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International and Ecumenical Conference on Racial Justice

GOD'S KALEIDOSCOPE 4

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians
3:28)

THEME: IN SUCH A TIME AS THIS

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH – FROM LAMENT TO LIBERATION

Date: 10–13 December 2026

Venue: Christian Jensen Kolleg, Breklum, North Frisia, Germany

Introduction

The Diocese in Europe embodies extraordinary diversity of language, culture, ethnicity, biography, and lived experience. Together with our Ecumenical Partners, we believe that this diversity is not incidental but reflects God's creative intention. The image of “God's Kaleidoscope” expresses the theological conviction that the Body of Christ reveals divine beauty precisely through its multiplicity.

At the same time, our world is increasingly shaped by racial injustice, xenophobia, economic exclusion, war, forced migration, political polarisation, and the weaponisation of identity. Across Europe and beyond, societies are struggling with questions of belonging, memory, colonial legacy, migration, democratic resilience, and structural discrimination. Churches are not immune to these tensions. They are called to respond both prophetically and pastorally.

The Fourth International and Ecumenical Conference on Racial Justice seeks to deepen the commitment of the Diocese in Europe and its partners to racial justice as intrinsic to the Gospel. The conference builds on the work of Freiburg (2023), Bad Boll (2024), and Berlin (2025), and continues the movement from awareness to transformation, from reflection to public witness.

Rooted in Isaiah's vision of the “repairer of the breach”, the conference understands justice as essential to authentic peace-making. Peace without justice is fragile; reconciliation without truth remains incomplete.

The previous conferences have already strengthened awareness, cooperation, theological reflection, and practical engagement for racial justice within the Diocese in

Europe and beyond. Their impact of the Racial Justice Conferences can be seen in growing ecumenical collaboration on a whole range of issues, including land, water, and food justice, stronger youth participation, more inclusive worship and leadership structures, and deeper engagement with questions of human dignity, democracy, migration, peace, healing and belonging.

God's Kaleidoscope 4 seeks to sustain and deepen this momentum in a time of growing uncertainty and hostility.

Theological Foundation

At the centre of our theological reflection stands the biblical conviction that every human being is created in the image of God. Human dignity is therefore not granted by states, institutions, or majorities. It is God-given and inviolable.

This conviction shapes Christian engagement in church and society alike. Wherever human dignity is denied through racism, exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, contempt for migrants, ecological injustice and destruction, or political extremism, Christians are called to respond.

The Diocese in Europe's policy framework *Breathing Life* continues to provide an important theological and pastoral foundation for this work. It invites us to reflect on belonging not as a human achievement but as God's initiative. Faith draws us into a community in which strangers become neighbours and outsiders become members of God's household.

As Rowan Williams writes in *Meeting God in Paul*:

“Those who were once strays, migrants, exiles, foreigners, are now insiders. They now belong.”

This understanding of belonging compels us to move from exclusion to inclusion and from fear to hospitality.

The conference theme also draws on Isaiah 58:12:

“You shall be called the repairer of the breach.”

Isaiah links worship with justice, spirituality with structural repair, and faith with the restoration of human dignity. Biblical peace (*shalom*) is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of right relationship, justice, equity, and flourishing.

The exhortation to Esther — “Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for **such a time as this**” (Esther 4:14) — reminds the Church of its responsibility not to remain silent in times of crisis. Christians are called to speak truthfully, defend the vulnerable, and resist the normalisation of hatred, fear, and exclusion.

Our previous conferences have deepened our understanding that racial justice cannot be separated from social, ecological, economic, gender, and intergenerational justice and healing. Human dignity is indivisible.

The conference also recognises that liberal democracy cannot sustain itself solely through legal procedures or constitutional mechanisms. Democratic culture depends on deeper moral and spiritual resources: truthfulness, solidarity, responsibility, humility, compassion, and a shared commitment to the dignity of every person.

Religious communities, alongside other cultural and civic actors, have an important role in nurturing these foundations in ways that are confident yet humble, engaged yet non-hegemonic.

At a time when digital hostility, disinformation, and algorithm-driven polarisation increasingly shape public discourse, churches are called to cultivate discernment, truthful communication, and courageous public witness.

Our call to racial justice work is therefore:

- a discipleship imperative;
- an ecclesial responsibility;
- a contribution to democratic resilience and social cohesion;
- a witness to the Kingdom of God.

Why This Conference Now?

The need for sustained engagement has become more urgent.

Across Europe and beyond, societies are increasingly marked by political polarisation, populist rhetoric, anti-immigrant hostility, democratic erosion, ecological crisis, and widening social inequality. Public discourse is often shaped by outrage, misinformation, and distrust. Institutions that protect democratic culture — including the judiciary, independent media, and civil society organisations — are under growing pressure in many contexts.

At the same time, new forms of racism and exclusion continue to emerge. Hate speech, xenophobia, religious discrimination, and attacks on minorities are increasingly normalised in public life and on social media platforms.

Churches are called to respond not only externally but also internally. Questions of representation, participation, hospitality, leadership, worship, and belonging remain urgent within our own communities.

Young people in particular are demanding credible responses. They are not asking merely to be consulted on “youth issues”; they seek meaningful participation and preparation for responsible leadership in church and society. Many of the young people have expressed their joy at being able to participate, that is being present and engaged, at the conferences and have found the encounter, diocesan, ecumenical and international enriching. Their urgency reflects the seriousness of the present moment.

In such a time as this, faith communities must move beyond general appeals for tolerance. They are called to cultivate communities of justice, courage, truthfulness, reconciliation, and hope.

Conference Objectives

God's Kaleidoscope 4 seeks to:

1. **Create sacred space for lament and truthful conversation**
Naming racial wounds, historical injustices, exclusion, and present realities within church and society.
2. **Deepen theological reflection on justice and peace-making**
Exploring racial justice in relation to democracy, migration, ecology concerns that include land, water and food justice, ecclesiology, and public witness.
3. **Equip participants for courageous engagement**
Providing practical tools for congregations, church and diocesan structures, and ecumenical partnerships.
4. **Strengthen networks of solidarity and collaboration that bring healing**
Building sustainable relationships across churches, generations, cultures, and communities.
5. **Develop concrete commitments and follow-up processes**
Moving intentionally from reflection to implementation and accountability.

Core Framework: From Lament to Liberation

The conference journey will follow three interconnected movements.

I. Courageous Truth-telling

- Truth-sharing in honest dialogue
- Preferential listening to marginalised voices
- Addressing unconscious bias and systemic inequities
- Developing intercultural competence to lament breaches

Courageous truth-telling refuses superficial harmony. It recognises that genuine reconciliation requires honesty, humility, and the willingness to confront painful realities.

II. Prophetic Peace-making

- Engaging biblical traditions of justice
- Examining colonial histories and their continuing impact
- Addressing structural inequities in church and society
- Enabling pathways for reconciliation
- Strengthening advocacy and public witness

Prophetic peace-making challenges systems that perpetuate injustice and calls the Church into courageous public engagement.

III. Liberating Justice-seeking

- Healing trauma and restoring dignity
- Celebrating diversity as gift
- Reimagining leadership and shared responsibility
- Cultivating communities of belonging
- Addressing ecological and digital dimensions of justice

Liberating justice-seeking joins peace with justice to announce and nurture the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Its purpose is not merely reform but renewal of life for all.

Participants

The conference will bring together:

- Participants from the Church of England as a whole, and in particular representatives from chaplaincies and diocesan structures within the Diocese in Europe;
- participants from ecumenical partner churches, in particular from Germany;
- young leaders and representatives from children's and youth ministries;
- practitioners, scholars, clergy, and lay people engaged in justice and inclusion work, including land, water and food justice, and climate justice;
- representatives of faith-based organisations and civil society initiatives;
- participants from previous God's Kaleidoscope conferences.

Particular emphasis will be placed on intergenerational participation and the strengthening of young leadership.

Conclusion

God's Kaleidoscope 4 builds on the journey from lament to action and from awareness to public witness and healing. It seeks to strengthen theological reflection, practical engagement, ecumenical cooperation, and courageous peace-making in a rapidly changing and often hostile context.

The conference is grounded in the conviction that racial justice is not a marginal concern but integral to the Gospel and inseparable from the wider struggle for human dignity, democratic resilience, ecological responsibility, and social cohesion.

The direction as envisaged in the Berlin Conference statement pointed to a pathway into the future:

- **We dream** of a world in which the breadth of God's spacious dwelling becomes evident among us – a house with many rooms, where every human being, in all their dignity, identity, and belonging, finds a home. In a time marked by rising fear, fragmentation, and hostility, we dream of communities shaped by the hospitality of

Christ, who creates common space where others exclude, reconciles where others foster a sense of offence and humiliation, and gathers together where others cause division. We dream of safe spaces where everyone may open up freely and is listened to attentively and respectfully.

- **We acknowledge** that this third Conference convened with heavier hearts than before. Participants brought stories of democratic backsliding; polarised societies; a populism that has seeds of fascism; racialised violence and a resurgence of unashamed, open racism; ecological devastation; weakening trust in institutions; digital manipulation; and rising hostility and fear. Our young participants – the inheritors of all that today’s decisions will shape – expressed frustration, urgency, and determination. They called for wider participation, formation for leadership, and the courage to act before opportunities close. These tears and fears do not overwhelm us. They sharpen our vision. They deepen our resolve.
- **We commit** to walk together in our diversities – not despite them, but because of them. Unity is not uniformity. We commit to strengthen one another in courage, to resist hostility with prophetic clarity, to speak truth in public, to defend the dignity of all people, and to confidently bring hope into this world. We commit to uphold ‘from lament to action’ and not reverse the course, and move from insight to transformation, reflection to public witness, being wounded to becoming wounded healers and a community of healing.

This 4th Racial Justice Conference is dedicated to turning these commitments into reality.

The Venerable Dr Leslie Nathaniel

*Archdeacon of Germany, Northern Europe and the East
and Chair of the Racial Justice Working Group*

On behalf of the Racial Justice Working Group
and the Local Conference Planning Committee

13.06.2026

Programme Overview (draft)

Thursday, 10 December 2026

- Opening Worship and Welcome
- Greetings from Church and Ecumenical Leaders
- Introduction to the Conference Process and Statement Preparation
- **Theme Presentation:** *God's Kaleidoscope: A Spirituality for Peace-making amidst the Laments*
- Evening fellowship with contributions from the Sámi community

Friday, 11 December 2026

Courageous Truth-telling in Such a Time as This

- Morning Worship and Bible Study on Esther 4
Keynote: Truth-telling amid growing Hostility and declining Christian Confidence
- Panel Discussion on the Breaches we need to repair - peace-making, racial justice and ecological justice, and Christian public witness
- Youth Voices Session
- *Keynote: The Joys and Pains of Truth-telling in a Context of Threat and Fear*
- *Reading the Magnifica Humanitas in Such a Time as This*
- Group Discussions: *Daring to Dream*

Saturday, 12 December 2026

Prophetic Peace-making and Liberating Justice-seeking: Navigating Faltering Times

- Morning Worship and Bible Study on Isaiah 58
- *Keynote: The Road to Freedom: Peace-making and Liberating Justice-seeking in Such a Time as This*
- Ecumenical, interfaith, and global perspectives on justice and democracy
- Voices of Young People
- Testimonies on repairing the breaches
- Caste and Race in Conversation
- *Keynote: Peace-makers: A New Horizon of Hope*
- Final Plenary and Adoption of the Conference Statement

Sunday, 13 December 2026

- Departure to Hamburg
- Concluding Worship at St Thomas à Becket, Hamburg
- Fellowship and Departures