

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Suffragan Bishop
The Right Reverend David Hamid



A Statement from Bishop David on St Alban's Church, Copenhagen. A Supplement to the Chaplaincy Profile – 25 September 2017

Archdeaconry and Diocese

St Alban's Copenhagen 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 focussed around the Deanery which meets for about 3 days residentially each year. The Archdeacon of Germany and Northern Europe is the Venerable Colin Williams who is based in Frankfurt. The Revd Nick Howe, the chaplain in Stockholm, is the Area Dean.

Each archdeaconry in the diocese has a lead bishop, either the Diocesan Bishop or the Suffragan Bishop, to provide pastoral care for the clergy and congregations, oversight of routine vacancy and appointment processes, care of title curates, consultation with mission agencies, strategic direction, mission planning and new initiatives. The Suffragan Bishop in Europe is the lead bishop for the Archdeaconry of Germany and Northern Europe.

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 Denmark is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. 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 Denmark. The Bishop of Copenhagen, Peter Skov-Jacobsen, is a close friend of St Alban's. Duly authorized clergy of the Church of Denmark lead worship from time to time. There are also very close relations with the Swedish parish, also a Porvoo signatory Church, and good ecumenical links with the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist and Methodist Churches in the city. The parish participates in the annual Church Walk held in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an event which attracts 1000s of Copenhagen Christians. The congregation in Aarhus (see below) is hosted by a local Church of Denmark parish and the pastor there occasionally assists in leading worship.

Liturgy

Chaplaincy life centres around the Sunday Sung Eucharist. Common Worship Order One is used for main services. Vestments are worn. As the international and multicultural congregation comes from a variety of church traditions, Anglican and other, it is essential that the worshipping life, while thoroughly grounded in the modern catholic liturgical style of the Church of England, is welcoming to those from many backgrounds. The choir and organ play a major part in the services.

Some Parish Information

The church, situated on the waterfront near the famous Mermaid statue, is well maintained and has recently been refurbished. Plans for new toilet facilities are well advanced. It is located in a prominent yet quiet location, and consequently many visitors pass by the Church and enter when it is open. They are welcomed

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by a team of volunteers from within the congregation. The chaplain's house is some 10 km north of the church, in a pleasant residential suburb. The house is well appointed and has a large garden and a double garage. It should be noted that there is little space for meetings or storage at the church and in the past there have been some expectations about using the chaplain's house for this purpose. It is good practice for the chaplain to establish and maintain clear boundaries. The Archdeacon will want to work closely with the newly appointed priest to ensure that these boundaries are clear.

The congregation is made up of people of all ages, coming from a widely international background. There are a number of highly qualified and articulate professionals, some working in demanding positions. In recent years the church has seen an increase in the numbers of immigrants from Africa and other parts of the world. The latter are beginning to be involved on Council and with such activities as the Mothers Union.

Thanks to large endowment funds (mostly designated for the upkeep of fabric) the chaplaincy is financially sound but nevertheless there is a need for teaching on Christian stewardship.

Although the chaplain is based in Copenhagen, the pastoral responsibility covers the kingdom of Denmark, although in practice its area of ministry covers greater Copenhagen and Aarhus, where there is a daughter community. There are presently three licensed Readers, and two more in training for Reader ministry, who will require supervision and mentoring by the chaplain. The Diocesan Director of Ministerial Development, the Revd Canon Ulla Monberg, lives in Copenhagen and may be available for occasional services, but due to her diocesan responsibilities cannot be part of a regular rota. There is also a Burundian Deacon, a refugee, living in Jutland, and a Danish Lutheran priest with PtO under the Porvoo Agreement. It is a matter for future discernment whether Deacon Christophe should be ordained to the priesthood.

Like the rest of Scandinavia, the cost of living in Denmark is high, as are taxes, and a direct conversion of the stipend from Danish kroner to sterling will not give a true picture. The standard of living is also high; public transport, medical services etc are good. Copenhagen is on about the same latitude as Edinburgh, which means long nights in the winter but long hours of daylight in the summer. It should be noted that Danish law requires foreign clergy to take courses in Danish. To do so would also help foster links with other churches and the local community.

Copenhagen is rated as one of the best cities in the world in which to live in terms of quality of life. St Alban's has many resources and a great deal of potential that, if harnessed, would provide the basis for a fruitful and varied ministry. All this makes St Alban's a very attractive and stimulating appointment in one of the most vibrant chaplaincies of the diocese.