

## Department for International Relations

- is responsible for the church's ecumenical and international relations and related theological issues
- prepares and implements our church's theological dialogues
- maintains contact with the various churches, international church organisations, universities and research institutions
- coordinates twin parish work
- is responsible for international exchange grants
- is responsible for planning the church's mission among Finns living abroad and the implementation of cooperation with local sister churches. The church works among expatriate Finns in nearly 40 countries. The church's tourist workers serve seasonal migrants and tourists in the biggest foreign holiday destinations
- coordinates the common action of the church's mission organisations and Finn Church Aid
- takes care of the church's common approach to mission and education, training and information work
- maintains links with international operators and networks involved in mission work
- monitors international mission work and missiological discussion
- participates in interfaith dialogue and communication

EVANGELICAL<sup>+</sup>  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
OF FINLAND

### NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

P.O. Box 210, FI-00131 Helsinki, Finland  
Visiting address: Eteläranta 8, 00130 Helsinki,  
Finland  
Tel. +358 9 18021  
[www.sakasti.evl.fi/kuo](http://www.sakasti.evl.fi/kuo)

2016

*Cover photo: Brett Jorgensen/ Shutterstock  
Other photos: Department for International Relations,  
Future image bank (3. left)*



## A Church of Encounter

Guidelines for international and  
ecumenical work, including  
interfaith encounter,  
until 2020

EVANGELICAL<sup>+</sup>  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH  
OF FINLAND



## There is one God, and there is one church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is part of the worldwide church established by Jesus Christ. Jesus proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God, and revealed it in his acts of salvation and healing. He has charged us with taking the gospel into all the world. In words and deeds the church of Christ continues Christ's work in the world.

## Ecumenism is based on Christian faith

The renewal of the church on the basis of the common Christian faith is the aim of ecumenism, and it is the task of every Christian to pray and work for this. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland seeks to advance the church's full and visible unity through its doctrinal conversations with other churches. Alongside theological dialogue at home, discussions are organised internationally.

## Interfaith dialogue

Because God is one, humanity is also one, in spite of national, cultural, or religious differences. God is the Creator of everything; God is the source of all life; and God also draws close to and calls all people. Christians recognise the work of creation and the shared calling of all the people of God. All people, irrespective of religion, are brothers and sisters, and their mission is to build a common future by their wisdom and good deeds. For this reason, Christians value what is good, true, and just – what is from God – in all faiths.

## Mission is the church's basic task

The church's mission is founded on the mission of the Triune God, in which all Christians are called to share. Mission is the basic task of every church and every parish. The church and its mission organisations take this message bravely to the living, whether near or far. The defence of justice, human dignity, equality, and fundamental rights is part of the church's comprehensive mission. The church and its mission organisations meet, listen to, and serve each person. They especially encounter the displaced, the marginalised, and the persecuted.

## Action for human dignity

Finn Church Aid is involved in long-term development work, assists in humanitarian crises, and promotes the realisation of human rights. It is charged with the work of international diakonia by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. This work is especially focused on the weakest countries, where there are also often deep-seated conflicts. Its working priorities are the right to peace, the right to a livelihood, and the right to an education.

**Internationalism, ecumenism,  
and interfaith encounter  
are daily realities at all  
levels of the church**

## The church's work among Finns abroad – a world support network

Finland has a population of 5.5 million. There are 1.4 million people with a Finnish background living abroad, of whom about 220 000 are Finnish citizens. Each year about 3.6 million Finns travel abroad on holiday, and a growing number of Finns lives abroad for part of the year. Work among Finns abroad seeks to offer them worship and the church's other ceremonies in their mother tongue, and also to offer assistance when their lives require it. The aim is also to support Finns living abroad in integrating in their new country, so that they can find their place among local Christians.

## Encounter everywhere

Internationalism, ecumenism, and interfaith encounter are daily realities at all levels of the church. Every member of the church is a point of contact for encounter with other Christian communities and other faiths. Local parishes are places of encounter and interaction. The church's twin parish relations and other international projects also serve as international actors. The dioceses support the parishes in their international contacts. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland as a whole is generally responsible for ecclesiastical relationships with other parties. Church organisations are charged with this responsibility by the church in accordance with the tasks of international diakonia and mission.