



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Department for Mission
and Development
Europe Desk

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To the leaders and participants
of the Conference:
“Seeking conviviality-new approaches in
congregational diakonia”
In Liepāja, Latvia, May 8-9, 2015

Per email: martin.urdze@gmail.com

Geneva, May 8, 2015

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

You have chosen a good time to come together and deepen reflections on how to live out your faith, in love and service to the neighbour. We are coming from the empowering Easter experience that new life is possible, and a new world in fellowship. And we are approaching Pentecost, the celebration of Christ's on-going presence with us, in the Holy Spirit.

As you are gathering these days in Liepāja, may the joy of Easter and the inspiration of Pentecost lead you and move you forward! You have set out to join a Europe wide process of “Seeking Conviviality” – the art and practice of living together and of “Re-forming Community Diakonia”. We welcome you in this common endeavour. It connects you to the fellowship of over 140 churches worldwide that are united in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF): A communion with passion for the church and for the world. Together, we carry the vision that we are “Liberated by God's grace, a communion of Christ living and working together for a just, peaceful, and reconciled world.”

Over the recent four years, some 28 diaconal actors and educators from 15 European countries have met and shared their local challenges and good practices. Together, we have gained a broader understanding of community, reaching beyond our own private relationships or church groups and including our neighbour in need. We realized how much, basically, all our lives are vulnerable and have, at different moments, suffered vulnerability. As Christians, this experience unites us with Christ and opens us to realize with sensitivity the wounds and suffering of our sisters and brothers, near and far. On this same background, many of us have heard God's vocation to serve people. Maybe, this is true also for pastors and diaconal actors in Latvia, and for you who are gathered here for this day's conference.

We are happy that Rev. Martins Urdze, a member of the LWF European Diaconal Process' resource group, is sharing with you today. We thank him for his commitment in organizing this seminar to learn together with you. And we thank all of you who have made the effort to come together today and to seek conviviality. We are confident that your commitment will be a blessing within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia and its diaconal service for and with people.

In the Lutheran World Federation, we often read the Easter story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and Jesus joining them. Together, they struggle and question and argue. In conversation, Jesus opens the Scriptures to them, and finally, sharing the evening meal, their eyes are opened and they recognize Jesus in their very midst.

We wish you God's rich blessing for this seminar and that, in the course of your own searching and discussing, you may experience Christ's presence among you, encouraging you to return and go back into your daily life and meet the challenges ahead, in the fellowship of the disciples and in conviviality with a world in need.

With kind regards,
Yours, in Christ,

Eva-Sibylle Vogel-Mfato
LWF Europe Secretary