




European Methodist Lecture Program (EMLP) 2022



Co-hosted by the Reutlingen School of Theology (GBHEM LEaD Hub Europe)



& Wesley House Cambridge (GBHEM LEaD Hub Britain)


Wesleyan/Methodist inspiration and insights to the understanding of the Church

	<p>(1) 11.10.2022</p> <p>Is Methodism a church or a movement? From renewal movement to institutional church (Jørgen Thaarup/Denmark)</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Methodism began as an inner church revival movement and builder of religious societies. Expanding to areas where the Anglican Church didn't have church-functions, Methodism developed its Anglican ecclesiastic DNA. Spread to continental Europe, Methodism both had the character of an inner church movement, but it also had the character of an independent protestant church institution. Does this mean that Methodism has the same ecclesiology as the Anglican Church, or is there a specific Methodist ecclesiology? Is the ecclesiology of John Wesley identical with the ecclesiology of Methodist Churches in the 21. century? What is most important for modern Methodism: to be a movement, or to be a church?</p>
<p>Bio</p>	<p>Jørgen Thaarup is District Superintendent of the UMC in Denmark. He received his Basic Theological training at the UMC Theological Seminary in Gothenburg. Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. Doctor of Theology degree in Wesleyan studies from Gothenburg University. Teacher in systematics and biblical themes at the UMC Seminary in Gothenburg, dean at the same for ten years. Lecturer at several Theological institutions, the last ten years in Wesleyan theology at the Stockholm Theological University and Methodist E-academy. Board of directors at the Africa University in Zimbabwe, chair of Committee on Academic and students' affairs. Published some books, most in theological themes.</p>
	<p>(2) 18.10.2022</p> <p>Staying connected – an innovative Methodist life and church model (Ulrike Schuler/Germany)</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>“Connexionalism” is the term used to describe the typical Methodist church model. Often, the first point of description is the organizational structure, the conferences with equal numbers of pastors and lay people delegated by the congregations. They stand in an interdependent network and have regional to worldwide decision-making authority at different levels. More important, however, is the question of the root of this church model: Christian spirituality is the beginning and heart of the doctrine and life of the church; expressing this in the connexional church is a further step. So, the lecture will be about this basis: The practice of the intensifying connection with God, oneself and all creatures, the continuous relational event of interpenetration with God's love to live God's love as “Living Grace”.</p>
<p>Bio</p>	<p>Ulrike Schuler served as Professor for Church History, Methodism and Ecumenism at the Reutlingen School of Theology (2003-2022). For many years she was chair of Methodist historical societies – for the German speaking area, the European and finally the World Methodist Historical Society. She was a delegate in international dialogues (with the Moravians, the Salvation Army and the Baptist World Alliance). For 12 years, she has been the UMC delegate in the German Theological Study Committee of the National Council of Churches. Her special research areas are Methodist women pioneers in European countries</p>

	with a special focus on different confessional and socio-political contexts; Methodism and Human Rights; Methodism and the Trade Union movement; Methodist observers of Vatican II. Since 2017, she has been the executive director of GBHEM for the LEaD Hub Europe.
	(3) 25.10.2022 Church as the community in its cultural context (Kirk Sims/USA, now Czech Republic)
Summary	From the earliest days of Methodism, John Wesley and others innovated and drew people together in community using forms that fit the cultural context. Building on this foundation, Methodists are called to gather in communities that use forms that are culturally relevant and connect people to the Good News in Jesus. This lecture will explore the need to be culturally relevant as a community of faith.
Bio	Dr Kirk Sims is consultant and theological educator with the General Board of Global Ministries. Prior to moving to Prague, he taught and oversaw the Intercultural Studies (Mission Studies) program at Asbury University in the United States. He has extensive ministry experience living and working in Ghana, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the US state of Georgia. He has research interests in and a call for resourcing the church in multicultural dynamics, responding to migration, and being culturally relevant in its theology. Dr. Sims is an elder in full connection with the North Georgia Conference and is married to Rev. Nicole Sims, who is the pastor of the English-Speaking United Methodist Church in Prague.
	(4) 01.11.2022 The Church as an Evangelizing Community (Sergei Nikolaev/Russia)
Summary	With significant political, economic, and ecclesial changes in our world, the importance of focusing on our church as an evangelizing community is paramount. This lecture will work off the classical definition from William J. Abraham of evangelism as a means of initiating people into the Kingdom of God. We will look at evangelism both theologically and as an ecclesial practice.
Bio	Dr Sergei Nikolaev is the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism in the Ruediger and Gerlinde Minor Chair and the President of the Moscow Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church. He holds a Ph.D. in Christian Tradition from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. His research and teaching focus on evangelism, spiritual formation and discipleship, recovering Methodist history in Russia, and bringing Wesleyan and Eastern Orthodox theology into conversation. Sergei Nikolaev is an ordained elder in the Central Russia Conference of the United Methodist Church and has served churches in both Russia and the United States.
	(5) 08.11.2022 Church as a caring community: Wesley's "intentional communities" as means for pastoral care (Meeli Tankler/Estonia)
Summary	The lecture gives an introduction to the essence of pastoral care and its forms and methods, focusing specifically on John Wesley's bands and on his general emphasis on small groups as „intentional communities“ for spiritual formation and growth. Mutual support and mutual accountability within a trustworthy small community have been acknowledged and

	successfully used also in the secular psychotherapy in our time but in the church context it has its own particular characteristics.
Bio	Meeli Tankler has a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY (USA). She is a member of the United Methodist Church in Estonia, and a member of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council. She served as President of the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary for 9 years (2009-2018), and currently her position at the seminary is Research and Development Director and Professor of Practical Theology, focusing on pastoral care. She has served in several international boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church, and has been on leadership positions in childrens' ministry and womens' ministry both nationally, internationally and ecumenically. Meeli is the Project Coordinator at the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary and works together with Ulrike Schuler for the Regional Hub for Leadership, Education, and Development in Europe (LEaD Hub EU) where she is responsible especially for the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference. Since January 2022 Meeli is the coordinator of Methodist e-Academy which offers an internet-based distance-learning program in Methodist studies with faculty and students from across Europe.
	(6) 15.11.2022 To Be Part of God's Renewal. Participation as Cornerstone of Methodist Theology (Michael Nausner/Sweden)
Summary	Participation is a reality that plays a crucial role in Wesleyan and Methodist soteriology. Salvation can be understood as participation in God's loving activity in the world. Humanity and all creation are invited to participate in God's creativity, in Christ's redemptive presence, and in the Spirit's continuous renewal. But humans participate not only in the renewal of creation but also in the destructive forces that threaten creation. This lecture explores various forms of participation in everyday life, in Christian praxis, and in the contemporary world with its challenges of ecological, intercultural, and interreligious co-existence. A main goal is to show how participation in the renewal of creation is not an exclusive affair but a spiritual reality with very concrete implications for the healing of a polarized and divided world.
Bio	Michael Nausner is a systematic theologian born in Austria. After theological studies in Reutlingen/Germany and Uppsala/Sweden he served as a United Methodist minister in Uppsala for six years. At Drew University in Madison/NJ he completed his dissertation in constructive theology in 2005 and served as professor for systematic theology at Reutlingen School of Theology between 2005 and 2017. Michael Nausner currently is senior researcher at the Church of Sweden Unit for Research and Analysis in Uppsala/Sweden and affiliated professor of Systematic Theology at Stockholm University College. He has an interest in how Christian faith is understood and practiced in the context of cultural and religious plurality. He has written on the relation between theology and postcolonial theory, on theology and migration, and lately on the theological challenges that arise from the climate crisis. An overarching theme throughout the last ten years has been to investigate various perspectives on salvation understood as participation in the renewal of creation.
	(7) 22.11.2022 Pastoral Supervision: a prudential means of grace? (Jane Leach/Great Britain)
Summary	In this lecture Dr Jane Leach will introduce the practice of pastoral supervision as it has been adopted by the British Methodist Church and experienced as a means of grace for the responsible exercise of ministry amongst British Methodist clergy. She will connect this with John Wesley's understanding of conferring and visitation as means of grace and locate the

	practice of pastoral supervision within a Wesleyan understanding of watching over one another in love.
Bio	The Revd Dr Jane Leach has been the Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge, since 2011. Prior to 2011 she was Director of Pastoral Studies at the college for ten years (2001-11). She trained at Wesley House in the 1990s and served her probation in the Fenland Methodist Circuit where she was responsible for four rural chapels. She was ordained presbyter at the British Methodist Conference of 1998. Jane holds degrees in history and theology from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Nottingham. Her own doctoral research was on faith development theory. She researches, supervises and publishes in the fields of practical theology and theological education with expertise in qualitative research and multidisciplinary perspectives. Her own recent research has been on the impact and nature of reflective supervision offered in a denominational context. Jane is a Fellow Commoner at Jesus College, Cambridge and is the Executive LEaD Hub Director: Britain for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church.
	(8) 29.11.2022 “Discerning the Spirits”: Methodist Ecclesiology and Processes of Theological and Moral Discernment (Stephan von Twardowski/Germany)
Summary	In “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection”(1777) John Wesley writes, “Give no place to a heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. Therefore, “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.” “Discerning the spirits” (1 Corinthians 2,12–15; 1 Corinthians 12,10; 1 John 4,1 etc.) proves to be a fundamental theological task of Christian community. Today, however, theological and moral discernment often leads to major disputes and confrontation within the churches. In society, too, processes of moral discernment in many places are marked by polemical disputes and distortions. The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has recently conducted an extensive study process on “Churches and Moral Discernment” (2015-2021). The core question of this study process was: What theological and ecclesiological foundations are needed to facilitate dialogue to build “koinonia” together? The United Methodist Church is challenged to rediscover its theological and ecclesiological foundations that enable processes of building “koinonia” in God’s loving grace within a reality of separation.
Bio	Dr Stephan von Twardowski is a pastor of the United Methodist Church and belongs to the North German Annual Conference. Since 2018 he has served as Professor for Systematic Theology and Methodism at Reutlingen School of Theology (Germany). He is also a lecturer in the Methodist-E-Academy teaching the subjects Methodist ecclesiology and ethics. His main research interests are Methodist and ecumenical theology, peace theology and ethics and the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
	(9) 06.12.2022 The Missional Church and Worldview Stages: Following Paul’s Lead in Engaging a Divided Church and World (Mark W. Lewis/Denmark)
Summary	In 1. Corinthians 9, Paul writes, “I have become all things to all people in order that I might save some”. Often, these words have been used to encourage contextualization of faith across boundaries of religion, culture and subculture. However, in today’s world, some of the greatest areas of division, both for the church and the world, revolve around the radically different ways people view reality. This lecture will offer some guidance in how

	leaders can recognize main characteristics of major worldviews, such as “traditionalism”, “modernism” and “postmodernism”, explore how they developed, and suggest how we might look past our own perspective in order to engage people of various worldview orientations from a missional church perspective.
Bio	Mark W. Lewis comes originally from the U.S. and is an ordained minister, teacher, writer and musician with the United Methodist Church of Denmark. He is currently senior pastor of Strandby UMC, general secretary of the Danish Methodist Board of Missions and an adjunct teacher with the E-academy. He holds a PhD in Missiology.
	(10) 13.12.2022 Church as the community with a future: Images of Church in the book of Revelation (Külli Tõniste/Estonia)
Summary	The last book of the Bible uses several images for the church that highlight different aspects of Christian ecclesiology. Revelation 21 in particular offers a vision of a perfect city made of the purest materials, reflecting the light of Christ, and having defined boundaries of access. What are the walls, foundations, gates and proportions of the New Jerusalem seeking to communicate about God’s purposes for church? This lecture offers a canonical-intertextual exploration of architectural rhetoric in Rev 21 that will potentially lead to a more satisfying theological insight than imagining Christian future as an eternal life in a golden celestial cubicle
Bio	After high school Külli studied in the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Bible School and thereafter at Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary. God opened the doors to study in the Master’s program at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky US, where she focused on the Bible, its historical-cultural background and the original Biblical languages. She earned her doctorate in London School of Theology via Brunel University. Her doctoral dissertation was on the Book of Revelation. Külli Tõniste taught at Houghton College in 2006-2014, and in Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary since 2015. She is excited to teach in the same school where she once studied, and believes that theology is not an academic exercise but a way to serve the church. Since 2018 Külli has been the Rector of Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary and sees her calling in serving the church through teaching. She is married to Douglas Childress who is a UMC pastor and has assisted him in his ministry.