



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Minutes - Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council
Friday March 29, 2019, 18:00 – 21:00, Saturday March 30, 09:00 – 17:00

Item	Minutes
	<p>Opening Devotion</p> <p>We sang “Be thou my vision”. Eduard Khegay prayed and read 2nd Cor. 5, 16-21. He shared his experiences on difficulties he have had in his ministry over the last six month concerning reconciliation in families, between pastors, and in congregations.</p> <p>One meaning of reconciliation in Greek is to exchange, and another is to balance the accounts. A third meaning is to be atoned with God. Jesus encourages us to be ambassadors of reconciliation.</p>
1	<p>Approval of the agenda</p> <p>With the addition of item 8 f. Judicial Court, the agenda was approved.</p>
2	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>The minutes where approved when no comments were made within two weeks of them being send out.</p> <p>We affirmed the approval of the minutes.</p>
3	<p>The Eurasia Area Group:</p> <p>The Eurasia Group Annual Report for 2018</p> <p>We praise God that He allowed us to come here for Central Conference Council. God was doing great work through His churches in Eurasia.</p> <p>On the level of Eurasia we have ministries every year such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth festival " you are the light for the world" that is held in Saint Petersburg;• Family festival " Grow together", in 2018 it was held in Ukraine, in 2019 is planned to be held at Far East;• Methodist brothers forum in 2018 was held in Samara in 2019 plan to have it in Kirgistan;• Women conference is yearly held in different parts of Eurasia;• Youth camp “what’s up” in Ukraine;• Covenant groups develops actively in churches.



Item

Minutes

Participants from all Eurasia come to join these events.

God raises young people to be more active in mission work.

- We have several mission projects with Roma children in Ukraine and in Russia;
- Mission camp in Voronezh where youth gather to work under repairment of the Crystal - Old camp place that belongs to our church and is in bad condition;
- 2 people are in long term mission trip;
- Few people in short term missions.

Many churches are very active in ministry with disabled people.

- Every year church in Voronezh has camp for disabled people called “Trinity”;
- Church in Samara is doing wonderful work by heaving theatre with young disable;
- Church Raduga in Moscow is having special evenings and celebrations where they invite disabled people.

Also new churches added to our conference, some of them are newborn and some joined our conference.

- New church in North Osetia republic, that is close to Kavkaz
- New church in Saints Petersburg
- New church in Kiev
- 2 churches joined at Far East and 1 is on its way to be added.

We are thankful to God for all that He is doing in Eurasia but we are also troubled by the situation with the Global United Methodist church. At the end of the past GC all our delegates were bulled by other delegates because they have shared their opinion, also we have received letters informing about terminating financial support. We are hurt and feel pain because we do not feel to be free to share our position and are sorry that at this moment our Global UMC doesn't follows the rules of BoD.

Also we have difficult situation in Russia and Kazakhstan because of the laws that do not allow us to spread the gospel publicly. Many Protestant seminaries were closed in Russia. We safer from many state inspections.

We continue to pray for relationships between Ukraine and Russia. This coming Sunday elections of new resident are going to take place in Ukraine.



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	<p>Despite current situation between our countries we work towards unity and continue to serve God together. This year in August we have Eurasia consultation and celebration of 130 years of Holly Spirit movement in Eurasia both of these events will be held in Ukraine.</p> <p>Vasylyna Kohutka, Ukraine & Moldova</p>
4	<p>The Nordic & Baltic Area Group:</p> <p>Ole Birch asked the bishops to work on a more deliberate format for this kind of reporting, as the present reporting is very different from the two area groups.</p> <p>Report</p> <p>1. Reporting from Subcommittees</p> <p>a. Continued Education</p> <p>Wesley forum. Decision: we decided to close down the Wesley forum as a separate website and moved the content to Nordic website</p> <p>Educational trip to England (in the footsteps of Wesley) Decision: we are approving Jorgen Thaarup and Roar Fotland to lead the tour.</p> <p>Applications for support for Jorgen Thaarup travel to Oxford and Roar Fotland conference in Africa. Decision: we approve applications from Jørgen Thaarup and Roar Fotland.</p> <p>Book project update. Only 3 abstracts, only 2 writers. In addition there are some practical articles. The book project has somewhat changed. There is a plan to publish on Amazon and print some copies for the School of Congregational Development.</p> <p>Clergy gathering. Clergy gathering will not take place this fall because of the SoCD.</p> <p>Gathering on preaching for clergy and lay preachers. Decision: we need to find dates early. By next time have a plan how to proceed.</p> <p>LeadHUB GBHEM information. GBHEM has a LeadHUB in Europe, it has been working for about 2 years in Germany. Meeli is going to be the contact person for our area.</p> <p>b. Development of the connection in the Episcopal Area</p> <p>The survey we made this fall is of no use as it is today – it is unknown , only 11 responders. We need to find new ways of marketing it – directly to</p>



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	<p>pastors -churches – social media. Share information on camps through bishop’s office – start with the youth camps. Encourage youth leaders in each country to send information to the bishop’s office for sending forward.</p> <p>c. International and Ecumenical Representation Nothing to report.</p> <p>2. Whistle-blower Policy</p> <p>The proposal for a new policy has been available on EZRA. We did some smaller changes to the text and considered the connotations of the word whistle-blower in different countries.</p> <p>The Whistle-blower policy was approved.</p> <p>3. Approval of Financial reports:</p> <p>a. Episcopal Fund We received the auditor’s report. The report was approved.</p> <p>b. Area Fund We received the auditor’s report. The report was approved.</p> <p>c. Nordic Theological Means We received the auditor’s report. The report was approved.</p>
5	<p>Evening prayer</p> <p>Christian Alsted led us in a short evening prayer.</p>
Sat:	<p>Saturday morning devotion and communion, Christian Alsted.</p> <p>We sang “Holy, holy, holy” and a song from Taize. Christian Alsted read from The New Testament and reflected on the story of how Jesus warned his disciple about the yeast of the Pharisees.</p>
6	<p>The current and future situation of the UMC after the called 2019 General Conference</p> <p>We shared personal and national perspectives on, and responses to, the outcome of the called General Conference 2019.</p> <p>Implications for the adaptations and organization of Central Conference 2021.</p> <p>Proposal from Christian Alsted: That we meet as full council in both spring and fall of 2020 in order to be able to make the relevant preparation for the Central</p>



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	<p>Conference 2021.</p> <p>The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Proposal from Christian Alsted: That a group prepare ideas for a good debate climate and that the committees on episcopacy start preparing the episcopal elections, considering what serves their areas while still honouring that we do this together.</p> <p>The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Christian Alsted presented the proposal for a roundtable process approved by the Nordic area Group yesterday March 29th 2019. (See attachment 1).</p> <p>Christian Alsted presented the statement approved by the Nordic Area Group yesterday March 29th 2019. (See attachment 2).</p> <p>(On the proposal of Christian Alsted, the Nordic Area Group members amended the statement so the wording of the statement and the proposal where aligned.)</p>
7	<p>Financial Report:</p> <p>Kirsten Hastrup presented the financial report for the Central Conference Fund.</p> <p>We approved a footnote concerning the contribution from Latvia that arrived after December 31st 2018.</p> <p>The financial report and the two allocations on page 6 (Book of Discipline supplement, Central Conference 2021) 6 was approve.</p> <p>The auditor's report was received.</p> <p>Kirsten Hastrup was thanked for her work on our finances.</p>
	<p>Lunch</p>
8	<p>2021 Central Conference in Tallinn 3 – 7 March</p> <p>a. Theme & Programme</p> <p>We worked on a first draft of the programme. We may have to have one evening for conference work. The evening worship will be done by Estonians. Morning worship/bibelstudies Friday, Thursday and Saturday can be done by visiting bishop. Our bishops will work on this.</p>



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	<p>b. Guest list We approved the guest list made up by Christian Alsted. (Se attachment 3.)</p> <p>c. Budget Next year we must decide how to use our accumulated funds.</p> <p>d. Episcopal Elections and nominations process Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh proposed that we investigate whether it is possible for Christian Alsted to serve longer. This is motivated in the difficult situation our area is in after the 2019 called session of the General Conference. The proposal was approved Christian Alsted said that he would come back with his answer to this idea by May 5th. The Chair of the committee on episcopacy, Pär-Endre Bjørnevik and Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh will create a proposal.</p> <p>e. Book of Discipline Northern Europe & Eurasia CC</p> <p>f. Judicial Court Ole Birch raised the point that the Judicial Court has not reacted to a request for a decision from Jørgen Thaarup. The request was made more than a year ago. Christian Alsted will follow up on this matter.</p>
9	<p>Youth Work - orientation</p> <p>a. Report from NEECCYC. We will answer their question about election of youth delegates positively. They will elect representatives to GYPC, for Division of ministry with Young people, and monitor if the different annual conferences use their membership in the EMYC. The report was received.</p> <p>b. EMYC Orientation by Eduard Khegay. We will send a letter encouraging the youth's organisations of our CC to use the place they have at the EMYC, and that has already been paid for.</p> <p>c. Report on Global Young People's Convocation (GYCP) 18-22 July 2018 in</p>



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	<p>Johannesburg.</p> <p>We received the report from Maria Thaarup.</p>
10	<p>European Methodist Council</p> <p>a. September Meeting 2018</p> <p>We received the report.</p> <p>b. Staunen! European Methodist Festival May 10 – 13 2018 in Cuxhaven Germany</p> <p>No action.</p> <p>www.staunen.net</p>
11	<p>World Methodist Council – orientation</p> <p>a. Meeting July 2018 in Korea</p> <p>b. World Methodist Conference 2021 in Gothenburg</p>
12	<p>Conference of European Churches (CEC) – orientation</p> <p>a. Meeting Novi Sad Serbia</p> <p>We received the report</p>
13	<p>SOCD 2019 - Called2Chance</p> <p>Kirsten Hastrup gave a presentation on the conference in September. Check out the information on the website of the episcopal office.</p>
14	<p>Additional Matters</p> <p>Council meetings 2019 – 2021</p> <p>2019 29-30 March - Council.</p> <p>2019 4-5 October – Area groups.</p> <p>2020 27-28 March - Council.</p> <p>2020 23-24 October – Council (NB: New dates)</p> <p>2021 3-7 March – Central Conference.</p>
	<p>Closing prayer: CA</p>



Attachment 1 – A Roundtable Process

A Roundtable Process for the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area Leading towards the Central Conference 2021

The Nordic and Baltic episcopal area is diverse in a number of different ways including our understanding of human sexuality and of how to be in ministry with all people. In spite of our diversities and differences, we have managed to be in a committed relationship in one church for more than 100 years. We have built relationships and friendships, we have shared and exchanged ministries, we have supported each other, and we have worshipped and prayed together.

The unity of the United Methodist Church has been under a great deal of stress for some time. The recent called session of the General Conference decided to support the so-called “traditional plan”; however, the conference was not able to come to a broad based decision, which would be a challenge no matter what the outcome would have been. While many had hoped that the called session of General Conference would give us a stronger sense of unity, the reality after the conference is that we are even more divided and polarized.

The many reactions to the decisions of General Conference across the world indicate that it will be very difficult for us to remain together as one church in the future. Several responses and statements in the Nordic and Baltic countries point to a similar division, and there is little doubt that our future as a denomination will be significantly different from what we know today.

In light of the current situation and as we quickly approach the General Conference 2020 and 2021 Central Conference, we find it responsible and prudent to reflect and plan proactively for the future.

Therefore, we have decided to form a roundtable to bring together key influencers and leaders from each annual conference in the episcopal area, with the purpose of seeking a foundation for the future of the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area that includes as much unity and as much missional strength as possible.

Roundtable for the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area

Recognizing that there are different processes in annual conferences and in the global church, we wish to setup a roundtable. The roundtable is intended to bring together influencers and leaders from each annual conference in the episcopal area, with the purpose of seeking a foundation for the future of the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area that includes as much unity and as much missional strength as possible.



Desired outcome: A consensus on one proposal for the future of the Nordic and Baltic area to be brought to the Nordic and Baltic area group early in the fall of 2020, to enable the area group to recommend this proposal to the 2021 Central Conference.

Composition: Each conference will have half of the number of delegates they are entitled to send to the Central Conference. (DK 3, EE 3, SF 2-3, FF 2-3, Lat 1, Lit 1, N 8-9). Bishop Christian Alsted will facilitate the process.

It is the responsibility of each annual conference council to ensure that their group of participants represents the theological positions in the annual conference, and furthermore that their group of participants is diverse.

Meetings: Three face to face meetings (fall 2019, spring 2020 and fall 2020) and 3-4 online meetings.

Funding: Each conference will pay the accommodation costs. The area fund will pay for meals and travels.

Unanimous decision on 29 March 2019 in Copenhagen by the Nordic and Baltic Area Group of the Council of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference



Attachment 2: Statement to the church in the Nordic and Baltic Area.

The Area Group of the Council of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference meeting on 29-30. March in Copenhagen has issued this statement to the church in the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area.

We greet you with words from Paul's letter to the Colossians:

And over all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. The peace of Christ must control your hearts—a peace into which you were called in one body. And be thankful people. (Col.3:14-15)

During our time together we have engaged in worship, prayer and Christian conferencing to reflect on the implications of the decisions of the called session of General Conference and to discern our way into the future.

The Nordic and Baltic episcopal area is diverse in a number of different ways including our understanding of human sexuality and of how to be in ministry with all people. In spite of our diversities and differences, we have managed to be in a committed relationship in one church for more than 100 years. We have built relationships and friendships, we have shared and exchanged ministries, we have supported each other, and we have worshipped and prayed together.

The unity of the United Methodist Church has been under a great deal of stress for some time. The recent called session of the General Conference decided to support the Traditional Plan, however, the conference was not able come to a broad based decision. While many had hoped the called session of General Conference would give us a stronger sense of unity, the reality after the conference is that we are even more divided and polarized.

The many reactions to the decisions of General Conference across the world indicate that it will be very difficult for us to remain together as one denomination in the future. Several responses and statements in the Nordic and Baltic countries point to a similar division.

In light of the current situation and as we quickly approach the General Conference 2020 and the 2021 Central Conference, we have discerned to move forward proactively and form a roundtable. The roundtable will bring together influencers and leaders from each annual conference in the episcopal area, with the purpose of seeking a foundation for the future of the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area that includes as much unity and as much missional strength as possible.

Recognizing there are different processes going on in annual conferences and in the global church, the desired outcome of the roundtable is a consensus on one proposal for the future of the Nordic and Baltic area. The proposal should be brought to the Nordic and



Baltic area group early in the fall of 2020, to enable the area group to recommend it to the 2021 Central Conference.

The roundtable will be composed of half of the number of delegates each annual conference is entitled to send to the Central Conference. It will be the responsibility of each annual conference council to ensure that their group of participants represents the theological positions present in the annual conference, and furthermore that their group of participants is as diverse as possible. Bishop Christian Alsted will facilitate the roundtable, and Kirsten Hastrup will act as secretary.

We would like to remind all of us that during a tense period with deep disagreement, we run the risk of ruining relationships that will be difficult to restore. We wish to encourage all of us to remember to care for each other and to be careful with one another. This is a time for prayer, fellowship and conversation, and we urge all us to think carefully before we make a comment or an update on social media, and to avoid saying anything that can be perceived as offensive or polarizing. Christ still calls us to love each other and to share His love with all people.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, many years ago created three simple rules, known, as “The General Rules, and they are highly relevant in the current situation. They are first “Do no harm”, second “Do good”, and finally “remain in God’s love by making use of the means of grace”. We will continue to worship, to pray, to share communion and to be in conversation with each other. – This is how we put on Christ’s love, which is the perfect bond of unity!

Unanimously decided on 29. March 2019 in Copenhagen by the Nordic and Baltic Area Group of the Council of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference



Attachment 3 – Guest list for the Central Conference 2021.

Central Conference 2021

Expenses to be included in the price for delegates:

<u>Invited Guests:</u>	<u>Meals & accommodation</u>	<u>Travel</u>
Bishop Rückert, Germany	CC-2021	
Bishop Streiff, Central Europe	CC-2021	
Bishop Wenner, Germany	CC-2021	
CoB's representative	CC-2021	
Church leader, UK	CC-2021	
Church leader, Equmenia Kyrkan	CC-2021	
Elisabeth Alsted Flinck, Copenhagen	CC-2021	CC-2021
Mrs. Victoria Nogay, Moscow	CC-2021	CC-2021
Bishop Hans Växby	CC-2021	CC-2021
Bishop Øystein Olsen	CC-2021	CC-2021

Other participants:

2 delegates from Equmenia Kyrkan	CC-2016	
CCCouncil members (if not delegates)	CC-2016 (Fee)	Travel CC-Fund – Hotel A/C
Kirsten Hastrup, CC & N&B Area Office	CC-2016	CC-2016

Saturday – Sunday

Ecumenical Guests from:

Estonia

Church of Norway

Lutheran Church Finland

Church of Denmark

Family members Christian Alsted