

# TOGETHER

The magazine of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway

February — May 2026



The theme of this issue is:  
'Hope'

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The diocesan website is [www.europe.anglican.org](http://www.europe.anglican.org), and the Church of England's website is [www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org).

## From the Senior Chaplain

*There is one hope to which we are called...our one faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, united in one baptism.. (cf Ephesians 4.4)*

Hope is sometimes overlooked or misunderstood as the important outcome of our Christian faith which it represents. St Paul certainly placed hope in his top three, along with faith and love, in his letter encouraging the Christian community at Corinth, "These three abide, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13.13) It can help us amid the troubles and uncertainties of our present time to be reminded that hope is based on eternal truths: not on our current circumstances or the world's state of affairs, but upon our being held within the love of Christ which bears all things, and overcomes all things.

Hope is a fitting theme for this issue of Together with much happening around our Chaplaincy which encourages us in that hope. New ministries of different kinds give special hope going forward and it was a great joy to see Revd Annie Bolger licensed as assistant chaplain and Ekene Agbala-kwe as lay reader by our Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel at St Edmund's on 23rd November.

The high levels of participation in carol services around the country also encourage us, especially at the cathedrals in Stavanger and Trondheim, but also with full turnouts recently at Mariakirken in Bergen and St Edmund's in Oslo. Carol services have also provided a fine opportunity for witness and fellowship where we offer Anglican worship less frequently. Thanks to good local cooperation with the Church of Norway we have again been able to hold carols in English at Svalbard Church and in Tromsø Cathedral as well as through our long established partnerships with Bragernes Church in Drammen and Oddernes Church in Kristiansand. These relationships are a great blessing and encourage us in our outreach as well as our partnership under the Porvoo agreement.

Amidst geopolitical tensions, ecumenical cooperation offers great hope and witness. In 2024 the Bishop of Greenland joined the ecumenical celebrations at Moster for 1000 years of Christian Law in Norway, an opportunity for deepened fellowship which invites us to stand together amid the moving ice floes. In October, church leaders from Ukraine visited Oslo and shared fellowship and

solidarity with the Norwegian Christian Council and joined ecumenical peace prayers in the Cathedral. Further afield, Pope Leo and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew stood together with other Christian leaders at Nicaea (present day Iznik, Turkey) in November to commemorate the 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea and pledged themselves to work for the visible unity of the Church. For the Anglican Communion, the Secretary General Bishop Anthony Poggo participated, demonstrating our global ecumenical commitment as Anglicans.

This issue of Together includes an array of articles which encourage us in hope: within the church's refugee ministry and in an integrated approach to racial justice; finding hope within flawed churches and flawed people even amidst the troubles in Northern Ireland; hope in finding that God continues to invite us back into relationship; and finding hope that even in our darkness, the light will come again.

As we journey through Lent towards Holy Week and Easter, we are pointed to "an Easter song of hope that reverberates throughout creation". For our Christian faith is grounded in hope - a living hope - through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1.3). May this hope reassure us and sustain us throughout our earthly pilgrimage and give us confidence of our eternal home in Christ.

*Revd Canon Joanna Udal, Senior Chaplain*

## Stavanger Notes

As the calendar year comes to a close and the church year began again at the end of November, we find ourselves looking back with gratitude and looking ahead with hope.

December was full of light and music. Our Nine Lessons and Carols services were real highlights, held first in Hundvåg in early December and later in Stavanger Cathedral just before Christmas. Both were wonderfully attended and full of life. In Hundvåg we enjoyed a cosy gathering afterwards with warm gløgg, good conversation, and that familiar feeling of being part of something special.



*Festive celebrations in Stavanger*

The service in Stavanger Cathedral was particularly memorable, with nearly 500 people filling the space. Two of our own members sang in the choir, and many others were busy reading lessons, welcoming guests, and quietly making everything run smoothly behind the scenes. Thanks to the generosity of all who attended, the collection from the service will be donated to Save the Children Norway, allowing our Christmas joy to reach far beyond our walls.

In the second week of January, a group of us attended the closing gala for the 900-year anniversary celebrations of Stavanger Cathedral, held at Madlamark kirke. It was a beautiful evening, and before the final blessing we gathered around a Christmas tree in the centre of the hall to sing together, a simple moment, but one that captured the spirit of community we cherish so deeply.

Looking ahead, our next church council meeting will focus on church growth. This comes at a time when a significant number of our members have moved away from Stavanger and even from Norway, good news for their journeys, but naturally something we feel as a community. Even so, we remain hopeful and prayerful as we seek new ways of welcoming, nurturing, and growing together.

Our regular services continue as planned. We are thankful that there have been no deaths, though a few among us have faced periods of hospitalisation. There have been no baptisms this season, which gives us pause, yet also invites us to reflect on how we can reach new families and deepen our witness.

We are especially grateful to Jane, our safeguarding officer, for organising another successful Safeguarding Sunday, and to Rev Annie for leading a joyful Christingle service.

Through every season; change, challenge, celebration, God's faithfulness remains. We step into the new year with open hearts, trusting that fresh life and new beginnings are already on the way.

*Revd Martin Chirume, Assistant Chaplain,  
Stavanger*

## Bergen Notes

Life in Bergen has been full, busy, and blessed this year. Our worship continues faithfully, sometimes as joint services with Revd Sheba from the Church of Norway and our own Iris. These shared moments have been a joy, even though poor Per (Iris's husband) is facing the possibility that his football team might be relegated this season, we are keeping him in our prayers!

We also had many happy occasions to celebrate. Birthdays were marked for Barbara, Kristin, Molly, Myla, and Carl, giving us plenty of reasons to gather, blow out candles, share good food, and enjoy each other's company. Fellowship around the table remains one of our greatest gifts. One wonderful "problem" we encountered this year was too many people in church, at one service our attendance reached about 80, while we only own 54 hymn books! Plans are already underway to make sure we have enough hymnals for everyone in the future.

The highlight of the year was once again the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, which was beautifully attended. After the service we held a raffle, and we are delighted that the proceeds were sent to St Luke's, Muni in Uganda, where they are building a new church. It was heartening to know that our celebration here is helping to build God's work elsewhere.



*Rosemary*

This year also brought moments of sadness. In early January 2026 we said goodbye to Rosemary, aged 93, one of our most cherished members. May her soul rest in peace. Her daughter, Ana Lisa, joined us in church to honour her mother's life. In August 2025, Juirii, Myla's husband, also passed away, and we continue to hold Myla and her family in prayer. We also experienced change. Joshua returned to America at the end of his contract in Bergen. He was more than a visitor, he became family, and we miss him greatly. We were happy to welcome Innocent, Norah's husband, who joined us and is pictured with Paddy.



*Norah, her husband Innocent, and Paddy*

In September, Barbara, Myla, and Molly represented us at the Nordic Conference for Refugee Ministry, whose theme was "Building Kingdom

Bridges: from Hospitality to Fellowship." That theme captures our hope as we look ahead: to keep building bridges, growing in love, and walking together into the future God is preparing for us.

*Revd Martin Chirume, Assistant Chaplain,  
Bergen*

## Trondheim Notes

In Trondheim we can look back over the winter season and feel blessed. In November we had our Remembrance service at Stavne graveyards, the largest Commonwealth war grave plot in Norway. It was lovely that the grand-daughter of one of the deceased pilots mentioned in my short talk was present, unbeknown to me until afterwards!

Our traditional Christmas bake sale went well, as did the Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols and nativity procession in the Cathedral, with a large group attending refreshments afterwards. It was very warming that things went so well. A very big thank you to all who helped in any way and for our Lutheran brothers and sisters making all this possible. The climax of the Christmas season was a festive family service on Christmas day in Vår Frue church, well attended in spite of starting earlier at 10am! We had parents and musicians playing, contributing to a very joyous occasion. We congratulate one of our congregation, Sigmund Tvette Vik who has been awarded the Liv Ullman prize for his work with Trondheim Chamber music festival. He was one of the founders 30 years ago.



*Part of the Christmas celebrations in Trondheim*



Thank you to all our PTO clergy and Senior Chaplain Joanna for their care of the Trondheim congregation. In October 2025 we marked 50 years of regular Anglican services in Trondheim. We extend a big thank you to the Nidaros Cathedral staff for making this possible. It all started with a past Dean of the Cathedral making contact with English speaking parents, one of them being Margot Tønset, who was then the head of Birrale international school.

The 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity opened with two services in the Cathedral including an Anglican service led by our Senior Chaplain followed by ecumenical church coffee. The Trondheim ecumenical Christian committee also invite us to join in the Woman's World Day of Prayer on 6th March and the Good Friday/lang fredag ecumenical prayer walk through the town, starting at Vår Frue 13.00. We continue our pattern of two evening services a month at 6pm, the first Sunday of the month in the Chapter house and the 3rd Sunday of the month in the Cathedral. Easter day will be at 11 in the morning in Vår Frue Church and Pentecost at Fjellseter chapel 11.15: see the calendar in the centre pages. Messy church continues once a month for families in Waisenhuset with 6 possible families attending, children with their parents. This is very encouraging and we are happy to have a new family that has just joined us from the US. Welcome. During Lent we hope to again hold a Lent study group - please let Susan know if you are interested.

*Lay reader Susan Boyd, Trondheim*

## Oslo Notes



*Christmas carols complete with Santa hats!*



*The licensing of Assistant Chaplain Revd Annie Bolger, and Lay Reader Ekene Agbalakwe, 23rd November*

In ancient Egypt, Pharaoh could anticipate the coming harvest by observing the water level on the Nile - they even invented a "nilometer" in Aswan, Upper Egypt, to measure the year's water level and so calculate the anticipated harvest. We may lack such a scientific indicator, but the Autumn and early Winter have yielded a promising harvest for St Edmund's: not only with a fine harvest festival celebration with auction of harvest produce in support of the Shearly Cripps Children's home in Zimbabwe, but also with the Licensing of both Revd Annie Bolger as Assistant Chaplain and Ekene Agbalakwe as Lay Reader by Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel at St Edmund's on Sunday 23rd November. Their new ministry among us offers much hope and we pray for them and for fruitfulness in their ministry.

The St Edmund's bazaar was also a festive and hope-filled occasion with the produce stall and cafe achieving record receipts. Everyone attending seemed to enjoy a sociable day-out. The St Edmund's Cryptic quiz also proved popular again with competition entering from far and wide. Much gratitude to everyone involved in this whole -community effort.

The passing of Ron Lane, formerly Church Warden and Treasurer for St Edmund's, in September, leaves much loss yet reminds us of our resurrection hope in Christ. We hold much gratitude for

Ron's contribution to the life of St Edmund's and the Chaplaincy and keep Ellen and all the family in our prayers. Our hope in Christ also encourages us in our annual Service of Remembrance where we recall the sacrifice of so many who gave their lives in time of war. On this occasion we were blessed by the participation of 5 women ambassadors including the British and South African Ambassadors who both read.



*South Sudanese Maban Christmas celebrations in Drammen*

Our ecumenical relationships continue to hold a valued place, with our clergy being invited to take part in the first visit of the Eritrean Orthodox Patriarch to Oslo and in the Centenary celebrations of our close friends and neighbours at the Swedish Marghareta Church at which the Bishop of Visby, Erik Eckerdal presided. Our fellowship within the Porvoo Communion is a profound source of hope with the opportunities for shared mission which we enjoy. Our friendship with Bragernes Church in Drammen is another a fine example - we are evergrateful to be able to meet there for the Drammen Ladies' Fellowship as well as holding a special Christmas service on 26th December for the South Sudanese Maban community where we celebrated not only Holy Communion but also 11 baptisms.

The joy and hope of Christ's coming have also been celebrated in a well-supported carol service in Drammen and in a full house for both the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and the Carols by Candlelight at St Edmund's. We were thankful when those regretfully turned away from the latter returned for some rousing carol singing in the street on Christmas Eve. Special thanks to our choir and John for their wonderful carols and to

Pamela for arranging a rich and varied set of Christmas readings, not to mention all those who provided and served the wonderful refreshments.

We have started 2026 in the hope found in the light of Christ being made known to the nations as we celebrate the Epiphany leading up to Candlemas, and as we have celebrated the joyful baptism of Linn. May that same hope keep us united in faith and love as we journey onwards.

*Revd Canon Joanna Udal, Senior Chaplain, Oslo*

## A Reflection on the Diocese in Europe's Racial Justice Conference

*The conference titled: "GOD'S KALEIDOSCOPE 3: Hope-Makers - From Hostility to Hospitality. An International and Ecumenical Conference on Embracing Diversity, Re-examining Democracy, Challenging Hostility"*



*Felix at the conference*

I was pleased to attend the International and Ecumenical Conference on Racial Justice held in Berlin, Germany from December 4 – 7, 2025 on behalf of the Chaplaincy in Norway. The conference offered a profound reminder that we are all made in God's own image. Powerful speakers, the clergy, thought-provoking questions and the voice of the young people echoed one thing: that is, human dignity needs to be safeguarded. While acknowledging the goodness of the democratic system of governance, Bishop Bedford-Strohm emphasized the serious adoption of the African concept of Ubuntu – "I am because we are" – as an ethos for co-existence. Drawing from the Scriptures, the co-existence of people from different

			8      Oslo		Bergen	
FEBRUARY						
Sun	01	Epiphany 4 Candlemas	11:00	All Age Service Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Sun	08	2nd before Lent	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	15	Sunday next before Lent	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Weds	18	Ash Wednesday	19:00	Sung Eucharist		Service of the Word
Sun	26	Lent 1	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
MARCH						
Sun	01	Lent 2	11:00	All Age Service Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	08	Lent 3	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	15	Lent 4, Mothering Sunday	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Sun	22	Lent 5	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	29	Palm Sunday	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
APRIL						
Thurs	02	Maundy Thursday	19:00	Sung Eucharist		
Fri	03	Good Friday	11:00	Joint Service with ALC	11:00	Tenebrae Service
Sun	05	Easter	11:00	All Age Service Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	12	2nd after Easter	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Sun	19	3rd after Easter	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	26	4th after Easter	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
MAY						
Sun	03	5th after Easter	11:00	All Age Service Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	10	6th after Easter	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Thurs	14	Ascension Day	19:00	Sung Eucharist		TBC
Sun	17	7th after Easter	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion
Sun	24	Pentecost	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Service of the Word
Sun	31	Trinity Sunday	11:00	Sung Eucharist	11:00	Holy Communion



Readings	Stavanger		9	Trondheim	
FEBRUARY					
Malachi 3.1-5 Luke 2.22-40	10:30	Holy Communion	18:00	HC Chapter House	
Romans 8.18-25 Matthew 6.25-end	10:30	Holy Communion	11:00	Messy Church Waisenhuset	
2 Peter 1.16-end Matthew 17.1-9	10:30	Holy Communion	18:00	HC Cathedral	
Isaiah 58.1-12 Matthew 6.1-6,16-21	18:00	Evening Prayer		No Service	
Genesis 2.15-17,3.1-7 Matthew 4.1-11	10:30	Holy Communion		No Service	
MARCH					
Genesis 12.1-4a John 3.1-17	10:30	Family Service	18:00	HC Chapter House	
Romans 5.1-11 John 4.5-42	10:30	Holy Communion	11:00	Messy Church Waisenhuset	
2 Corinthians 1.3-7 John 19.25b-27	10:30	Holy Communion	18:00	HC Cathedral	
Romans 8.6-11 John 11.1-45	10:30	Family Service		No Service	
Isaiah 50.4-9a Matthew 27.11-54	10:30	Service of the Word	18:00	EP Chapter House	
APRIL					
1 Corinthians 11.23-26 John 13.1-17,31b-35	10:30	Holy Communion		No Service	
TBC	10:30	Service of the Word	13:00	Walk from Vår Frue	
Acts 10.34-43 John 20.1-18	10:30	Family Communion	18:00	Family HC Vår Frue	
Acts 2.14a-22-32 John 20.19-end	10:30	Family Service	11:00	Messy Church Waisenhuset	
Acts 2.14a,36-41 Luke 24.13-35	10:30	Holy Communion	18:00	Holy Communion Cathedral	
Acts 2.42-end John 10.1-10	10:30	Family Service		No service	
MAY					
Acts 7.55-end John 14.1-14	10:30	Family Communion	18:00	HC Chapter House	
Acts 17.22-31 John 14.15-21	10:30	Holy Communion	11:00	Messy Church Waisenhuset	
Acts 1.1-11 Luke 24.44-end		TBC		No service	
Acts 1.6-14 John 17.1-11	10:30	Family Communion		No service	
Acts 2.1-21 John 20.19-23	10:30	Holy Communion	11:15	Pentecost Fjellseter	
Isaiah 40.12-17,27-end Matthew 28.16-end	10:30	Family Communion		No service	

cultural backgrounds was highlighted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and serves as evidence for the possibility of the same in this modern world.

At the conference, we were reminded to be hope-makers. As hope-makers, idealism is insufficient. Anger towards various injustices is not enough as anger without action can only burn us out. We are called to have a discerning eye, create a space for the marginalized, and advance protective hospitality. A constant reminder that was echoed at the conference and which I believe should stick with all of humanity is that racism is a manufactured social anxiety. It was God's plan for us to look different. In her powerful delivery, The Rt. Rev'd Dr Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover, cautioned that ill-treating each other assumes that God was not in his right mind when making us with such diversity. She advocated for acceptance and respect, not just tolerance. Understanding that God has given us enough would shift our focus from what we are taking from each other to what each one is bringing.

We were further urged to speak the truth against injustices. However, the big question is, "Why speak this truth?" Prof. Dr Sathianathan Clarke put out a deep and uncomfortable truth that more often, people speak the truth to get into places of power. We are reminded that whenever we are doing something good, expect nothing in return (Luke 6:35). We are all challenged to speak the truth to power, not to seek power. Those feeling safe should realize that if others are not safe, no one is safe. It is the duty of not just the Diocese in Europe but all believers to work together in the fight against racial injustices. Lastly, the youth attending the conference were given a particular opportunity to speak. The youth challenged the church to include young people at the church's decision-making tables. There was lament for that inadequacy, for the way that young people and their vital insights can be excluded.

In conclusion, the Racial Justice Conference 2025 called for an integrated approach. As we fight for racial justice, let us consider other injustices like economic, ecological and other forms of injustice that we can think of. All forms of suffering

are woven together, like threads in a fabric. When we work together to promote the flourishing of all people, and actively stand against discriminations and injustices of any form, we create a future of hope that can be shared with all.

*Felix Masina, Stavanger*

## Hope in Holy Week

Hope is profound and necessary, but it is not easy. When I think of the challenge of hope, I am reminded of the disciples' experience of Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Jesus inspired the downtrodden and painted a remarkable picture of humanity's salvation. And yet, on Good Friday, the one who lived the most elevated life was sentenced to the most shameful death. Then came Holy Saturday. For Jesus' followers, Holy Saturday was a day of silence. Countless questions must have swirled in their minds: How could God let this happen? What should we do now? We left everything to follow Jesus: what was the point of it all? On that day, these questions were met with silence.

But despite the hopelessness, despite the silence, Mark's Gospel tells us that three women continued to visit Jesus' body and tend to it. In their grief and despair, they remained faithful to Jesus even after his death, and even though everything seemed to have been lost. And then, on Easter Sunday, silence was broken in the most unexpected way. The women approached an empty tomb, discovering that death and despair do not have the final say.

Our familiarity with this story can downplay how much of a twist the resurrection is. No one saw it coming. By all accounts, all hope was lost. And yet, the most tragic event was followed by the most joyous outcome. The silence of death was overwhelmed by the song of resurrected life, and the world would never be the same. No wonder the disciples couldn't keep the news to themselves.

When we look at much of the news, or experience tragedies in our lives, we experience our own

Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Indeed, some may think that despair is the only rational option in a dark world. But Easter Sunday demonstrates that God's power is not limited by our weakness. This is the world that Christ came to save, and it is in this world that he did the impossible: conquered death itself. When we take this Easter message to heart, we realise that hope is the only appropriate response. In the bleakest of circumstances, God demonstrated that creation will be renewed in ways we cannot foresee. The light of Christ cannot help but shine, and its fire of hope is contagious. The Spirit of hope draws us together to testify to God's goodness, and sends us out as agents of healing.

It is true that hope is difficult to maintain, especially when circumstances look bleak. But here we can borrow the logic of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: If we only have hope when all is well, what reward is there in that? The empty tomb continues to shock and invigorate us, reminding us that God brings life out of death and impossibility. That is what God does, who God is. So when darkness and despair clamour for our allegiance, we choose to listen again to the Easter song of hope that reverberates throughout creation, and add our voice to its divine chorus.

*Rev'd Dr Jacob Quick, Oslo*

## Lay Reader Ekene's journey



I came to Norway in 2009 for my master's at the University of Stavanger. I was introduced to the Stavanger Anglican congregation by Rumi, who

had arrived in Norway few weeks before me. As an international student from Nigeria, the congregation became my second family, and I still cherish those memories deeply. After my studies I got a job and moved to Oslo in 2011 where I also started attending St Edmunds. I moved to Ågotnes in 2012, on a 10-month work assignment. I was part of the Bergen Anglican congregation during that time and moved back to Oslo in 2013. Being part of these three congregations has been a true blessing, and I still hope for a Trondheim opportunity to complete the circle.

My lengthy journey towards being admitted and licensed as a Reader began in 2018. Darren McCallig, who was then the Senior Chaplain, asked me if I would consider exploring vocation to reader ministry. Prior to reading the handbook, I had not realized that the academic study would entail 120 University credits!

During the discernment process, I continually prayed for guidance and clarity. With the support and approval of the chaplain and the chaplaincy council, I was nominated as a candidate. I went through the application process and was accepted into Reader Training in May 2019. The academic study was provided by St John's College Nottingham and after an eighteen-month period which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, the provider was changed to Queens Foundation Birmingham where I had to start again from scratch. One year later, in 2022, it was once again changed, this time to ERMC.

Despite the initial frustration caused by these changes, I kept trusting God who sees the bigger picture and promises to lead us toward a hopeful future. ERMC's training method was well-structured, offering valuable weekly group classes with fellow readers in training and ordinands. It was a reminder of Paul's word in Romans 8:28, 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him'.

During this time, the intense workload at my job, including frequent overtime, and family obligations created a major challenge in keeping pace with my assignments at ERMC. It was also challenging for my wife Chiamaka who was studying

full-time and working weekends at the time. Chinua, Kamsi and Tobenna (poor kids!) often felt the brunt of our busy schedules. Thank you to my family for the support and understanding. There were times I was on the brink of mental breakdown, struggling with severe burnout and sleeplessness. During this time, I learned to hope against hope, like Abraham in Romans 4:18, and to surrender control to God. God has been faithful through it all as I completed my study in the summer of 2024.

Whatever challenges we may face, we should remember that God's grace is always available and sufficient and his power made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). We must learn to trust in this grace, to choose reliance on God over self-reliance and surrender control to him. Through prayer and studying the Bible we can find strength to trust God. We can also find courage to trust through the prayers of others and can be inspired by the hope found in the shared testimonies of those who have faced similar challenges. Through my Reader training period, some of you were always asking how I was coping with everything. Thank you for your encouragement and prayers. Let us keep praying and looking after each other. By doing so we may be helping someone to believe again and to trust in God's grace.

*Lay Reader Ekene Agbalakwe, Oslo*

## A book about hope: "In the Shelter: finding a home in the world" by Pádraig Ó Tuama

\*I listened to this book as an audio recording. It was originally published by Hodder & Stoughton, 1st June 2015.

As I write this book review, we are approaching the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We set aside a week to pray for that great burden of Christ's, for which he continually prays: "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." John 17:21

In mid-January, Jacob and I were fortunate enough to visit friends in Northern Ireland and attend the christening of their son, our godson. It was a baptism for the history books: shared by both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic archbishops of Armagh, who for reasons of recent history have not been able to participate in sacraments together. To our knowledge, this was a first. Ireland's long story of violence perpetrated between Christians is a case of genuine ecumenical challenge. Jesus seems to say that the world would know the validity of his life, message, and mission based on the unity of his followers. What does it mean when Christians turn against each other, even murderously? What does the hope of the Gospel have to say to our darkest and cruelest impulses?

Seeing the leaders of these two churches (both leading communities still living with the scars and trauma of Christian conflict) stand together with our godson and proclaim the hope of the Gospel over him, I remembered some words from Pádraig Ó Tuama that I will share below. I read Ó Tuama's book *In the Shelter* in 2025 and it made a deep impression. Ó Tuama has made the hope of unity his life's work. Born in County Cork, Ireland, his Roman Catholic family relocated to Belfast, Northern Ireland during the Troubles. His formative experiences of intra-Christian violence would later lead to his work in directing the Corrymeela Community.

*In the Shelter* is a spiritual autobiography. In these pages, Ó Tuama reflects on what it is to search for God in the midst of despair, and to know deep within that God is "beyond" the fractures and failures of religious communities. He shows that sanctuaries of hope can be discovered within flawed churches and flawed people. "Let us pick up the stones over which we stumble, friends," he writes, "and build altars." This was the image in my mind at the baptism. Beneath the rubble of a religious conflict that shaped his life and faith, for better and for worse, Ó Tuama committed himself to peace and reconciliation work. He remains convinced that the Gospel offers healing to our wounds, even the wounds we inflict on one another.

“The Christian story of incarnation in the body of a boy — a boy whose ancestors were both famous and infamous — is one that can spur us towards living with the courage that is indigenous to us. To be human is to be in the image of something good, and image comes from imagination. To be human is to be in the imagination of God, and the imagination is the source of integrity as well as cracks. To be born is to be born into a story of possibility, a story of failure, a story of imagination and the failure of imagination. To be born is to be born with the possibility of courage. Hello to courage.” — Pádraig Ó Tuama, *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World*

One day, I hope to share these words with my godson. I will tell him that these words say something about what it means to be a baptised person. These words have something to do with what the Gospel says to our darkest and cruelest impulses: to be born in the waters of baptism is to be born with the possibility of courage. Herein lies hope.

*Revd Annie Bolger, Oslo*

## Nordic Conference for Refugee Ministry

The Bergen congregation received an invitation from our friends at KIA (Kristent Interkulturelt Arbeid) to participate in this conference, held in Bergen in September 2025 at the Salvation Army premises. The conference was focussed on “Building Kingdom Bridges; from Hospitality to Fellowship”, providing ‘an opportunity to network with fellow workers that share a passion to reach out in love and justice those who escape violence and persecution.’

The conference was organized by folks within the Church of Norway, Norges Kristne Råd, KIA and priests and agency workers in Denmark, Finland and Iceland. The program was varied; from learning about KIA’s consistent work in Bergen for and with refugees from many countries, Alver commune’s welcome of Ukrainian refugees in their region and the “welcome churches” network cur-

rently only in the UK, whose motto is “No refugee should be alone.” There were two very interesting presentations from the founder of the law firm Skandinaviska Människorättsadvokaterna AB in Sweden, whose team passionately fights the deportation of Christians back to their homeland where they are likely to be persecuted. This is often at reduced fees, and sometimes at the highest level of the UN courts. Notably, no law firm in Norway currently offers this type of service, but some Norwegian conference participants know of cases where this would be helpful!

In the end there were three from the Bergen Anglican community who participated in this conference: Molly, the Bergen Safeguarding Officer (originally from Uganda), Myla (a refugee from Ukraine who arrived in Bergen in March 2022) and me (originally from Canada). We greatly appreciate the sponsorship of the Bergen congregation; it was engaging and enriching to hear of the various initiatives aimed at helping refugees, and to network with others over meals of Norwegian and Ghanaian food at the Salvation Army premises, and Ukrainian food and Eritrean coffee at KIA’s premises. We shared our own experience wherein Myla reads in Ukrainian each Sunday; the first lesson and the intercessory prayers, which she lovingly translates from the English version which are read immediately after. Lemma Desta of NKR emphasized two approaches for helping people in general; help them be self-sufficient, and allow them to give back. We in Bergen feel blessed that the Ukrainian community in our midst can and does give back. There is soon to be a Zoom meeting within Norway among participants, with an aim to work together such that “no refugee should be alone.” Stay tuned for further developments in the next edition of Together.



*Left to right: Myla, Barbara, and Molly  
Barbara McIntosh, Bergen*



## “Where Are You?” — Finding Hope When Life Feels Broken

Genesis 3:9

A preacher once walked into a small barbershop for a haircut and a friendly chat. As they talked about life, the preacher gently invited the barber to come to church on Sunday.

The barber laughed and said, “Why should I come? Look around. There is no God. People are struggling. No food. No help. No hope. If God were real, things wouldn’t be like this.”

The preacher smiled and said, “God is real. Come and see for yourself.”

But the barber shook his head. “No, I can’t. There is no God.” They finished the haircut, and the preacher stepped outside. After a few minutes, he came back — this time with a man whose hair was extremely long, tangled, and dirty, as if he hadn’t seen a comb in years.

The preacher pointed to him and said, “Look at this man. Barbers don’t exist.”

The barber was shocked. “What are you saying? Of course barbers exist! I am one of them!”

The preacher replied, “If barbers exist, why does this man look like this?”

The barber thought for a moment and then said, “That’s not my fault. He never came to me. If he had, his hair would be clean and neat.”

The preacher gently nodded. “Exactly. God is there. Hope is there. Help is there. But many people never come to Him.”

This story connects beautifully with God’s first question to humanity in Genesis 3:9: “Where are you?” God wasn’t asking because He didn’t know where Adam was hiding. He was reaching out. He was inviting him back into relationship, back into truth, back into hope. Even today, when life feels heavy, when the world looks broken, and when hope seems far away, God is still asking each of us: Where are you? Not because He wants to punish us — but because He wants to restore us. The good news is this: hope is not gone. God is not absent. The door is open. We only have to come.

*Revd Martin Chirume, Bergen and Stavanger*

## Finding hope in the garden

When I was growing up, the local methodist church would organise crafts and activities for children on Good Friday. My favourite craft was making Easter gardens, finding different flowers, small stones, and moss to decorate the empty tomb. It wasn’t maybe the most exciting activity, but it was peaceful.

Gardens are often a source of hope for many of us. There is the initial work of putting seeds or plants in the ground, the often frustration with lack of growth, and the eventual satisfaction in seeing the plants come up through the earth, hopefully! But a lot rests on hope, and the belief that what we bury in the ground, will grow and bring us joy when it does.

I didn’t start gardening until my early 20s, during a more challenging and difficult period in my life. My mum, who is much wiser than me, may have forced me out into the garden for an initial 15 minutes a day, getting me to plant potatoes. I was not enthusiastic. However, day by day, seeing the different vegetables we planted grow, I understood why she had done it. When I felt like I had lost hope, that vegetable patch felt like a life line. I am to this day grateful for that period, and of course, to my mum for not giving up on me!

God’s light is that lifeline of hope that I felt growing in the garden. Sometimes, as Martin wrote, when hope seems far away, it can feel as though that light is buried, or hidden from us. However, God’s light is not only something that shines through praise and joy. Sometimes, that light is growing, waiting for the right moment to show us the way back to hope, and that the darkness we may be experiencing is temporary. I hope that we can carry the light with us into the coming season, and through the uncertainty of the world today.

*Dr Beth Winther-Noble, Oslo*



## Upcoming events



### Chaplaincy

**14th April** Chaplaincy AGM

**10th May** Confirmation (tbc)

**24th May** Opening of Summer Chaplaincy in Balestrand

**3rd – 6th September** Deanery Synod

### Oslo

**7th February** 19:00 “Lux Aeterna - a timeless exploration of light in choral music” concert by the Choral scholars from St Martin-in-the-fields.

**6th March** World Prayer Day, (with ALC)

**4th April** Easter Vigil 20:00 at St Edmund's

**19th April** Oslo congregation AGM

### Trondheim

**6th March** World Prayer Day

**3rd April** Good Friday ecumenical prayer walk through Trondheim, starting at Vår Frue Kirke at 13:00

**24th May** Pentecost Celebration at Fjellseter chapel at 11:15



*Friendship and fellowship in Bergen*

## From the registers

### HOLY BAPTISMS



#### *St Edmund's, Oslo*

Linn Miriam Ha Sandvær,  
4th January 2026

#### *Bragermes Church, Drammen, 26th December 2025*

Bota Moki Teti

Benson Benjamin David

Sandra Benjamin David

Isabella Benjamin David

Chris James Musa

Sunday James Musa

Poya James Musa

Sabit Gabriel

Thankyou Gabriel

Hanna Gabriel

Jal Gabriel

### DEATHS

Ronald Eric Lane, Oslo

Richard John Armstrong, Tromsø

Rosemary Lund, Bergen

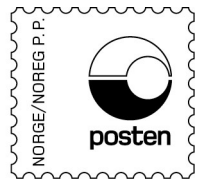


## Choom, Children's Zoom

THE ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY IN NORWAY, SUSAN, IRIS & NORAH INVITE ALL CHILDREN TO

ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 9.40–10.15

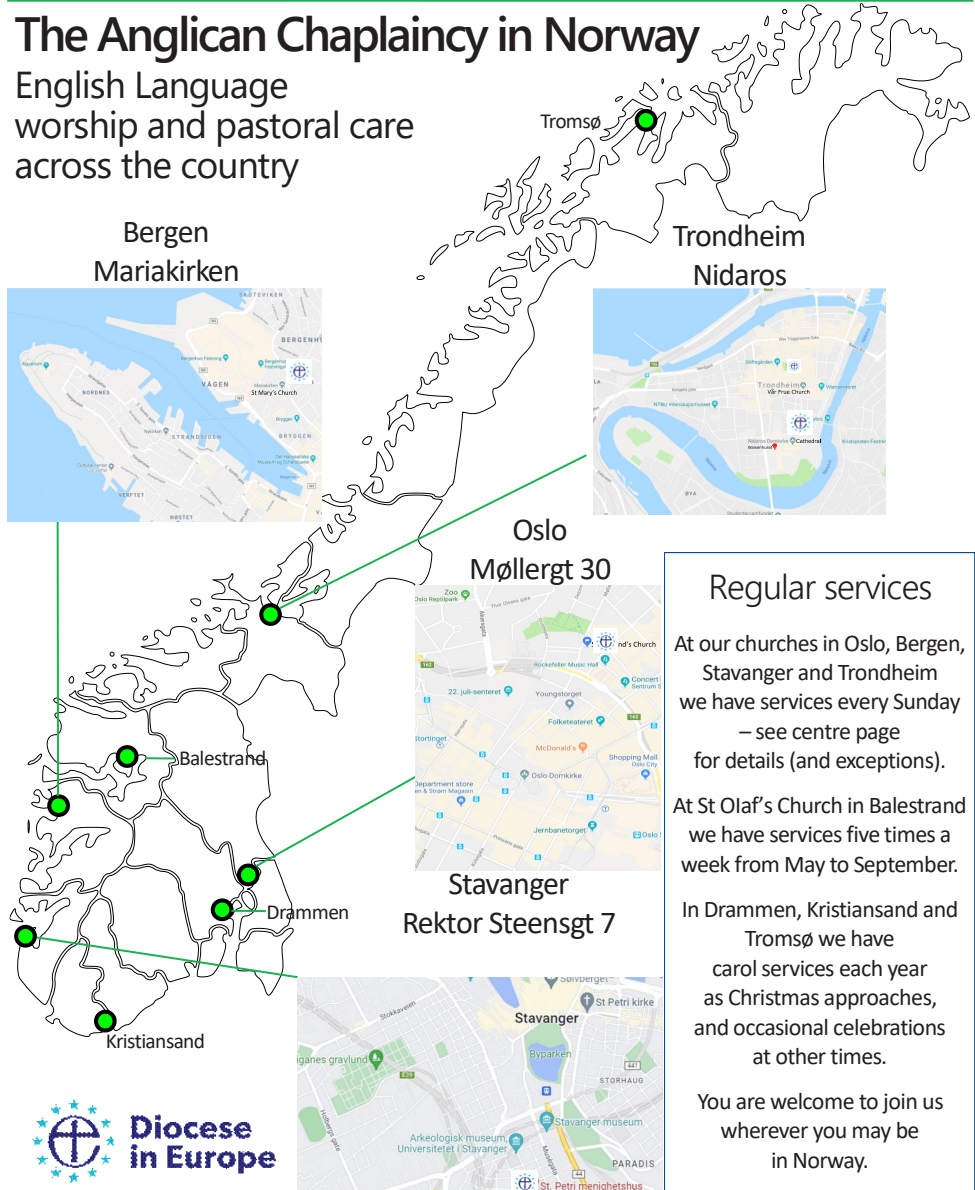




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# The Anglican Chaplaincy in Norway

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.