

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

## **Trustees' Annual Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

The Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain is an ecclesiastical community of congregations bound by their Articles of Faith in full preaching and Eucharistic fellowship. It unites German-speaking congregations of the Lutheran, Reformed and United denominations. The proclamation of the Gospel is based exclusively on the teaching of Jesus Christ as witnessed by the Holy Scripture in the Old and in the New Testament and re-stated by the Articles of Faith of the German Reformation.

### **1. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The Synod is established to advance the protestant Christian religion, in particular amongst German speakers in Great Britain. In achieving this objective the Synod fosters solidarity between its member congregations and a common approach to questions of Christian faith and life. It attends to the ecclesiastical and social life of the congregations and concerns itself with the maintenance of Christian life. The Synod provides the congregations with ministers, advice, training and oversight so that they can provide public benefits in accordance with their charitable objectives and their agreements with the Synod.

#### **1.1 Ministry**

The Synod is responsible for providing and organising effective German-speaking Protestant ministry in Great Britain. It supports the member congregations by employing pastors and pastoral assistants for German worship and pastoral care. It provides German worship and pastoral care when needed, even where there is no organised congregation.

#### **1.2 Quality Management**

The Synod supports the member congregations by visitation and training. A visitation to a congregation sets in motion a process of reflection; whether their activities match their objectives and whether improvement is possible.

Volunteers training enables them to lead worship, to offer worship for children, to lead the congregation and to manage its finances. This supports good governance and develops the skills of the current and future lay community, helping to ensure the long term continuity of the congregations.

#### **1.3 Administrative Support**

***Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain***  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

The Synod supports the member congregations by giving advice, examining their finances and legal documents and providing them with templates for their day-to-day work.

#### **1.4 Financial Support**

The Synod supports the member congregations by giving grants for specific purposes. It partly pays for repairs to the manses occupied by the pastors and applies to the Kaiser-Wilhelm II Fund on behalf of the congregations for grants towards their church work.

#### **1.5 Networking**

The Synod Assembly, held annually in April, provides an opportunity for trustees of the congregations throughout Great Britain to share their ideas for congregational work and to discuss matters of the Christian faith.

#### **1.6 Representation**

The Synod represents German-speaking Protestants at the German Embassy, at the assembly of *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD) and in several ecumenical organisations. It delivers a presentation about the German-speaking church work in Great Britain at the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag* in Germany.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **2.1 Ministry**

At the end of 2015 eight pastors were employed, who work with 18 congregations, with about 50 places of worship, divided into six pastoral regions: London-East, London-West; East Anglia; South and West-England and Wales; North-England and East-Midlands; Scotland and North-East-England. Four of the pastoral regions have a single pastor whilst two have married couples, both of whom share the role working part-time. In addition, one pastor was employed as a pastoral assistant in London-East. One pastor was employed part-time as a pastoral assistant in Scotland until the end of April to support the Senior.

The agreement with the EKD enabled the Synod to employ two part-time pastors to replace the pastor in the Pastoral Region Scotland and North East England and to

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

offer the congregations in London-East candidates for the election of a new pastor at the beginning of 2016.

The Synod organised and paid for pastoral work in Leicester after the congregation and associated charity closed down.

## **2.2 Quality Management**

Members of the Synod Council visited the congregations in the London East Pastoral Region in order to discuss their objectives and activities. This visitation led to a presentation about the pastoral region for the process of finding a new pastor in 2016.

The Senior visited the new pastors in Scotland to provide them with necessary information needed to carry out their role effectively.

Four training sessions for volunteers were organised for trustees, treasurers, worship leaders and leaders of worship with children. The trainers supported the volunteers by giving advice.

The ministers met at two conferences; one of them was organised by the EKD.

## **2.3 Administrative Support**

The budgetary control committee examined the finances of the congregations and the legal committee assisted with contracts, agreements between congregations and the writing and updating of constitutions. The Synod financed the membership of the treasurers at the Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers.

## **2.4 Financial Support**

The Synod supported renovation work for the manses in Cambridge and Edinburgh.

The Synod applied on behalf of the congregations for grants for their church work from the Kaiser-Wilhelm-II-Fund and distributed £19,000.

## **2.5 Networking**

The theme for the Synod Assembly, which met in April, was the use of music in worship.

## **2.6 Representation**

Representatives of Synod met with officials from the German Embassy, participated in the meeting of Churches Together in England, a Church Leaders' Meeting and at the EKD Assembly in Germany.

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

At the *Kirchentag* in Stuttgart, representatives from the pastoral regions gave a presentation on the *Markt der Möglichkeiten* on behalf of the Synod and provided visitors with information about German-Speaking worship in Great Britain in order to offer potential immigrants a spiritual home.

### **3. FINANCIAL REVIEW**

After making appropriate enquiries, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

#### **3.1 Income and Expenditure**

The annual fee, paid in advance by the congregations, has to be used to cover the costs for the ministry. The unspent part of these contributions is accumulated in the restricted "Salary Savings fund", which can only be used should the cost of the ministry exceed the contributions.

The grants to congregations were financed through the restricted "Congregational Support Fund", which holds money given by the EKD to support the congregations in accordance with the regulations of the Synod Council.

All other expenses are financed through the reserves of the Synod itself and to some extent through interest and donations (German YMCA, Kaiser Wilhelm II Fund). The deficit amounted to £49,010. The Synod received no grants from central or local government for the delivery of services.

The dissolved congregation in Leicester passed over its assets to the Synod in accordance with its charitable governing document in order to support German church work in Great Britain. £232,370 was added to the reserves of the Synod.

#### **3.2 Reserves and Restricted Funds**

The reserves are now £822,519. If there is no change in the current policy of not allowing a deficit of more than £50,000, the reserves will last for 16 years. The Synod could simply request additional contributions from the congregations in order to cover the deficit. This should be avoided for as long as possible in order to enable the congregations to spend their money on their church work. Changes may be considered within the next few years in order to reduce the deficit.

The Salary Savings fund contains £34,244 to cover unexpected expenses caused by changes in the Euro-Sterling exchange rate.

The residue of the Archive Fund was spent on archiving the Synod's files before our office relocation.

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain  
Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

The Congregation Support Fund now stands at £144.477, which enables the Synod to continue supporting manse repairs.

The Grants retained in Germany have increased to €660,077 (worth £462.045 on 31st December 2015 and £513.275 in March 2016. On 1st January 2015 it stood at £527.144) and are to be used to cover shortfalls between the congregations' contributions and the costs of providing them with pastoral care. Since most of the congregations are financially healthy, there is no expectation of using this fund within the next 10 years.

### **3.3 Investment Policy and Performance**

The reserves of the Synod are held in short-term investment accounts, with a maximum term of one year. One fund is held in Euro accounts in Germany at fixed interest rates for one year.

The trustees are aware of the need to safeguard monies, whilst also obtaining a good investment return. They have therefore decided to invest half of the reserves and funds in bonds and shares in order to increase the investment return. This is planned for 2016. In order to avoid losses caused by exchange rate fluctuations, they are considering transferring the funds held in euro into sterling in the longer term.

### **3.4 Salaries**

#### **Policies adopted for the Payment of the Staff**

The remuneration of the pastors is set by the EKD in accordance with its worldwide procedures. The pastors who are also trustees therefore have no role in setting their own remuneration.

The salaries of the pastoral assistants are set by the Synod Council based on the German YMCA scales.

The salaries of the office staff are set by the Synod Council.

#### **Liabilities**

The main liability of the charity is the salaries of the pastors on fixed-term contracts, usually for six years. In addition, the charity is responsible for the salaries of two part-time staff working at the Synod's office as administrators, one part-time pastoral assistant (if necessary) working to support the senior pastor in his pastoral work and the full-time pastoral assistant for the London East Pastoral Region.

As the cost of the pastors and the pastoral assistants are paid by the congregations, the liability reduces to the part-time administrators. As shown above, the charity can meet its commitments during the next 16 years.

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

## **Deposits**

The Synod holds £60,000 from each Pastoral Region as a deposit for the pastors' salaries, should a Pastoral Region fail to contribute its annual fee. These monies are currently invested in fixed term investment accounts, with the interest returned to the congregations.

## **3.5 Risk Management**

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Charity, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate our exposure to these risks.

Employer's liability, public liability, personal injury, property and legal protection insurance policies are in place.

## **3.6 Seamen's Mission**

The Synod processes the salary payments for the staff of the German Seamen's Mission. At present they have one full-time and two part-time members of staff based in Great Britain.

## **3.7 Grants for the member congregations**

The Synod applied for funds on behalf of member congregations from the Kaiser-Wilhelm-II-Fund. £19,000 was distributed. All the congregations are registered charities.

# **4. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

## **4.1. Constitution**

The Charity is constituted under a Constitution adopted 12th May 1973, as amended 27th March 1981, 20th October 1984, 13th April 2002, 27th March 2004, 5th April 2014 and 18th April 2015.

The charity also operates under the name Council for German Church Work.

The charity is an unincorporated association.

## **4.2 Governing Body**

The governing body of the Synod is the Synod Assembly, consisting of its pastors, one representative from each member congregation, at least three members from

*Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain*  
*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

each designated Pastoral Region and up to seven extraordinary members. The Synod Assembly meets once a year.

The Synod Assembly decides the orders, strategy and policies for the work of the Synod and sets the budget.

#### **4.3 Trustees**

The supervision of the day-to-day running of the Synod is the responsibility of the Synod's trustees ("Synod Council"). They are elected under the terms of the Constitution. Elections take place every three years at the Synod Assembly. Trustees may be re-elected. The trustees are bound by the decisions of the Synod Assembly and they report to the annual meeting of the Synod Assembly.

The trustees are members of the Synod Assembly and are therefore provided with copies of the Charity's governing document and the previous year's Annual Report and Accounts. They are familiar with the philosophy, history and objectives of the charity. The trustees are kept informed and up-to-date during Synod Council meetings as appropriate.

The trustees are inducted into their responsibilities and duties on the basis of Charity Commission publications. They have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. Ongoing trustee development takes place as required.

#### **4.4 Treasurer and Administrator**

The Treasurer has delegated responsibility for internal controls, with the transactions performed by the Financial Administrator under the "four eyes" principle.

## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **5.1 Principal Address**

Until 14 September 2015:

Council for German Church Work  
c/o German YMCA  
35 Craven Terrace  
London W2 3EL

Email: [office@ev-synode.org.uk](mailto:office@ev-synode.org.uk)

From 15 September 2015

Council for German Church Work  
27 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9HH

Email: [office@ev-synode.org.uk](mailto:office@ev-synode.org.uk)

### **5.2 Trustees and Executive Officers**

***Synod of German-speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain***

*Charity number 266600 Trustees' Annual Report 2015*

Pastor Michael Mehl	Trustee and Senior (Chair of the trustees) until 18th April 2015
Pastor Albrecht Köstlin-Bürma	Trustee and Secretary until 18th April 2015. Trustee and Senior (Chair) from 19th April 2015
Pastor Dr. Ulrich Lincoln	Trustee and Vice-Chair until 18th April 2015
Pastor Georg Amann	Trustee and Vice-Chair from 19th April 2015
Pastor Diemut Cramer	Trustee and Secretary from 19th April 2015
Mrs. Frauke Constable	Trustee
Mrs. Hildegard O'Kane	Trustee
Dr. Michaela Scheuermann-Freestone	Trustee
Mr. Christopher Isbell	Treasurer (not a Trustee)

**5.3. Internet**

<http://www.ev-synode.org.uk>

**DECLARATION**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Pastor Albrecht Köstlin-Bürma, Senior    Pastor Diemut Cramer, Secretary