



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Office of the
General Secretary

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**Greetings from the Lutheran World Federation
to the 2022 Executive Committee Meeting
World Communion of Reformed Churches
17 May – 20 May, 2022**

**Stand firm, giving yourselves fully to the work of the Lord
(1 Corinthians 15:58).**

Geneva, 9 May 2022

Respected President of the WCRC, Rev. Najla Kassab
Respected Officers and Members of WCRC Executive Committee
Respected General Secretariat
Dear sisters and brothers,

Greetings and blessings from the Lutheran World Federation. In my first year as General Secretary, I am grateful for our strong commitment to the gospel and to one another on this journey towards unity.

This past year has brought many transitions in our lives and work, both individually and as communions. We continue to live in a form of “on-going pandemic”, always navigating what it means for our work and witness. Meetings increase, particularly as we try and catch-up on many missed opportunities for gathering. Our two communions have been working ever more closely together yet we too have been hindered by the pandemic and our implementation of the *Wittenberg Witness* (2017) has been slowed down.

Yet, we are able now to engage more actively with one another, especially with the Study Group on Religious Freedom. We have had the first two meetings. A process has been defined. In this world, where extremism and polarities and self-proclaimed rights prevail, the work of this Study Group is particularly pertinent.

Not only is this joint project significant for the world in which we live. There is another angle as well. Through the Study Group on Religious Freedom we are able to explore and deepen our understanding of our commitments in the *Wittenberg Witness*. In the spirit of the *Wittenberg Witness*, both communions together express their longing for new imagination “to dream a different world, a world where justice, peace and reconciliation prevail” (Art. 5). We are challenged today to make our “dreaming” a reality.

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I give thanks to God for the close partnership with the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Joint proclamation, witness, and service are more and more urgent in this time of crisis and war in Ukraine and in many other regions of the world. The theme of your meeting is therefore particularly meaningful: "Stand firm, giving yourselves fully to the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

At the beginning of Lent, we prepared together a prayer for global peace. Together, with many ecumenical partners, we prayed for a just peace. And now together we continue to engage, in the spirit of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, for the realization of justice – God's justice – as the visible witness of salvation, bringing about God's generous and good intent for all creation.

The Lutheran World Federation continues to hold you in prayer, especially as you navigate this time of transition. We are grateful for the General Secretariat and for our continuing close collaboration. With joy, we look forward to the realization of our gospel hopes. With perseverance, we continue to hold the WCRC, and you, its Executive Committee, and you, the General Secretariat, in our prayer. We entrust this meeting and the important decisions you are making to the Triune God.

May God grant you all to "stand firm," rooted in love, hope, and encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

With thanksgiving,



Rev. Anne Burghardt
General Secretary
The Lutheran World Federation