



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Office of the
General Secretary

To: LWF Member churches

lutheranworld.org

Geneva, 27 November 2020

Waiting with hope

Respected church leaders, dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

We greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

We want to begin this Advent letter with a word of gratitude. You have led your churches during times of unprecedented challenge as your countries and your communities needed to relate to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no ready-made answers available for the questions you had to deal with, there were no toolboxes to rely on, as you needed to make complex decisions.

Yet, we hear that the gospel message of Jesus Christ continues to be preached by your churches, that suffering neighbors continue to be served, and the public voice of the church raising visions for peace with justice continues to be heard. We praise God for this and thank each of you for steadfastness, creativity, and hope during these times of pandemic.

We are thankful for how you worked to come together regionally and globally as members of the Lutheran World Federation – a communion of churches. You reflected, discerned, and prayed for each other. Your spirit of ‘prophetic defiance’ to connect is a wonderful gift. As you met, you have been a powerful expression of the vitality of our communion relationships.

We are now beginning the liturgical time of Advent. A time to prepare. A time of waiting. A time to learn anew to wait. It is never a passive waiting, but a hopeful one, a ‘pregnant waiting’ that nurtures and prepares for what is to come.

We will probably miss some of the signposts we would generally be looking for during Advent. Regular worship may not always be possible. Also, the singing of choirs with beautiful music opening our hearts to receive the good news of Immanuel – God with us. Even the signs of hope around us, or in our world, may be obscured. For many, it is not even clear whether Christmas can be a celebration with family members as it has been in previous years.

Still, nothing will prevent God from making God’s way: reaching out to us, approaching us, finding us, transforming us for a life in abundance as a gift of Christ. Salvation is coming into our realities and our lives. A salvation that has already taken roots in our time and in this world in Christ Jesus becoming human, and which we wait with active hope for God to complete and fulfill.

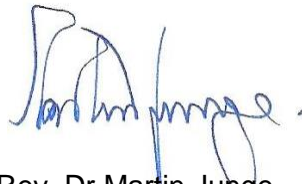
We offer our words of encouragement to you as leaders to continue nurturing the people and the communities entrusted to you with the gift of God's word. It is a signpost that no pandemic can wash away, one that gives orientation, confidence and hope to people seeking to remain strong as they live through these demanding times. We shall be affirmed in our shared faith that, by preparing for God's coming into this world in Bethlehem, we do anticipate in hope what lays ahead of us as we journey through this special time.

Know that we do pray for you.

In Christ,



Archbishop Dr Musa Pantil Filibus
LWF President



Rev. Dr Martin Junge
LWF General Secretary