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REV. DR ANNE BURGHARDT

Rev. Dr Anne Burghardt has served as General Secretary of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) since November 2021, acting as both Chief Executive Officer and Chief Ecumenical Officer of the LWF. In her capacity she leads the LWF's mission to connect 150 member churches, advancing LWF's work in theology, advocacy, humanitarian aid, and ecumenical engagement globally.

An ordained pastor of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), Rev. Burghardt has extensive background in theological research and ecumenical relations and has held positions in both areas within her home church and the LWF.

She is the first person from the LWF's Central Eastern Europe region as well as the first woman to hold this position. Elected by the LWF Council on 19 June 2021, she assumed office on 1 November 2021.

She led the LWF at the 2023 Thirteenth Assembly in Kraków, Poland, under the theme "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope." Through her guidance the LWF developed a new strategy for 2025-2031, focused on "Sharing Hope – Empowering Churches, Impacting the World."

Biography

Burghardt was born in Estonia in 1975. She completed her high school education in Estonia. She studied theology at the University of Tartu from 1994 to 1998 and obtained a bachelor's degree. She graduated with a master's degree in theology in 2002 from the University of Tartu. Part of her master's program included studies in Germany: at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1998-1999, and the Humboldt University in Berlin, 1999-2000. She completed her PhD studies at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg in 2022 with a dissertation focusing on Orthodox theology.

Burghardt was ordained in 2004, following a two-year study at the EELC Pastoral Seminary. From September 2004 until 2013, she worked at the EELC Institute of Theology, an accredited private university, as head of the MA program on Studies in

Christian Culture. She was instrumental in developing this master's study program, that has become a successful and popular curriculum, attracting many people who are not directly connected to the church. From January 2006 until 2013, she served in addition, as the head of curriculum development for bachelor's and master's studies at the institute and as coordinator of strategic planning.

Between 2007 and 2010, Burghardt's work at the institute covered other projects such as responsibility for HIV prevention and counselling. From 2009 to 2011, she was the Estonian coordinator for a European Union (EU)-funded multilateral program on community development in disadvantaged rural areas. She was also responsible for an EU-funded project analyzing best practices of intercultural methods of conflict management in the church, both at parish levels and in national church administration.

In 2010, Burghardt was among a group of theologians who initiated translation of Luther's main writings from German into Estonian, published in 2013. She contributed to the collection with translations of writings such as "Von Kaufhandlung und Wucher" and "An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung". She was a founding member of the web-based theological journal *Kirik & Teoloogia* (Church & Theology) in 2011, with the aim to enhance theological discussion in Estonia.

Burghardt joined the LWF in 2013 as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations. She was initially responsible for ecumenical relations with the Anglicans and Mennonites, and later with the Orthodox and Pentecostals. She also coordinated preparations for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, including production of the study booklets on the significance of the theme "Liberated by God's Grace." In 2016, she led the coordination of preparatory material for the 2017 LWF Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia.

Burghardt has authored numerous papers for several LWF publications, and for other books, journals and conference presentations. The LWF publications she has edited include the following:

- Global Perspectives on the Reformation. Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economics (2016)
- Salvation – Not for Sale; Human Beings – Not for Sale; Creation – Not for Sale (2015)
- Liberated by God's Grace (2015)

She has edited many other publications in German and Estonian, and [several of her papers have been published](#) in periodicals, theological publications and journals.

Upon her return to Estonia in 2018, Burghardt worked as a guest lecturer on ecumenism at the University of Tartu and at the EELC Institute of Theology. At the EELC Institute of Theology, she also led a project on conflict resolution.

From 2020, Burghardt worked on a part-time basis at the EELC as Advisor for International and Ecumenical Relations, with main responsibility for LWF and the Conference of European Churches (CEC). She continued as Head of Development at the EELC Institute of Theology, with responsibility for implementation of strategic priorities, introducing new avenues of international cooperation, and new web-based ways of studying and working. Between 2019 and 2020, she was an LWF consultant in ecumenical relations, and since 2018, a member of the CEC governing board.

Anne Burghardt and her husband Arnd Matthias Burghardt, an EELC pastor, have two children.