



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Minutes - Nordic & Baltic Area Group Meeting 2018 in Copenhagen

Friday, October 5, 16:00 at Jerusalemkirken.

Saturday, October 6, 09:00 – 15:30 at Betaniahjemmet.

Chair: Christian Alsted, Bishop.

Secretary: Ole Birch, clergy (DK)

Members present: Karen Ærenlund Brogaard, lay (DK). Hilde Marie Movafagh, Clergy (N). Ingull Greifslie, clergy (N). Remigijus Matulaitis, clergy, (LIT) Robert Tserenkov, clergy (EST) Leif Göte Björklund, clergy (FIN) (S) Jori Brander, Clergy (FIN) (F) Per Endre Bjørnevik, lay, (N) Edgars Sneiders, clergy, (LV) Johanna Lundereng, lay, (N).

Members absent: Meeli Tankler, lay (EST)

Item	Agenda
1	Opening and approval of the agenda: The Agenda was approved.
2	Minutes from last meeting: March, 2018 No comments or proposed changes were made inside the first three weeks after the minutes of the march 9 th and 10 th 2018 meeting was send out, so the minutes are approved.
3	Work in subcommittees: a. Report – <u>Continued Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wesley Forum• Applications to Nordic Theological Means• Guidelines for applications b. Report – <u>Development of the connection in the Episcopal Area:</u> Please see separate agenda c. Report – <u>International and Ecumenical Representation:</u> Reports from representatives in agencies and councils. 18:30 Dinner at Café Leo Back at the church, Christian Alsted lead us in a communion service. The evening ended with coffee & tea at Jerusalem Church.



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4	<p data-bbox="331 454 678 483">Saturday at Betaniahjemmet</p> <p data-bbox="331 521 611 551">9:00 Morning Devotion</p> <p data-bbox="331 589 1358 656">Ingull Greifslie read from Mark. 10 and shared her reflections on the cost of following Jesus. Then she led us in prayer.</p> <p data-bbox="331 689 930 719">Reports & Action Items from the Subcommittees</p> <p data-bbox="331 734 730 763">a. Report – <u>Continued Education</u></p> <p data-bbox="331 770 678 799">Chair: Hilde Marie Movafagh</p> <p data-bbox="331 806 1281 835">Members: Karen Ærenlund Brohus, Robert Tserenkov and Remigijus Matulaitis.</p> <p data-bbox="331 842 703 871">Meeli Tankler was not present.</p> <p data-bbox="331 909 504 938">Wesley-forum</p> <p data-bbox="331 945 1409 1122">We move to move the content to the website/facebookpage of the Nordic and Baltic area and close down the site due to rise of costs. This needs to be closed down before March. We had a concern on who will moderate the facebook-site if discussions take place there. Hilde Marie have a talk with Andreas Kjernald to finish the agreement on Wesley-forum, and we will see how life on facebook proceeds.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1160 1386 1301">New proposal in the plenary: To ask Jørgen Thaarup and Hilde Marie Movafagh to determine what part of the content needs to be saved. The n the content will be moved either umc-ne.org or to the website of the Theological Seminary in Oslo. Hilde Marie Movafagh will work on this. This proposal was approved.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1339 751 1368">Nordic Perspectives on Methodism</p> <p data-bbox="331 1375 965 1404">Hilde Marie presented the history and plans of NPM.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1411 1422 1659">Christina Preisler is co-editor with Hilde Marie. Book tree will be on ministry with children and young people, book four will be on pastoral care and counselling. Pastors/deacons are the main target group and the articles should be reflective in character, not focusing on how-to. Suggestion from the committee to include a few petit-stories in book three. Mainly electronic, but print for instance 150 copies. Book three could be printed in Estonia as that is cheaper and the release will be at SoCD there in 2019. The committee would like to be informed on e-mail along the way.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1697 443 1727">Seminars</p> <p data-bbox="331 1733 1386 1874">Motion: We move to postpone the planned theological seminar for clergy from January 2019 to January 2020. We already have Michael Lodahl as a main speaker, and we hope that the seminar can happen in Riga. This seminar will be on weekdays. Hilde Marie and Meeli continue to work on this.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1881 678 1910">The proposal was approved.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1948 1142 1977">Seminars for pastors and lay preachers 2021 focusing on preaching.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1984 1409 2047">The seminar should include both content of preaching and delivery – creativity, structure, style, the craft or art of preaching. We want to invite some big names, and have several</p>



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	<p>sermons that are good examples during the event, maybe consider group-work for participants to actually train. We hope the seminar can take place in Tallinn. Karen Brogaard, Remigijus Matulaitis, and Robert Tserenkov continue to work on this.</p> <p>Fund – guidelines We affirm the suggested guidelines from Kirsten Hastrup. See appendix.</p> <p>b. Report – <u>Development of the connection in the Episcopal Area:</u> Chair: Johanna Lundereng. Members: Jori Brander, Ingull Greifslie We looked at the notes from the past 2 meetings that Taavi Hollman led as Johanna Lundereng was unable to attend. Work on the Facebook page and home page were focus areas then. Today we focus on the survey to make connections during the summer months of 2019. We went through the test survey that Johanna had prepared and made some suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We will add a slide after number 1 that asks what position the respondent has; clergy, layperson, youth leader etc.2. Slide 3 will list all types of summer activities that we are aware of including generational, children, youth, teenager, scouts. 5 categories. Here we will have a short description of what we mean when we say “camp”.3. If the respondent has no camps they will be directed to “Thank you for your time”.4. If the respondent says yes to a question they will be directed to a new slide that asks for contact information, dates for event etc.5. The slide that has a scaling question must be revised so that category 1 and 5 are not the same. In addition, we will specify that the question concerns possibilities to stay overnight in a church building.6. We will delete the last slide concerning friendship congregations as we see this as a theme for a separate survey.7. A test survey was sent to all who were present at the meeting. We will gladly listen to and incorporate input from the others. <p>Timeline for our work: Johanna will edit the survey as described above and send “dummy” questionnaires to Ingull and Jori. New input will be incorporated. We will ask Kirsten Hastrup for help to get e-mails to appropriate respondents. (pastors, lay people, church board leaders. All who are obligated to answer emails sent from the bishop’s office. GDPR consistent.) We hope to send the survey in December/January. It is to be sent from the bishop’s office.</p> <p>Other moments: Couch surfing for Methodists similar to the initiative from Germany? Air BNB for Methodists. Surveys that connect other groups: youth, United Methodist women, musicians. Etc. Later on, we can consider connecting events in the Northern part of Norway and Finland. Etc. We feel that we were able to work effectively in a smaller group (3 people). English as the working language also functioned well. We felt that we narrowed the focus to make the survey more effective and informational.</p>



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	<p>c. Report – <u>International and Ecumenical Representation:</u> Chair: Ole Birch Members: Per-Endre Bjørnevik, Leif-Göte Bjørklund, Edgars Sneiders. Reports from representatives in international and ecumenical bodies.</p> <p>3c1 General Commission on the Status and role of women (GCSRW) Berit Westad. We consider the issues of sexual harassment and misconduct and the dignity of women in ministry and leadership very important for our church. The group proposes that these issues are raised at the next CC with the purpose of raising the awareness of the issue among the leadership of all the Annual Conferences. We will ask Berit Westad and others with insight (Methodist Women in Norway?) to work with us on that. We ask the office to make a statement, and a “easy to use” reporting system, on harassment and discrimination on our website. The proposal was adopted. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c2 UMC Communication (UMCOM) Karl Anders Ellingsen. Thanks to Karl Anders Ellingsen for spreading Norwegian stories internationally. Would he consider spreading stories from other parts of the CC also? Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c3 European Commission on Mission (ECOM) Øyvind Aske. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c4 General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) Øyvind Aske. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c5 General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) Kari Hay. We are unsure what Kari is asking and what the CC can do. SOCD 2019 will have some program on working with refugees/migrants. Most of the AC are involved in this kind of work. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c6 Africa University Jørgen Thaarup. We draw the attention to the critical situation of the theological department of Africa University. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c7 Commission on Central Conference Education Fund, Thomas Risager. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c8 General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) Per-Endre Bjørnevik. We underline the need for all bodies of the Central Conference to adhere to the GDPR asap. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c9 The Connectional Table (CT) Ole Birch. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c10 Standing Committee on Central Conference matters (St.CCCM) Jørgen Thaarup. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c11 Commission on the General Conference. Audun Westad. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c12 General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. (GBHEM) Eduard Khegay. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c13 Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) Jørgen Thaarup. We express our gratitude to Jørgen Thaarup for his faithful work and reporting over the years. This is the last report from him as his term in the CPCE is ending. The next</p>



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	<p>representative of Methodism to the CPCE is from Ireland and we do not expect a report to our CC from him. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>3c14 European Methodist Council (EMC) Jørgen Thaarup. Received and added to the minutes.</p>
5	<p>Committee on Episcopacy Chair: Per-Endre Bjørnevik</p> <p>5a Office report and budget</p> <p>Kirsten Hastrup presented an oral report. The timeline of budget set by GCFA demands a budget in august. In the future, we will look at budget at our spring meeting.</p> <p>The budget for 2019 is approved by GCFA with a minor change: no increase in the offices expenses was approved.</p> <p>5b Committee on Episcopacy (Without the bishop)</p> <p>The EC prepared the themes for the conversation with the bishop</p> <p>5b Committee on Episcopacy (With the bishop)</p> <p>The CE met with the bishop and had a satisfying conversation on the prepared issues emanating from a survey conducted earlier, from the EC's own experience and from the bishops report. At the end of the conversation, it was determined that no formal conclusion was needed.</p> <p>The part of the conversation that centered on the uncertainty of the future of our connection lead to the following proposal.</p> <p>Proposal: The Area group will meet prior to the next CCC meeting in march to have conversation about the results of the Called Session of the General Conference 2019. The meeting will take place Friday the 29th of march from 9 am to 4 pm. The proposal was approved.</p>
6	<p>The Called Session of the General Conference 2019 This agenda item is postponed to the next meeting. Se above.</p>
7	<p>Central Conference 2021</p> <p>We worked our way through the final version of the guidelines for the planning of a Central Conference. The guidelines were approved. Se appendix.</p>
8	<p>Baltic Pastors' Salary and Pension Support Fund A revised budget with increased support was presented by Kirsten Hastrup. The revised budget was approved.</p> <p>Ole Birch explained that the Danish AC has approved their contribution for 2018 and 2019,</p>



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	but not for the following years.
9	<p>Orientation from the Bishop</p> <p>a. European Cabinet, meets next year in December in Germany.</p> <p>b. School of Congregational Development September 2019 in Tallinn.</p> <p>d. Staunen – We saw a video from the festival in Germany. Christian Alsted shared his impressions from a successful European event with 850 participants, approx. 30 from our area.</p>
10	<p>Representation:</p> <p>a. Report from the meeting of the Conference of European Churches in Novi Sad by Leif-Göte Bjørklund. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>b. Report on the World Methodist Council meeting in Korea by Christian Alsted. Received and added to the minutes.</p>
11	<p>World Methodist Conference 2021 in Gothenburg</p> <p>Orientation. Christian Alsted gave an orientation and encouraged us to get involved. He explained that the CCC has no financial responsibilities connected to this event. The same is true for the Annual Conferences of Denmark and Norway.</p>
12	<p>Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Youth Council (NEECCYC)</p> <p>Global Youth Convocation</p> <p>Video report from the gathering in South Africa. The report was presented. Received and added to the minutes.</p> <p>Proposal: That the NEECCYC take over the responsibility to appoint representatives to the Division for work with young people. The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Proposal: That the NEECCYC will coordinate the election of delegates to the Global Youth Convocation. The Central Conference Council want’s each Annual Conference to have the possibility to have one delegate selected by their own youth organisation. Seats that are not filled can distributed by the NEECCYC The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Received and added to the minutes.</p>
13	<p>Other Matters</p> <p>Ole Birch informed the Area group about two questions concerning the proposal of the Commission on a Way Forward.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the notes of the “One Church model proposal” the commission says that inside the US each Annual Conference will have the right to decide how it will view homosexuality in regards to ordination, but outside the US they point to the Central Conferences as the place where this decision is made. Why this difference? 2. In the BoD § 2201 pt. 2 it says “All resolutions and petitions related to Central



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	<p>Conferences presented to the General Conference shall be referred to the committee (Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters) for consideration, and the committee shall report its recommendations directly to the General Conference". What does that mean in relationship to the proposals of the Commission on a Way Forward and other proposals at the Called Session in March 2019?</p> <p>Christian Alsted said that he would raise both issues at the next Council of Bishops.</p> <p>Ole Birch also pointed the attention of the Area Group to the fact that Jørgen Thaarup has send a request for a declaratory decision to the judicial court in march 2018 and have heard nothing about it. Christian Alsted informed us that the request has been received, but the chair of the court, Ove Sørensen, is sick. Christian Alsted will ask the members of the court to work on the petition.</p>
	<p>Our meeting ended in prayer and cordial wishes for God's grace and safe travels.</p>