



## Communiqué

The Meissen Commission of the Church of England (CofE) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) met for its 34th meeting from October 24 to 27, 2024, in Rochester, under the leadership of Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Dr. Jonathan Gibbs (CofE) and Landesbischof Ralf Meister (EKD). We are grateful to Bishop Jonathan and his wife, Toni, for their hospitality during the meeting.

In addition to the Commission members from the CofE and the EKD, the meeting includes regular observers from the Celtic Churches, German-speaking congregations in Great Britain, and the Diocese in Europe, who provided reports and updates. To foster closer collaboration between the Commission and the Theological Conference, the Co-Chairs of the Meissen Theological Conference, Professor Dr. Friederike Nüssel and Revd Canon Professor Mark Chapman, also gave an update on theological work related to the understanding of episcopacy.

The focus of this year's meeting was twofold: on "Estates Ministry" – its challenges and opportunities – and on "Racial Justice." Four key presentations were given by The Revd Richard Thomas, The Revd Mike Nelson, The Revd Canon Jeremy Blunden, and Pastor Stephen Bello. The Meissen Commission remains committed to addressing these and other challenges and opportunities facing the wider Church, as we journey and work together toward full, visible unity by seeking first the Kingdom of God.

At a reception at Bishopscourt, we were honoured to be joined by the German Ambassador to the United Kingdom, His Excellency Miguel Berger, who shared insights on current and future Anglo-German relations across all sectors of society. During the Q&A, the ongoing challenges of Brexit were discussed, with a clear consensus on the importance and relevance of the Church and Government working together to foster existing partnerships (such as town-twinning and diocesan connections) and to provide opportunities for groups and individuals to experience cultural exchange.

The Commission received an update on the work of the last Meissen Theological Conference from Professors Chapman and Nüssel, and considered the possibility of future work on how doctrine may legitimately develop and change within our respective traditions, as part of our commitment to working towards full visible unity.

The meeting also included regular attendance at Evensong at the cathedral, a guided tour of Chatham, a visit to a church regeneration project, and a visit to the Huguenot Museum in Rochester. The gathering concluded with a Eucharistic service, at which Bishop Gibbs preached and Bishop Meister presided.

27 October 2024

