

Meeting of Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion of Churches

Tampere, Finland, 11th -13th October 2022

The 25th Anniversary of the Porvoo Communion: Portrait, Unity and Vulnerability

Communiqué



The Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion, which unites the Anglican Churches in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Iberian Peninsula and Lutheran Churches in Nordic countries, the Baltic, and Great Britain, met in Tampere, Finland, to mark the 25th anniversary of the communion. The Primates' Meeting usually takes place every four years and should have taken place in 2021, but due to the pandemic had been postponed for a year. The meeting was hosted by Rt Revd Dr Matti Repo, Bishop of Tampere and Lutheran co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group. The meeting started with a eucharist celebrating the 25th anniversary in Tampere Cathedral, led by Bishop Repo and Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin and Anglican co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group. The participants experienced generous hospitality at several gatherings, hosted by Bishop Repo, Lauri Savisaari, Director of Culture and Education, Tampere, and Very Revd Dr Olli Hallikainen, Dean of Tampere Cathedral together with Revd Tapani Rantala from the Parish Federation of Tampere.

A session consisting of presentations and discussions was devoted to each of the three themes of portrait, unity, and vulnerability. For the first theme, papers tracing a portrait of the Porvoo Common Statement had been prepared by Dame Mary Tanner, former World Council of Churches President of the European region, Rt Revd Christopher Hill, former Bishop of Guildford, and Revd Dr Tiit Pädam, an Estonian theologian, all of whom were involved in the original working out of the Porvoo agreement. Following discussion raised questions about whether the original intentions should be developed by exploring further forms and expressions of communion.

In the session on unity, Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, and Rt Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway, introduced the theme of the role of the churches in Europe during times of tension, particularly the role of national churches. The past failings of our churches, in part due to being so integrated in our own cultures and contexts, can at times make it difficult to speak critically into contemporary situations. Conversely, the strengths of our historical positions can help us deliver important messages from and of faith communities. In the discussion, we shared different perspectives on the effect of division within a church upon its calling to speak within society. All these things affect our unity.

Meeting in nearby Finland, participants shared their horror at the Russian war in Ukraine. All continue to pray for peace and for a just outcome for the people of Ukraine, and for the return of stability to the whole region. At a separate session, the primates and presiding bishops agreed to send a letter to the Patriarch of Moscow, the Russian Orthodox Church, the text of which follows this communiqué.

In the final session on the theme of vulnerability, the experiences of the churches during the Covid-19 pandemic and what they have learnt for the future were the subject of presentations by Most Revd Dr Antje Jackelén, Archbishop of Uppsala, and Rt Revd Jorge Pina Cabral, Bishop of the Lusitanian Church. They reflected on new and sometimes challenging ways of being church discovered during the pandemic, and on how different ways of deepening spiritual life had to be sought. Participants discussed how the Church can speak into a world facing climate devastation, and how times of suffering kindle hope.

All three themes gave opportunity for interesting discussion about the role and challenges of the Porvoo Communion. Future major gatherings in the Porvoo Communion will include a thematic conference on the eucharist in Spain in 2023, a church leaders’ consultation on environment and eschatology in Sweden in 2024, and a theological conference marking the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed in Wales in 2025.

List of participants:

Primates	Porvoo Contact Group
<p>Anglican</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Cottrell, England Michael Jackson, Ireland (PCG, Co-chair) Carlos López Lozano, Spain (PCG) Jorge Pina Cabral, Portugal (PCG) Mark Strange, Scotland <p>Lutheran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olav Fykse Tveit, Norway Antje Jackelén, Sweden Tor Berger Jørgensen, Lutheran Church in Great Britain Tapio Luoma, Finland Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir, Iceland Peter Skov-Jakobsen, Denmark Urmas Viilma, Estonia Lauma Zusevics, Latvian Worldwide 	<p>Anglican</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ainsley Griffiths, Wales Tuomas Mäkipää, Diocese in Europe Jeremy Morris, England Miriam Weibye, Scotland <p>Lutheran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zilgme Eglite, Latvian Worldwide Tomi Karttunen, Finland Petur Georg Markan, Iceland Christopher Meakin, Sweden Matti Repo, Finland (Co-chair) Thorsten Rørbæk, Denmark Meelis Süld, Lutheran Church in Great Britain Tauno Teder, Estonia Rinalds Grants, Latvia

His Holiness Kirill
Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia
Russian Orthodox Church

Thursday 13th October 2022

Your Holiness,

We, Primates and Presiding Bishops of the churches of the Porvoo Communion met in Tampere, Finland, 11-13 October, 2022. Together we want to express our horror at the war in Ukraine, particularly how deeply concerned we are at the renewed systematic targeting of civilians and local infrastructure in your neighbouring country of Ukraine by Russian military. These are acts against humanity, violating the principles of the Geneva conventions, and they bring the war into another level of cruelty and death for the Ukrainian people. At this moment, together we call upon you, Your Holiness, to do your utmost to convince the Russian President to immediately halt these attacks and end this war. We as churches should share the joint ecumenical commitments to follow Christ's commission to love and to protect those most vulnerable, and to demonstrate that we all, including Your Holiness, should be peacemakers wherever we are.

We assure you of our prayers and trust that you will do everything in your power to influence those making these decisions that escalate the war and other decisions made to destabilize Ukraine. For the sake of all, including the soldiers and their families in Russia, we urge your Holiness to do whatever is in your power to bring this war to an end.

Yours in Christ,

Most Revd Dr Tapio Luoma, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Most Revd and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell, Church of England

Rt Right Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, Church of Norway

Rt Revd Rinalds Grants, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

Most Revd Dr Antje Jackelén, Church of Sweden

Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland

Rt Revd Tor Berger Jørgensen, Lutheran Church in Great Britain

Rt Revd Carlos López Lozano, Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain

Rt Revd Jorge Pina Cabral, Lusitanian Church (Portugal)

Rt Revd Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir, Church of Iceland

Rt Revd Peter Skov-Jakobsen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Most Revd Mark Strange, Scottish Episcopal Church

Most Revd Urmas Viilma, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Most Revd Lauma Zusevics, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia Worldwide