

Dear members of the Synod in the Evangelical - Lutheran Church of Latvia,  
from 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September the Western-European WICAS conference (Women in Church and Society of the Lutheran World Federation) took place in Vienna. Women from three countries, five national churches and a member of the Association of Protestant Female Theologians in Germany were meeting to discuss projects and activities in the year of the Reformation and to investigate the implementation of the Gender Justice Paper of the Lutheran World Federation in their respective churches.

The delegates were delighted to learn about the jubilee festivities in Riga on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2015 on the occasion of 20 years of the Association of Lutheran Women Theologians. It was especially moving to hear about Vaira Biténa, the first ordained woman vicar, being present at the celebration and taking part in it.

Ever since the beginning of Christianity women have passed the gospel on, they have preached and they have given lessons, as according to baptism (Gal. 3,27f.) everyone is one in Jesus Christ.

Women have read and interpreted the Bible following the example of biblical women like Mary Magdalene, witness of the resurrection, or the apostle Junia as well as women of the Reformation like Argula von Grumbach or Katharina Zell to name just a few. Time and again women have been called to serve the Word and the Sacrament, referring to Mt.10,32ff or Acts 2,18 or Joel 3,1 where the spirit calls both on sons and daughters to serve the Word and the Sacrament.

The delegates of the WICAS Conference Western Europe encourage the members of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia to actively support the ordination of women theologians into the office of priest. This would mean that the model of the priesthood that was founded in the Reformation, as representing all that are christened would become reality in all respects and women can follow the call to office in parishes and the church.

With regards as sisters



Pastor Ulrike Hansen, Regional Coordinator of WICAS Western Europe