

Appendix to the General Report on Art Exhibition and on Women

Report 1: KIC Church Service, also marking the Opening of UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

Church Service of the Kolding International Congregation

Opening of the FN World InterFaith Harmony Week

Simon Peters Church, Islandsvej 12, 6000 Kolding, Denmark

February 4, 2024

Description and Background: Every first Sunday of the month, Kolding International Congregation, holds its worship service in English. This is often attended by people of different countries of origin. The church service is officiated by the Rev. Michael Markussen with the church organist, Ejvind Amorsen. Lone Krogh Møller, the cross-cultural employee for the Cross- Cultural Ministry for Kolding Deanery leads the congregation in congregational prayers. Kolding International Congregation is run by a local church council and is the international church within the Kolding Deanery, a church entity of the Danish Folk Church or Lutheran Evangelical Church in Denmark which in the town of Kolding, comprises 31 local churches that support the work for foreigners, immigrants, and refugees.

This Sunday on February 4 fell on the week for the global observance of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. And it became natural that the international church service should also give information on the FN World Interfaith Harmony Week: its start as a resolution and its invitation for activities that gather people...as one community despite different cultures or religions.

Church Service: The order of service was already planned by Pastor Michael Markussen and Ejvind and with the new cross-cultural worker, Lone Krogh Møller. Pastor Birgit Urd Andersen led the church service. Elizabeth Padillo Olesen was requested to do the biblical reflection because Pastor Michael Markussen was sick.

This February church service was also called Candle Mass Church Service which in Danish is called *Kyndelmisse* or Candle Mass with the lighting of candles to mark the transition of darkness to light in the mid-winter and the change of the seasons and our need for light.

One tradition is the eating of pancakes as done by the older farmers in the past. A pancake symbolizes the sun and the light it brings to a time of darkness in winter. It is just recently that this tradition has slowly come into the Danish Church.

The community singing featured songs in different languages: in Spanish, Danish, English, Ukrainian and German. Those who know the language simply hopped in to sing. Elizabeth Padillo Olesen gave the biblical reflection, and she informed the gathered congregation on UN World Interfaith Harmony and how it was started with a resolution by the King of Jordan, King Abdullah II and which soon after was ratified by UN members. The ground principles of *Love of God, Love of Neighbor and Love of the Good* surrounding the celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week also inspire us to reach out foreigners, immigrants and those of other religions as as own brothers and sisters.

The text was on the Growing Seed and the Mustard Seed from the New Testament, interpreted as a symbol of God's kingdom on earth, a kingdom of truth, love, peace and justice and how it can turn to be a big tree in God's world with all those who work out for love, solidarity and unity despite differences in cultures and religions.

The Fellowship Hour after the Church Service:

1. Serving of Pancakes, also reminding the tradition on having pancakes for the Candle Mass, an old tradition from the Catholic Church, but also affirming how good it is when we can gather, eating simple food and still enjoying the fellowship as brothers and sisters in one Lord.

The pancakes were prepared by Lone Krog Møller, the new Cross-Cultural Worker of Kolding Provsti and Lilly Biswas, the chairman of church council of the Kolding International Congregation.

2. There was time for sharing by those who have come for the first time or by those who had earlier agreement to speak during fellowship. A young youth, Mahde from Afghanistan, a refugee in DK, talked about his escape from

Taliban through the waters until he was fished out by Turkish police, after having swam in the waters in many days and nights to reach a safer ground. Mahde is still waiting for the next interview, and he is hoping he will be allowed to stay in Denmark. He participates in summer camps and week-end camps and find a circle of friends.

3. People spent time talking with each other around tables. New participants were introduced into the fellowship, a woman from Thailand with Buddhist religious orientation. And 2 families from Iran also joined. And a mixed couple from the Philippines and Afghanistan also presented their son who has grown much bigger since the last time they attended the cross-cultural meeting.
4. Personal conversations around the table. Sharing and updates as friends. Or answering to the question: how we can contribute to God's kingdom on earth.
5. The church service started at 1 pm and there was an hour church service. Participants stayed for the fellowship time until 4 pm.

Photos: only from the fellowship time with pancakes and fruits



Invitation on the Facebook profile of Kolding International Congregation

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=776314021199350&set=a.556304236533664>

Photo of Simon Peters Church

