

Church Newsletter October 2019

Overdelivery

I moved house recently, and in connection with the move I have bought and had delivered a new settee, a fridge, a desk, a washing machine, a tumble dryer, and a bed. I paid for it all to be delivered to my new address. When the delivery guys arrived with the goods, they carried and pushed and shoved as the true professionals they are, everything into place. They unpacked the washing machine and the tumble dryer, hooked them up, removed all the wrapping materials, swept and made sure that none of the newly painted window sills had been scratched. They gave me their phone number and told me to call them if there were any issues. All done with a big smile and kindness that was way beyond what was expected of them. They were kind beyond measure.

In English there is a word, “overdelivery” which means that you do or give whatever you’re supposed to, plus 10%. The percentage may vary of course. But that was exactly what the kind delivery people did: they delivered more than they had to. They had delivered the goods – and more! And it’s the “more” that one mustn’t underestimate: the positive energy generated by kindness and consideration. It is so nice to meet kindness, and kindness is infectious. Just the same way that unkindness is.

I was in a good mood the rest of the day. I waited patiently with a smile on my face for the extremely slow lady in front of me in the queue to find her parking ticket for the parking meter; I let numerous cars merge into the traffic in front of me; I took my shopping trolley back to the supermarket when I’d finished with it; and I vacuumed although it wasn’t my turn. Overdelivery is an amazing concept. It is often free, and it sends out good vibes. Pass it forward. The good things we get, we have to pass on. We have to carry the baton to an unknown friend and infect each other with kindness.

Simon Grotrian, a Danish hymn writer, has a lovely way of saying it in his hymn “Guds nåde er en vintergæk” (God’s grace is a snowdrop).

“God’s love has been gifted to you

On both hemispheres

It forged a way ahead

The infant Jesus is your teacher

And where you lost your footing

The love will persevere

So carry the baton

And pass it

Into the hands of an unknown friend.”

Simon Grotrian 2006

With the arrival of spring let us all walk the path of kindness and give that little bit extra. Overdelivery is almost always feasible in all life's endeavours. When dealing with the check-out lady, the charity collectors in the street, your colleagues, neighbours and not least at home. It costs so little, and it has such wide reaching consequences.

Pastor Anja G. Mathiassen

Thank you to Kim Basse,

Our Auckland pianist for 10 years.

Kim Basse and her husband have now both moved to Ohakune, so Kim has decided to step down from her role as our accompanist at our Danish church services in Auckland. On behalf of the church I would like to thank Kim for her loyal contribution over many years to our services in Auckland. Always smiling, happy and positive and amazing to work with for me as the pastor. Thank you for your work and your positive engagement. We shall miss you of course and wish you all the best.

Celebration service in Herning

In June Pastor Anja G. Mathiassen took part in a celebration service in Herning to mark the 100-year anniversary of the Danish Seamen's Church. The queen and our two former consuls, Niels and Rita Jægersborg, took part along with several hundred others. It was a solemn service followed by a reception with excellent speeches. During the reception Pastor Anja, who was representing the Danish church in New Zealand, was presented with a portable cross to be used in the future as an altar cross that can travel with the church. The cross is a gift, donated to us by an anonymous donor. See below for more information about the portable cross.

The Portable Cross

A beautiful gift from Denmark

It seems very fitting to be able to include in this church magazine just before Christmas the news of a lovely gift which our Danish Church in New Zealand received from Denmark thanks to a donation from an anonymous donor. The cross has been a long time in the making, and has travelled far to get here with help from many sources – as has been the case with gifts for the church in the past.

It's a portable cross in the best sense of the word, so that pastor Anja can bring a church symbol, along with her vestments, to the services and to other church ceremonies that take place outside a church: weddings held in nature, confirmations held at home, and church

services held in community halls to mention a few. The Danish Lutheran Church in New Zealand is different in the sense that we don't have a church of our own.

The idea/desire to get a portable cross was expressed in a conversation between DSUK's communications officer, Anne Meldgaard, and the Bendsen family in Geraldine in May 2018. The family was interviewed in connection with the 10th anniversary of the Danish church in New Zealand for a series of articles about this milestone for the DSUK newsletter. "If we had such a wish for the church, we could mention it in the newsletter, and people in Denmark would become aware of it and feel positive about it." And that was indeed the case. An anonymous donor from Denmark was very happy to donate this gift to us. The church council could then start the work surrounding the design, budget and further planning.

The portable cross was to be executed in a simple design in silver to be kept in a solid box made of Danish wood and a red lining, so that it looks like the Danish flag when you open the box. The work was done in consultation with silversmith T. Fredberg of Kirkemester at the beginning of 2019. It was presented to Anja at a celebration of the 100 year jubilee of DSUK in Herning in June 2019.

The Danish Lutheran Church of New Zealand is very grateful for the exquisite gift, and we look forward to seeing the beautiful cross in use all over New Zealand. We hope that future newsletters will be able to bring photos showing the cross with the church congregations around the country.

Birgitte Bendsen

Substitute Pastor for the Danish Christmas Services in New Zealand 2019

Pastor Anja G. Mathiassen has agreed to be the locum for the Danish Church in Sydney from 1 October 2019 and the rest of the year. A challenge that she is looking forward to.

Because of this the church has employed a locum for Anja to take the Christmas services. We hope you will extend a warm welcome to pastor Kirsten Øster Lundqvist and her husband, Karsten Øster Lundqvist.

Introducing Kirsten

Kirsten identifies as an expat Dane as she has lived outside Denmark longer than within the kingdom. She was born in Sweden, grew up in and around Vejle, and graduated from Horsens Statsskole (Highschool). Her studies then took her to the UK and the States. She returned to Århus where she met Karsten whom she married in 1996.

It's because of Karsten's academic career that they now live in Wellington. He works at Victoria University as a senior lecturer and programme leader in computer sciences. Previously Kirsten's work has taken them to Norway and England. In her career Kirsten has worked within the Free Church movement. It has been a very varied career, where she has

been a parish priest in the Adventist church, a media and communication leader, radio journalist, aid worker, educator, and TV host.

In her spare time Kirsten likes to read, drink tea, Facebook friends around the world, and play board games with new friends here. She goes for her daily walks with the dog, Yoshi, and Kirsten and Karsten are still exploring New Zealand. During their first two years in Wellington, much of their spare time was spent learning Te Reo Maori which has enriched their understanding of the land and the culture here. “We have both fallen head over heels for Wellington and we intend to stay here,” says Kirsten, “and we look forward to meeting other Danes at this year’s Christmas services.”