armies of God take to battle in our defence, it is best we stay out of the way. When we are weak, we are strong, for the Lord of Armies Himself fights for us.

We remain weak and vulnerable every day. But God’s promises of the protection of His heavenly armies remain in force every day. Our angels stand before God every day, watching over us.

While they fight for us, we are called to stand firm in the citadel of the Church, to don the armour of God daily so that we can “withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:13). It is in

We remain weak and vulnerable every day. But God’s promises of the protection of His heavenly armies remain in force every day.

the knowledge of this protection, and above all in the knowledge of Jesus’ victory over sin, death and the devil, that we gather again and again to join our voices with the angels, the archangels and all the company of heaven, evermore praising God and saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Armies!”



Rev. Tapani Simojoki,
Editor

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St. Michael and All Angels

*Dr. Cynthia Lumley, Principal,
Westfield House, Cambridge*



Lord God to Thee We Give All Praise (LSB 522)

1. Lord God, to Thee we give all praise,
With grateful hearts our voices raise,
That angel hosts Thou didst create
Around Thy glorious throne to wait.
2. They shine with light and heav'nly grace
And constantly behold Thy face;
They heed Thy voice, they know it well,
In godly wisdom they excel.
3. They never rest nor sleep as we;
Their whole delight is but to be
With Thee, Lord Jesus, and to keep
Thy little flock, Thy lambs and sheep.
4. The ancient dragon is their foe;
His envy and his wrath they know.
It always is his aim and pride
Thy Christian people to divide.
5. As he of old deceived the world
And into sin and death has hurled,
So now he subtly lies in wait
To undermine both Church and state.
6. A roaring lion, round he goes,
No halt nor rest he ever knows;
He seeks the Christians to devour
And slay them in his dreadful pow'r.
7. But watchful is the angel band
That follows Christ on ev'ry hand
To guard His people where they go
And break the counsel of the foe.
8. For this, now and in days to be,
Our praise shall rise, O Lord, to Thee,
Whom all the angel hosts adore
With grateful songs forevermore.

*Text: Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560); German
version Paul Eber (1511–69); tr. Emanuel
Cronenwett (1841–1931), alt.*

Martin Luther (1483–1546) gave music the highest place after theology. He introduced congregational singing of vernacular psalms and hymns and published several collections of hymns. In contrast, Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) is best known as a theologian and scholar, Luther's colleague who framed the text of the Augsburg Confession. He did not make a significant contribution to hymnody, but in 1534 Melanchthon did publish this hymn, praising the work of angels. Melanchthon believed that nothing in our lives happens 'by accident', and that angels comprise one of the forces that result in good for us.

His hymn describes the attributes of angels, as testified by Scripture: they are creatures created by God (v 1), have a shining appearance (v 2), are wise listeners to God's voice (v 2), and are ever watchful (v 3).

Although angels are mentioned nearly 300 times in the Bible and their existence is confirmed by Jesus (see Matthew 22:30, 25:31; Luke 16:22), Scripture does not tell us much about their creation. However, we know from John 1:1–3 that before He began his work of creation, nothing existed apart from God; Psalm 148 includes

angels in its description of the range of the created order; and Nehemiah 9:6 testifies that God made the heavenly host (another term for angels – see e.g. Luke 2:13).

Because angels are spiritual beings, the Bible does not describe their physical appearance in detail, but Daniel saw an angel whose “face was like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze” (Daniel 10:6); “the glory of the Lord shone” when an angel announced Jesus’ birth to the shepherds (Luke 2:9) and the angel who moved the stone from the entrance to Jesus’ tomb had an “appearance like lightning and clothing white as snow” (Matthew 28:3).

The Greek and Hebrew words translated as ‘angel’ both mean ‘messenger’. There are many examples in Scripture of angels bringing messages from God, such as the angel Gabriel who appeared to Zechariah (Luke 1:11–17) and to Mary (Luke 1:26–38). It should be noted that there is no reference in Scripture to ‘messenger’ angels having wings or flying; these were added by medieval artists who drew on images of pagan gods that were also ‘messengers’ and added wings to show swiftness. (Two other types of angels, cherubim and seraphim, which are generally seen in visions, are described as having wings.)

In addition to using them as messengers, God employs the ministry of angels to deliver His people from affliction and danger (Psalm 91:11–13). This is the focus of Melancthon’s hymn. He describes the mighty power

of the devil in verses 4–6, which is countered by the work of angels, who guard us against the devil’s wiles, as described in v 7. We know that in this work angels are carrying out God’s instructions: Psalm 103:20–21 tells us that angels obey “the voice of [the Lord’s] word” and do His will.

Only two angels are named in the Bible: Gabriel and Michael. The word translated as Michael means “Who is like God?” – a rhetorical question, as there is no one like God! Michael is referred to in the book of Daniel as “the great prince” or “one of the chief princes” and in the New Testament as the archangel who fights “against the dragon . . . that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan” (Revelation 12:7–9). Michael leads “the good angels [who] do battle with the evil angels in defense of men”, as described in Daniel.

Archangel Michael’s “permanent assignment is the defence of God’s people” (Andrew Steinmann). Because of this, Michael is usually depicted in art as a soldier. Interestingly, many cartoon superheroes were modelled after Michael and other angels. For example, compare St. Michael as depicted on the front cover of this issue (the central panel from the Altarpiece of St. Michael by the Flemish painter Gerard David [c. 1460– 1523]), with superman – the billowing red cape, ability to fly, triumph over the forces of evil – but in contrast, the weapon with which St Michael defeats evil is the cross rather than his own physical abilities.

Continues on p. 9.

Let Your Holy Angel Be with Me

Rev. Arno Bessel,

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Plymouth



Dangers can be real or fictitious or unnoticed. The thought of being surrounded by a dangerous enemy holds a prominent place in our minds. And we try to find shelter and safety. As Christians, we pray in the morning and in the evening that God would protect us and our loved ones. Since March 2020, countless believers have sent prayers to heaven asking God to defend them from the invisible – but terrifying – enemy, Covid-19.

God uses means to give protection to His children: parents, nannies, teachers, pastors, doctors, nurses, policemen, firefighters, coastguards, etc. We trust that God would use these people to keep our lives safe, to keep our bodies healthy and to care for our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

It is possible, however, that we rarely think of special agents God uses to extend His presence to us and to provide shelter for us. I'm referring to the holy angels. They have been created in the beginning when God brought the universe into being. The holy angels are ministering spirits sent out by God to serve us who believe in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:14). The writer of Psalm 91 says that the Lord "will command his angels con-

cerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11-12). We find in Scripture beautiful stories about how God sent His angels to protect and save people. Think, for example, of Daniel who was guarded by God's angel in the lion's den (Daniel 6); remember the apostle Peter who was rescued from prison by an angel (Acts 12:6ff.); or consider Jesus who received the service of angels after being tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11).

The holy angels are ministering spirits sent out by God to serve us who believe in Jesus Christ

Martin Luther held clearly in mind the service of the angels. He closes the well-known Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer with the words, "Let Your holy angel be with me that the evil foe may have no power over me."

In this statement, two angels are taken into account: God's holy angel and the evil foe, that is Satan, also known as the devil, Lucifer, and the ancient serpent. Originally a holy angel, the evil foe along with many companions rebelled against God. They fell away from God and were

expelled from God's presence. Ever since, the fallen angels are evil foes of God and of us believers.

The apostle Peter urges us: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith" (1 Peter 5:8-9). The apostle Paul teaches: "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

"When we pray God to send His holy angel to overpower the evil foe, we are praying that Jesus' victory may be granted to us."

God sends His holy angel to guard us from the evil foe. We trust and take comfort in this teaching. After all, Jesus Christ fought and overcame the evil foe for us when He was tempted. Jesus' mission consisted in defeating the evil foe for us. The apostle John

puts it this way: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). While Jesus hung suspended on the cross, He declared His victory over the evil foe, saying, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). By His suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus destroyed "the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). At the end of times, the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur and "will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

Jesus won the battle for us. When we pray God to send His holy angel to overpower the evil foe, we are praying that Jesus' victory may be granted to us.

Some dangers that frighten us could be unreal, a product of our imagination. Other dangers are real. Still others pass unnoticed to us but are known to God. Gather them all in a bundle and take them in prayer to God's throne of grace. Confident in Jesus' victory over the evil foe, pray to God in the morning and in the evening: "Let Your holy angel be with me that the evil foe may have no power over me." Amen.

Continued from page 7:

In the background, another battle between Michael's angels and those of Satan can be seen, as prophesied in Revelation. God the Father is looking on, signifying that Michael and all the angels are carrying out his instructions. Scripture is clear in telling us that our "adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Together with Melanchthon, we can sing praises to God for the divine protection he provides to us and to all his children through the work of St Michael and all the angels.

Remember me — The Gospel according to Mad Max

Aleksander Bieriejanczuk
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cambridge



This is not another review of the film ‘Mad Max: Fury Road’ (2015). Though it is not a Christian film, I would like to show that the mind of Western civilization, of creators of action films and of the audience (us), is very deeply rooted in the biblical stories. It is almost necessary to incorporate Gospel narratives – without labelling them such – to make the genre interesting.

The post-apocalyptic genre is ideal for illustrating our sinful nature as human beings. Hence the violence. The genre exaggerates characters and presents the world in the form of basic patterns to make the stories into proverbs.

The story opens with the image of the Citadel. The Citadel, which is located on the top of a rock, is a source of fresh water and is covered by green pastures. This picture might remind us of the creation of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2). Yet it is enslaved by a tyrant, Immortan Joe, the warlord of a religious cult. He rules the surrounding territories through fear and an army of devoted young boys. Instead of serving to bring prosperity to the Citadel, he brings misery and plagues (Genesis 3). Under this tyranny, Mad

Max is captured in the wasteland and enslaved to be a universal blood donor.

Most fake religions have a seed of truth. What is the seed of truth in the cult of the Citadel? The essence of it is expressed in words, "I live, I die, and I live again", followed by a self-sacrificial act. Members of this cult share their faith by hand-signing their symbol of immortality and speaking the

The true God is always in control of even the smallest twists and turns in our lives

words "Witness me" when choosing the moment of death – a distortion of Christian love.

In the midst of a dangerous trade trip, a commander sent by Immortan Joe himself, Furiosa, executes her plan to escape. The warlord sees this act of betrayal and sends his army in pursuit. During the chase, the protagonists meet. Mad Max uses the opportunity to free himself. A young opportunist joins the chase to gain the respect of his idol and god, only to fail spectacularly. The true God is always in control of even the smallest twists and turns in our lives (Luke 21:18).

The turning-point of the story is the

moment Furiosa and the company reach the dried-out sea. Her goal was to reach ‘the green place’ which turns out to be more wasteland. She is crushed by the reality of the situation. Usually, the best solution humanity can come up with is to start over somewhere new, to run away. In the moment, Furiosa reaches the same conclusion. This is idealism, not hope, however. There is no water or food in the dried-out ocean, but the Citadel is full of it.

Max walks the earth with his feet firmly planted on the ground. He proposes real hope with the words, “If you can’t fix what’s broken, you will go insane”. This is true hope for the world. Both decide to bring salvation by giving their lives and winning back the Citadel. This is not the Gospel, and it is clearly inspired by the redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ’s words are grounded in reality: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than

he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted and divides his spoil. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters” (Luke 11:21–23).

In the second half of the film, the young man experiences a true human touch of love and tenderness for the first time in his life. He is converted and joins their good cause. On their way back, he sacrifices himself to save the others. This time his sacrifice bears truth to the words “witness me”. Secondly, in the midst of the vicious battle, Furiosa is wounded, and she uses her remaining strength to protect the others, to redeem her past, to be “remembered”. Mad Max saves Furiosa’s life by giving her a blood transfusion; he is a universal donor. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches



Image courtesy of Warner Bros.

of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

The team of companions, the germ of the new world, defeats the tyrant and his army and comes back to the Citadel to establish justice and mercy. The first sign of justice is the gruesome scene of the dead body of Immortan Joe being ripped apart by the crowd – an end not unlike that of Judas (Acts 1:18). The garden once lost to the de-

ception of the devil is restored to be ruled by grace. This is “not yet” the end of the story. Mad Max leaves Furiosa right after she is recognised as the new ruler (John 16:7). This is the call of the church, the followers of the road, to bring dominion to the rest of the world, fulfilled by the true meaning of the words “Remember Me”!

NEWS FROM THE LUTHERAN WORLD

New Bishop for Finnish Lutherans

Rev. Dr. Juhana Pohjola was consecrated as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF) on August 1, 2021 at the conclusion of the church’s three-day summer festival.

Bishop Pohjola, who formerly served the ELMDF as Diocesan Dean, was elected to serve as bishop earlier this year. Rev. Dr. Risto Soramies, outgoing bishop of the ELMDF, preached for the service and led the consecration of his successor. Bishop Soramies reminded Bishop Elect Pohjola to remember the words of Jesus: “Take care of My sheep” (John 21:16).

Also participating in the consecration were Bishop Thor Henrik With (Evangelical-Lutheran Diocese in Norway), Bishop Bengt Ådahl (Mission

Province in Sweden), President Matthew Harrison (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), and Bishop Hanns Jensions (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia).

Bishop Matti Väisänen (the former bishop of Luther Foundation, the ELMDF’s predecessor organization) and two ELMDF pastors also participated in the consecration service.

Bishop Pohjola’s consecration comes at a challenging time: he faces criminal charges for his role in publishing a 2004 document which articulates the historic Christian understanding of human sexuality (see *The British Lutheran* 60:1).

“It has been overwhelming to receive support and encouragement not only across church boundaries but also from many who are not even Christians,” noted Dr. Pohjola in a speech



Bishop Pohjola with the ordaining bishops and pastors. Photo courtesy of ELMDF.

during the ELMDF's summer festival. "The continuity of the Church does not only include faith in Christ; it also involves battles and suffering. That is why Martin Luther, our great mentor, adopted the bearing of the Holy Cross as the seventh mark of the Church."

"I am not standing here before you trying to gather sacrificial points for my victimhood," he continued. "I am not at all in danger. Even if I should be sentenced by the court, we will manage just fine. First, my anxiety is that many of the people who are struggling with questions of, for example, same-sex attraction will feel that there is no room for them in our congregations. My concern is

that those people who disagree with us may think that Christians are filled with hate, that Christians do not believe that all humans are of equal worth. Second, I share an anxiety that fear and self-censorship may fill even the hearts of Christians. Finally, I feel anxious that our fatherland will become more ideologically narrow-minded."

Dr. Pohjola continued: "It is our calling to speak the truth in love in all peace, to invite people to be partakers of grace, to pray for everyone, and without any bitterness endure in patience whatever resistance may come our way. Amidst all of this, I claim this hope and prayer that the Apostle Paul, who was filled with

joy, wrote about while in prison: ‘I want you to know, brothers, that whatever has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel’ (Philippians 1:12). Lord, use all of this to the glory of Your Name!’

Latvian Lutherans vote to seek membership in the ILC

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (LELB) held its 28th synod on 6 August 6, 2021, during which time the church voted to seek membership in the International Lutheran Council (ILC), a worldwide association of confessional Lutheran churches of which the ELCE has been an active member since its early days.

“We are delighted to learn that the Latvian church has voted to seek membership in the International Lutheran Council,” said ILC General Secretary Timothy Quill. “The LELB has a long, fruitful, and harmonious relationship with many of the churches who are members of the ILC. We know each other well and are of like mind and heart in Lutheran doctrine and practice.”

Delegates to the LELB’s synod met under the theme “We Will Serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15),.

Among other business during the synod, the LELB also voted to with-

draw from membership in the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), formerly known as the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia is the largest church body in Latvia, with approximately 700,000 members.

Former LCA President Enters into Glory

Rev. Dr. Lance Steicke, former president of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), has died at the age of 88.

Dr. Steicke was born in Murray Bridge on February 19,

1933. He studied at Concordia College in Adelaide and Concordia Seminary, leading to his ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia – a predecessor body of the current LCA – in 1955. He spent four years as a pastor in Loxton before moving to New Zealand where he served for the next twenty years, including fifteen years as president



*Lance Steicke.
Photo courtesy of LCA NZ*

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Zealand. He further served as director of New Zealand Lutheran Radio and TV before accepting the role of director of Lutheran Radio and TV in Australia.

In 1987, Dr. Steicke was elected president of the Lutheran Church of Australia, a position he held until his retirement in 2000. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis, Missouri) in 1990.

In addition to being a regular participant in the gatherings of the International Lutheran Council (ILC) during his tenure, Dr. Steicke and the Lutheran Church of Australia also hosted the 16th Conference of the ILC in Adelaide, Australia in September 1995.

Dr. Steicke is particularly remembered for his work on Aboriginal reconciliation in Australia as well as for his contributions to ecumenical dialogue. Following his service as president of the LCA, Dr. Steicke spent three years (2000-2003) as president of Australia's National Council of Churches, an organization he had helped found in 1994. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2003 for his service to ecumenism and the Lutheran Church.

Dr Steicke's wife Leah died in 2020. He is survived by their four children.

SELK Bishop Passes from Time into Eternity



Jobst Schöne. Photo courtesy of SELK.

On September 22, 2021, Rev. Dr. Jobst Schöne, Bishop Emeritus of our sister church in Germany', the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche – SELK) finished his earthly race. He was 89 years old.

The current bishop of SELK, Hans-Jörg Voigt, writes:

“Last Tuesday Jobst Schöne called me by phone to say good-bye and farewell. God gave me grace to visit him one last time on Tuesday afternoon with the Body and Blood of Christ. I have never experienced such a clear and peaceful time in the last hours of one's life. His last words to me were the following: ‘I am not sure, but if there is the possibility during eternal worship, I will pray for you.’ And I answered: ‘Thank you,

and I will see you soon!”

Bishop Voigt continues: “Together with his family we are feeling both sadness and joy together—sadness because we will miss him very much, and joy because we know he has been welcomed into eternity by his Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

Dr. Schöne was born on October 20, 1931 in Naumburg (Saale). After finishing school, he pursued theological studies at universities and seminaries in Bethel, Tübingen, Oberursel, and Münster. From 1957–58, he served as an assistant at the Ecumenical Institute in Münster.

Schöne was ordained in 1959 and completed his vicarage (curacy) in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. He served in Cologne from 1961–1962, before being called as pastor of St. Mary’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Berlin-Zehlendorf and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Berlin-Spandau, a position in which he served from 1962–1975.

While serving in Berlin, he would go on to receive a doctorate in theology from the University of Münster in 1968. He later received an honorary doctorate from Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne, Indiana) in 1978.

From 1973–1985, Dr. Schöne served

as superintendent of SELK’s Berlin district. On November 3, 1985, he was elected the national Bishop of SELK, a position he would hold until his retirement in 1996. During his tenure as bishop, Dr. Schöne expanded the ecumenical relations of the SELK. He also oversaw the merger of the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church – a church body in former East Germany – into SELK in 1991 following German reunification.

Dr. Schöne was the author of several books, and his writing has been collected into two anthologies. In a 1994 pastoral letter, he defended SELK’s adherence to historic Christian teaching in rejecting female ordination.

Bishop Schöne continued to teach and lecture in Germany and abroad following his retirement, including at Westfield House in 2007. He also served as a preacher and liturgist in local services. He celebrated his 60th ordination anniversary in 2019, where he—at 88 years old—preached and led the liturgy. He continued to preach even thereafter, giving his final sermon only the Sunday before his death.

Dr. Schöne is survived by his wife, Ingrid, and their three children.

*Source: International Lutheran Council
www.ilc-online.org*

ELCE News

Barnes Conference Meets

The pastors of the ELCE met for Barnes Conference, the twice-yearly meeting of pastors named after the first English Lutheran Reformer and martyr, Robert Barnes (c. 1495–1540).

The meeting was hosted by the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Harlow— as it has been on several occasions in the past few years.

In addition to general administration, the pastors took time to study the Bible and the Lutheran confessions together.

Each day began and ended with worship, with Rev. George Samiec,



Photo: George Samiec

the vacancy pastor at Redeemer, serving as the chaplain to the Conference, and other pastors assisting by providing homilies.

Apart from study and information sharing, the Barnes Conference provides an important opportunity for the pastors to support and encourage one another, and to share one another's burdens.

Restructuring Conversations Continue

Members of the Executive Council, pastors and congregational representatives have continued to meet via Zoom to discuss the proposed constitutional documents of the coming restructuring of the ELCE. Three reading days have been held since the last issue of *The British Lutheran*: 10 July, 18 September and 9 October.

Upcoming Synod

The next meeting of ELCE Synod will be held on **19–20 November**. Further details will be published shortly.

Anniversaries

7 December 2021: George Samiec ordination – 35 years

Map of ELCE Congregations



| Congregation | Address | Service Time |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Ascension Lutheran Church | Brandon Methodist Church, London Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 OEL | 5 pm on the 1 st Sunday of the month, and 9 am on every other Sunday |
| Brighton Lutheran Mission | Holland Road Baptist Church, 65-71 Holland Road, Hove, BN3 1JN | 3.30 pm on 1st Sunday of the month |
| Bristol Lutheran Mission | Contact St. Peter's Lutheran Church for details | |
| Cheltenham Lutheran Mission | Contact Luther-Tyndale Memorial Church for details | |
| Christ Lutheran Church | 227 Poverest Road, Orpington, BR5 1RD | 10.30 am |
| Good Shepherd Lutheran Church | 49 Eastern Green Road, Coventry, CV5 7LG | 4 pm on the 2 nd & 4 th Sunday of the month |
| Holy Trinity Lutheran Church | 53 Antill Road, Tottenham, London, N15 4AR | 11 am |
| Ipswich Lutheran Mission | St. Luke's Church, 78 Cliff Lane, Ipswich, IP3 0PJ | 6 pm on the 3 rd Sunday of the month |
| Luther-Tyndale Memorial Church | 9 Leighton Crescent, Kentish Town, London, NW5 2Q | 10 am |
| Our Saviour Lutheran Church | 10th Fareham Scout Hall, 20B Highlands Road, Fareham, PO16 7XN | 10:30 am |
| Oxford Lutheran Mission | Marston United Reformed Church, 352 Marston Road, Marston, Oxford, OX3 0JB | 4:30 pm on 2 nd & 4 th Sunday of the month |
| Rainham Lutheran Mission | Wigmore Evangelical Free Church, Durham Road, Rainham, Kent, ME8 0JN | 10:30 am |
| Redeemer Lutheran Church | 22 Tawneys Road, Harlow CM18 6QS | 11 am |
| Resurrection Lutheran Church. | 25 Westfield Lane, Cambridge, CB4 3QS | 11 am |
| St Andrew's Lutheran Church | Whitby Road, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 9DY | 11:30 am |
| St Columba Lutheran Church | 151 Westwood Hill, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8QA | 11 am |
| St David Lutheran Church | St. Fagans Road, Fairwater, Cardiff, CF5 3EU | 11 am Last Sunday of the month: 6 pm (Holy Communion) |
| St Paul's Lutheran Church | St. Paul's Close, Cranes Way, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 2DB | 9.30 am |
| St Peter's Lutheran Church | 21 Larkham Lane, Plympton, Plymouth PL7 4PG | 11 am |
| St Timothy's Lutheran Mission | Queen Alexandra Road, Sunderland, SR2 9AA | 11 am on the 1 st & 3 rd Saturday of the month |

Searching for the Beauty of Holiness

St. Columba Lutheran Church in East Kilbride has the privilege of being served by not one but two vacancy pastors! Since the beginning of his PhD studies at St Andrews University in 2019, Wade Bellesbach joined Jon Ehlers in serving the saints in S. Lanarkshire.

Pastor Bellesbach grew up on a farm south of the city of Eau Claire in western Wisconsin, a region with a strong Lutheran history.

“The parish where I was baptized, received my first communion, was confirmed and ordained is one of the original German Lutheran congregations in the area. My own family have been members for generations.”

His interest in the office of the ministry developed early, thanks to the encouragement of faithful pastors, friends and family – an inner call that was strengthened during undergraduate studies of Theology and Theological Languages at Concordia University Wisconsin.

“My studies, the care and attention of my professors, and working with various campus ministries – especially as the chapel sacristan – confirmed my ongoing desire to enter pastoral ministry.”

He also met people who had studied at Westfield House and heard about their experiences in Cambridge. As a result, having enrolled at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, he applied to spend the second year of his studies in Cambridge.

“It was a foundational year in many ways. Many of the theological interests



that led to my current PhD work were formed and nurtured at Westfield House.”

And so it

was that the conclusion of his pastoral training in the USA led to a successful application to study at St Andrews in 2018 and then to doctoral studies and the call to St. Columba.

“It was an exciting time and very much felt like coming home.”

Having been ordained back at home and then installed at St. Columba, the newly-minted pastor Bellesbach soon found himself in unexpected territory:

“I would never have imagined my first years of ministry taking place in a pandemic! Nevertheless, the Lord has certainly blessed me beyond my very limited imagination.”

Pastor Bellesbach’s PhD research and writing concerns an understanding of the arts and culture through the prism of Lutheran doctrinal confession and theology. As for the details? “It’s a large topic with many avenues; I’m always happy to discuss it over a coffee or a pint!”

Having reached the half-way point of your current studies, are your thoughts beginning to turn to the future?

“I’m not sure I want to consider that just yet. Happily, I still have time to wait on the Lord and see where He might call me to serve in His church.”