



Based on the fruitful and mutually sustaining relationship we have had for a number of years, which has encouraged both churches to develop new perspectives on our church work, we wish to renew the Agreement between our churches.

The Diocese of Skara was the first diocese established in Sweden. The traditional view is that this took place in 1014, and that Thurgot von Bremen was the first bishop. Around the year 1000, the first Christian king Olov Skötkonung was baptised in the Husaby spring 20 km north of Skara. The Lutheran Reformation in Sweden was a long process. By 1527 a Riksdag had decided to break with the Pope; in 1531, the first Lutheran archbishop was ordained; but it was not until 1593 that a synod, independently of the then Catholic king and the basically Calvinist regent, approved the Augsburg Confession. Today, Skara is one of 13 dioceses in the Church of Sweden. Around 75% of all 530 000 people living in the diocese are members of the Church of Sweden. The diocese is located between the large lakes Lake Vänern and Lake Vättern. Borås, with a population of 106 000, is the largest city in Skara. The city of Skara is the home to the diocesan office and the bishop's residence. In the Diocese of Skara, there are 440 churches in 119 congregations.

It is believed that there were Christian communities in Roman settlements south of the frontier as early as the 1st century AD. Many churches in Bavaria bear witness of a lively communal Christian life in the Middle Ages. The teachings of Luther came to Bavaria at an early stage: in the region of the Lutheran Landeskirche Augsburg, Nuremberg and Coburg were important focal points for the Reformation. After 1530, followed imperial cities and Franconian principalities the Augsburg Confession. After 1803, when Swabian and Franconian areas became part of Bavaria, the confessional composition of what was then a kingdom changed: traditionally evangelical regions merged with what had previously been purely Roman Catholic Bavaria. Today the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria (ELKB) is the third-largest protestant Landeskirche in Germany. The ELKB is divided into six church districts with a total of 66 deanery districts.

1. The Church of Sweden and the ELKB are member churches of the Lutheran World Federation and thus part of a community of churches. It is our intention to continue to cultivate that community in the ELKB and the Diocese of Skara.
2. We live in the European Union and actively participate in shaping a united Europe, including inter alia by pursuing the objectives of the Charta Oecumenica.
3. The ELKB and the Diocese of Skara intend to continue their lively relationship, providing each other with mutual support and learning from each other. The two Lutheran churches operate in a similar and comparable social context, but have developed different structures and organisational forms. Both churches face the same challenges presented by the secularised, pluralistic society in which we live. Both churches are endeavouring to find answers how to be church in this situation.

The Diocese of Skara and the ELKB will continue to learn from each other and to share experiences and theological insight into the conducting of church services, diaconical work, mission and educational work.

Our partnership relates to all levels of church life and will continue to be sustained in numerous ways and imbued with life. It will involve for example:

- continuing with the exchange programme focused on youth-work and church-music
- encounters of youth work, co-workers and members of parishes and deaneries and church institutions
- regular meetings between bishops and other members of church leadership to common current themes
- collaboration on the European-Ecumenical Study-Course

4. The ELKB and the Diocese of Skara will continue to encourage meetings and exchange programs at the parish level.
5. The Diocese of Skara and the ELKB will each appoint a contact person for relations between the two churches.
6. As part of this Agreement, the ELKB and the Diocese of Skara hereby commit to pray for each other.
7. This Agreement will be evaluated and reviewed in 2027.
8. The Lutheran World Federation, the Evangelical Church in Germany [EKD], the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany [VELKD], and the Church of Sweden will be notified regarding this Agreement.

Geiselwind 25th November 2021 and Skara 18th June 2022.

Signature for Diocese of Skara, Church of Sweden

Biskop Åke Bonnier

Signature for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria

Landesbischof Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm