A Statement from Bishop David on St Edmund’s Church, Norway
A Supplement to the Chaplaincy Profile – 8 June 2020

Archdeaconry and Diocese
St Edmund’s Oslo is part of the Archdeaconry of Germany and Northern Europe, and the Deanery of the Nordic Baltic States, within the Diocese in Europe. The chaplain is required to participate, along with the lay representatives, in the life of the Archdeaconry and Deanery. The synodical life has for several years focused around the Deanery which meets for about 3 days residentially each year. The Archdeacon of Germany and Northern Europe is the Venerable Leslie Nathaniel, who is based near Stuttgart. The Revd Nick Howe and the Revd Tuomas Mäkipää, the chaplains in Stockholm and the chaplain in Helsinki respectively, are the Area Deans.

The Suffragan Bishop in Europe is the lead bishop within the diocese for the Archdeaconry of Germany and Northern Europe, including Oslo/Norway.

Ecumenical and Inter-Church Relations
The Diocese in Europe has a distinct ecumenical vocation and our priests have a key role in carrying out this vocation. The diocesan guidelines and regulations state that the Diocese in Europe seeks “to minister and engage in mission in partnership with other Churches especially the historic Churches of the countries in which we live”. The major Church partner in Norway is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. As a signatory to the Porvoo Common Statement, there is interchangeability of ministries and close cooperation in mission between the Church of England and the Church of Norway.

Thanks to the Porvoo agreement a number of priests of the Church of Norway have permission to officiate and provide useful backup support. The nurturing and deepening of the Porvoo agreement is an important dimension of chaplaincy life and the chaplain is expected to represent the Church of England at many events and on many occasions in the Church of Norway. In the past the chaplain has been privileged to preach in Norwegian cathedrals and churches. It is important to build and maintain warm working relationships with Norwegian bishops and clergy. It is not unusual for the chaplain to be approached by the Norwegian media to comment on events or developments in the Church of England, the Anglican Communion, or even in Great Britain in general. A knowledge of Norwegian helps such involvement, and indeed the Norwegian government generally requires that foreigners living in the country learn the language to a degree.

Oslo and Norway
Although the senior chaplain is based in Oslo and the main focus of weekly ministry is with the congregation of St Edmund’s, the chaplaincy covers the entire kingdom of Norway and the senior chaplain has ultimate oversight. The chaplain therefore needs to be able to balance the Oslo responsibilities with the wider care of other clergy and congregations, and have demonstrable skills and experience in collaborative ministry, leading a team of priests and Readers, and in supervision of clergy.
One of the clergy is in IME II and is due to be ordained to the priesthood at Michaelmas, depending on pandemic conditions. The senior chaplain functions as “training incumbent” for this deacon/priest.

The present configuration of work across Norway, in addition to Oslo, includes a congregations in Stavanger, Bergen and Trondheim. Very occasionally services are held in other locations. There is a summer chaplaincy in Balestrand for which the senior chaplain is responsible for recruitment of locum chaplains. Bergen and Trondheim have part-time clergy in charge. Stavanger is also a part time post, but is vacant at present. The congregation in Stavanger is in a process of healing following a major safeguarding incident involving the former priest, who was found guilty of criminal charges and served a prison sentence.

A review of the overall work in Norway, and the terms and conditions of all the clergy will be timely for the next senior chaplain to undertake in collaboration with the Churchwardens, Council, clergy and Archdeacon. Anglican work in Norway is dependent on generous subsidy from the Norwegian government, based on the numbers of Anglicans identified in the country.

It is vital that absolute precision is kept with regards to such records and the expenditure of such funding, which can only be within the Kingdom of Norway itself.

**St Edmund’s**

As a congregation in the capital city, the members come from very multinational and multicultural backgrounds. (The same is true for all the congregations, actually). Some Norwegians themselves attend the services, often attracted by Anglican liturgy and music. (There is a strong musical tradition in St Edmund’s). The congregation needs a priest who will further develop this very inclusive community, making it a home for English-speakers (not only Anglicans) from around the world.

The liturgical style is eucharistic, with vestments. There is a Sunday school.

A Burmese Baptist congregation uses St Edmund’s on Sunday afternoons.