

## 250914 Community Meeting

### Opening talk by Peter Dobers

It is with great joy – and with humility – that I welcome you to the first congregational meeting of the autumn. But before we begin, let me share a few words.

We stand in a living and well-appreciated church. Just in the past few weeks we have seen it clearly:

- a full church at the confirmation service last Sunday,
- the Ecumenical Week, partly hosted here in Immanuel – a historic continuation of the Ecumenical Week in 1925,
- and soon, in just two weeks, we will host the national conference of the Uniting Church in Sweden (Equmeniakyrkan) here in our house.

Immanuel Church is therefore not just a building in the heart of Stockholm. We are a meeting place that is valued and that counts:

- in the very center of the city and the pulse of the metropolis,
- in the broad fellowship of the Uniting Church in Sweden,
- in Christian and interfaith collaboration,
- in diaconal work, compassion, and music – yes, in society at large.

When we met at the annual meeting this spring, and I had just been presented by the nominating committee as the proposed chairperson, I was asked a question along the lines of: “How do you see Immanuel Church?”

My answer then is the same as today: I see a congregation full of committed people – with different backgrounds, unique talents and gifts – who, regardless of where they come from, find in Immanuel both a spiritual home and a social community. Here we worship in English, Korean, and Swedish. Here there are activities and meeting places that touch people’s daily lives. It is good. It is blessed.

And precisely because it is so good and blessed, we also have opportunities – and perhaps even obligations – to contribute even more – especially to the Uniting Church in Sweden and its important mission priorities: to spread faith in Jesus, to strengthen adult education, and to support higher education and research.

- I am thinking of the work that will follow after the weekly magazine *Sändaren*,

- I am thinking of the five folk high schools,
- I am thinking of University College Stockholm (*Enskilda Högskolan Stockholm*), and
- I am thinking of all the wonderful sister congregations in and around Stockholm.

Here, Immanuel can take part and make a difference.

At the same time, we have great opportunities to deepen our presence here – in the neighbourhoods around the church and our properties, throughout Greater Stockholm. To build more cooperation with others in civil society, with the public sector, with business and academia – and to be a voice, a hand, a force in our city. That is the development I want to encourage, and where I see Immanuel contributing.

Development in our congregation, in the Uniting Church, in Stockholm.

Peter Dobers

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