

## Insights from Sweden

A brief presentation of who I am.

My name is Gunilla Hedkvist. I live in Norrköping two hours south of Stockholm. I was born in a Christian family that belonged to an organisation called Bible Faithful Friends which began in 1910 as a protest and break out group from The Evangelical Fatherland Foundation which in turn used to be a protest organisation within the Swedish state church and started around 1850.

We didn't go "to church". We went to "the mission house" or "the prayer house". Lay preachers preached there and we had a very simple liturgy: "Hymn, sermon, hymn prayer, hymn, coffee break, hymn, sermon, hymn prayer, hymn. We believed that for the sacraments you still had to turn to a pastor in the Swedish Church. All six children in my family were baptized at home, by a pastor from the Swedish State Church.

Confirmation was also done in the State church. In our Christian group confirmation retreats were held every summer and my confirmation pastor Josef Imberg was a former missionary to South Africa and Kenya. He introduced us to attending regular church services. He said that you should go to church even if the pastor is in no good. You can read a good book during the sermon and then just participate in the liturgy and hymns.

I think I started liking liturgy at this time. A couple of years later, when I was about 17 I found a book with all psalms of the Bible put to music, all 150 of them. In my mind I thought that this must be the best hymnal since God himself wrote it. So I suggested to my Bible Faithful Friends group that we should start singing the psalms. I was told that they were not supposed to be sung, they were just for reading. End of discussion. At least we managed to start a small Bible study group for teenagers, with my confirmation pastor as the leader. And I wrote a short evening prayer liturgy which was probably a close copy of something I had seen somewhere. We used it every time.

In 1972 my parents and I attended a Biblicum weekend in UMEÅ in northern Sweden, 600 miles from home. Besides important Swedish theologians such as Gustaf Adolf Danell and Seth Erlandsson there was a theologian from the USA there, professor Siegbert Becker. I remember how great it was to listen to lectures in English, my favourite subject at school. And they were good! When I found out that there were Christian colleges in America I saw my chance to persuade my parents into letting me study in the USA for a year. They finally gave up their resistance.

Professor Becker helped me with the first contact with Dr. Martin Luther College. I studied there for three semesters in 1973-74 and 1977. I don't think it is possible to overestimate the impact that school has had on me. I loved every bit of it.

Hymns and liturgy are two very important things to me. There are two articles I have read that have made me think quite a bit about these things. One is "Things are not always what they seem", by Paul Prange. Reading it made me so happy that I immediately translated it into Swedish. It deals mainly with what really happens in the divine service and when the word is preached and the sacraments are in use. The other one is "The power of hymnody" by John Brug. I attended a "hymn festival" at a folk high school in Sweden about a year ago. There was a panel discussion about the importance

of hymns. Even in this very Swedish church-liberal setting people witnessed about their aged parents who, despite severe dementia, remembered, quoted and trusted in the message of basic hymns with a clear gospel message.

A lot of research has been done in both Sweden and the other Nordic countries about the impact and influence Luther has had on liturgy, hymnology and music in the church over the centuries. I will not talk very much about this. Instead we will concentrate on the developments in my church, the LBK.

We will start with some important (and some not so important) background information about LBK and the history of Christianity and hymnals in Sweden.

## **My congregation and my city**

I live in Norrköping, a city 2 hours south of Stockholm. A fairly large city with about 130 000 inhabitants. Our congregation rents a worship space on the second floor of this building. Every Sunday we hang Christian paintings on the walls and a large altar tapestry to cover the whiteboard. This Easter Sunday one of our confirmands had prepared and open grave decoration for the altar.

The house where we rent our service space is a well known building in Norrköping. From the windows of our church you can see the City hall (the high tower) with Norrköping's patron saint St. Olav sitting on a chair at the top. The other tower is Hedvig's church, also called the German church.

A man made brook runs through this park(Strömparken) in central Norrköping.

Next to the park is the river "Motal ström" with its many water falls.

Norrköping used to be the center of all textile industries in Sweden, a "Little Manchester". There is no textile industry any more. It all moved to China and Thailand. Instead there is a lot of high tech industries and a branch of the University of Linköping in the old factory buildings. You could call Norrköping "Little Niagara" if you think about all the water falls along the river.

## **My church - The LBK**

This is a map of Sweden. All the red dots are places where the LBK has a congregation or a preaching station. There are 7 congregations. The distance between the congregations most far away from each other is about 900 miles. We have 6 pastors and about 200 members.

LBK was founded in 1973 so this summer at our annual summer conference and summer camp we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church. We had visiting pastors and professors from Bulgaria, Portugal, Germany, Finland, Norway, and the USA at the conference.

## **Early Swedish church history**

The first missionary to Sweden was Ansgar, in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. But it seemed that the congregation he founded in Birka, west of Stockholm, died out and a hundred years later there was no trace of it. Of course the country of Sweden didn't exist at that time. In the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century there was a king named Olof Skötkonung. He was the first king to be baptized and who remained in the faith until his death even though he was forced to resign because of it. It was the English missionary Sigfrid who baptized him. Sigfrid became bishop over a western province in Sweden.

If you travel in Sweden you will notice all the white church buildings on hills in the countryside. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century Christianity had spread and there are many churches still in use, which were built at this time. Östra Eneby church in Norrköping is one of them. Services are held here every Sunday and it is a popular church for weddings and baptisms. The oldest part of the church is from 1100 and the newest part from 1775.

The old 12-th century paintings in the ceiling are still preserved. The organ is from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Also very typical for Sweden is the graveyard surrounding the church. Even though there is no State church any more, the Swedish church still is the responsible organization for the burial sites and funeral chapels in Sweden. The so called “free churches, evangelicals and the catholic church” never have graveyards.

The pulpit is from the 18th century and rather typical, with reliefs of the the evangelists. The organ is from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The ship in the ceiling is a votive gift, given to the church to show thankfulness to God after being saved from drowning. These ships are rather common in churches along the coast of Sweden.

At the time when this church in Östra Eneby was built there were no hymnals...

### **Swedish hymnal history ...**

#### **... starts with the Reformation**

The Lutheran Reformation in Sweden was nearly simultaneous with the reformation in Germany. Two Swedes studied under Luther, Olavus Petri and Laurentius Andre. When they came back to Sweden, the reformation was soon under way protected by the Swedish king Gustavus Vasa.

**The first hymnal** was produced in 1526, but the oldest preserved one is from **1530**. The New Testament in Swedish was published in 1527 and the complete Bible in 1541. Olaus Petri both translated several of Luther’s hymns and wrote hymns, which are still in use today.

At this time Sweden also got the first complete translation of the Bible. It was published in 1541 and named “Gustav Vasa’s Bible”. It was a unifying factor for the Swedish language and served as a rule for how to spell the Swedish language. This translation was also very dependent on Luther’s translation.

Hymn singing became popular and many small hymnals were published without becoming used nation wide. The first hymnal used in most of Sweden was **the “Uppsala hymnal” from 1645**. The Uppsala hymnal was widely accepted but printers kept changing and adding hymns so it didn’t help stop the confusion.

At this time there was a lot of German influence in Sweden and especially so in Norrköping. German know-how was needed for the industries in this little city of with its 5000 inhabitants. And the German, comparatively wealthy, immigrants needed a church. The Swedish queen, Hedvig Eleonora, was of German descent and she took active part in providing a church building for her countrymen. Hedvig’s church was dedicated in 1673. It is right by the “German square” next to the City hall in Norrköping. And there is a hymnal connection as you will see later.

Hedvig’s church is situated to the left of The city hall at the German square, along the main street “Drottninggatan”, “Queen’s street. Maybe not as high hills as San Fransisco, but we do have street cars for public transportation.

The outside has been restored to what it looked like originally so what you see is what they saw in 1673 as well (almost, anyway).

The church underwent a renovation last year. Walls and ceiling were cleaned and the paintings were repaired.

The pulpit was imported from Germany in 1726.

The painting above the altar illustrates when Jesus comes to his disciples, including Thomas, after his resurrection.

Besides regular services and masses this church is often used for concerts because of its great acoustics. I have listened to both Handel's "The Messiah" and Bach's "Passion according to Matthew" here.

This is the church where the stones are speaking. In the ceiling there are paintings of many of the most important Jesus words, so whatever goes on here, you can always read that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and that he is the Good Shepherd who gives rest to those who carry heavy burdens.

Protected buildings like these old churches are preserved with tax money, so even if you are not a member of the Swedish church your tax money goes to renovation of these churches

And there is a connection between Queen Hedvig Eleonora and the first national hymnal authorized by the king:

In 1692 Bishop Jesper Swedberg of Skara was commissioned by the Swedish king (Hedvig Eleonora's son) to produce a hymnal for the whole country. Together with two other pastors he finished the work in 1694 and it contained 482 hymns. The king quickly approved and sanctioned the hymnal. It was printed. But then the hymnal was accused of being pietistic and not orthodox enough and it was confiscated to be destroyed. 70 hymns were excluded, some were changed. In 1695 the work was finished and the Swedish church had its first complete hymnal. Queen Hedvig Eleonora is said to have done some work with the music in the hymnal.

On the side: What happened with Jesper Swedberg's hymnal? I have read that jealousy played a big part in the decision to confiscate it, maybe it wasn't so pietistic after all. At the same time there was a call for help from the Swedish colony "New Sweden" in Delaware. The Swedes there were in great need for spiritual literature. It was quickly decided that Swedberg's hymnal should be shipped to America, where it could do no harm to Sweden.

The 1695 hymnal was published in 250 editions, a stunning 1 500 000 copies were printed, before Sweden produced a new hymnal 120 years later, and after that in 10 editions, the last one in 1973. It is by far the most influential devotional book in Sweden, and it has no comparison in other countries either.

It was more important than the Bible to many people and there is a reason why. Between its covers you find this:

1. The catechism in hymns – 21 hymns
2. King David's psalms in rhyme – 90 hymns
3. 4 canticles
4. 300 hymns for the different parts of the church year and Christian life.
5. Complete lectionary with epistle and gospel readings
6. The liturgy of word and sacrament
7. The Small Catechism
8. The Bugenhagen compilation of the passion and resurrection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem
9. A small prayer book
10. The litany – which is a special prayer of the church used during Lent and the close of the church year.

For people in general the hymnal was THE book of religion, more used than the Bible.

Ever since then the Swedish hymnals have contained a complete lectionary, the liturgy and the litany, the small catechism, a prayer book, the passion story besides all the hymns.

The next hymnal came in **1819**, and was called "**Wallin's hymnal**" after the most influential theologian/pastor/hymnwriter in the development of this hymnal. There is a strong influence from the enlightenment and romanticism in this hymnal and morality and the good will of people are stressed. The general world view is much brighter than in the old hymnal. Wallin was a synergist and it can be seen in some of his hymns. One of the LBK pastors, Ingemar Furberg, sometimes would summarize Wallins theology like this: "Do good and do your best, then God will do the rest." Wallin had a reputation of being a very good poet. You can see in the hymns that romanticism has an influence on this hymnal. And still now, in Sweden we like to connect the variations in the seasons with our Christian faith and use this in our hymns. There is an American connection here. Wallin actually once wrote an occasional poem called "Cheers for George Washington"!

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this hymnal was criticized for not clearly enough presenting the Lutheran theology of salvation by grace alone. There was also a need for hymns covering other subjects, for example mission work. A replacement was needed.

In 1921 a supplement was printed: "New hymns".

In 1937 it was replaced completely. Influential in producing the 1937 hymnal was bishop J. A. Eklund. A young pastor, Anders Frostensson, had a few hymns in this hymnal.

The last **Swedish hymnal was published in 1986**. It has all the "extras" that you could find in the 1695 hymnal, but it is still very different. The 325 first hymns are part of the "ecumenical hymnal" a corporate work between almost all Christian denominations in

Sweden and the other half is “the Swedish church” part. Anders Frostensson was the most influential hymn writer for this hymnal.

### **My own relationship to hymnals:**

#### **My three blue hymnals**

##### 1. My first blue hymnal:

Church and school were closely connected in Sweden until 1963. My first blue hymnal was given to me when I began first grade in 1961. It was a special school hymnal but the only difference from the hymnal in the State Church was the purple slightly thicker inserted paper right after the hymns, which contained a list of hymns suited for learning in the schools. I didn't have any special relationship to this hymnal. It was “approved and sanctioned by the king” in 1937. The language seemed old to me then in 1961 and the music was boring. I was already used to the revival melodies of the Bible-Faithful Friends' songbook, a large collection of spiritual songs from the revival times in Sweden at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The melodies were much livelier to my ear and people sang from their hearts.

##### 2. My second blue hymnal:

Dr. Martin Luther College auditorium, August 1973. A newly purchased “Lutheran Hymnal” from the DMLC bookstore. I now sang many of those “boring” melodies from my first blue hymnal in a completely new setting. Young people, singing from their hearts in four part harmony rich texts from our Lutheran heritage. Everyone participating in the songs of the liturgy at St. John's down the hill. I began to like it all.

3. My third blue hymnal is my newest one but also the oldest one. It takes us back to that golden age of Lutheran Hymnody in Sweden and the first Swedish hymnal. It's been in my house for a few months. It's the hymnal from 1695, published with music in 1697. Paging through it I found the one and only hymn we had to learn in confirmation class, “Jesus is my friend, the best one”, AND not with the music from my first blue hymnal, with boring music, but with the NEW fresh melody I learned much later! So the new melody was actually the old melody.

### **The situation in 1974 when the Lutheran Confessional Church (LBK) was formed.**

#### **My first red hymnal**

The 1937 Swedish hymnal seemed old-fashioned. At the same time one of our pastors, Per Jonsson, wanted to distance LBK from the pietistic type of spirituals songs that were so popular among many of us. He and his wife Kjerstin produced a supplement to the 1937 Swedish hymnal, which they called “Praise the Lamb”. It contained 117 hymns, many of them taken from the 1695 hymnal with slightly modernized language. But still, one other LBK pastor said about it that even though he was happy for this alternative he could “cry blood” when he read the very old language in some of the hymns.

A couple of years later, Per and Kjerstin published their next “supplement” “Praise to you, o Christ”, with another 128 hymns. The language is better in this supplement. They were bound into one book called Luthersk psalmbok (The Lutheran Hymnal). In 1984 and 1989 two supplements to Luthersk Psalmbok were published and in 1991 all

original four parts were published in one hymnal. The four parts had not been reorganized so you find for example Christmas hymns in four different places. Also the numbering remains the same: 1-148 and 701-974 for the hymns that originally were supposed to be supplements to the Swedish hymnal from 1937.

No one else in LBK had any influence on this hymnal. It was the work of two people exclusively. The copyright belongs to their daughter and she never permits printing of any of the copyrighted hymns, not even if you pay for them. I think the only churches that use this hymnal regularly is LBK and ELBK, 300 people.

This is my first red hymnal. 92 hymns of these can also be found in the Swedish hymnal from 1986. About 100 of the hymns are in regular use in our church. There are some you just don't want to lose and some you don't ever want to sing and some that don't fit the music that is suggested for them.

### **My second red hymnal**

My second red hymnal has 623 hymns and 61 psalms. Christian worship. I have paged through it many times and played the melodies of the ones that seem the most interesting. On the inside of its covers I have written down the numbers of the hymns I would like to have in Swedish.

Because of the shortage of pastors in LBK, families sometimes have to have services at home. Right after I got Christian worship I put together a "Devotion booklet" with a simple liturgy for reading services and I included some of the psalms from CW so that families could read them responsively.

This hymnal also triggered my interest in singing the psalms again. I asked the musician in our church in Piteå about it and he said that he didn't think that was possible. It would be too hard. I then prepared psalm 98 with Swedish text and showed it to him. "Well, that doesn't look too hard," he said. And so it started. I introduced psalm singing at a youth camp. This was probably in 1997 or 1998.

Since then we have adapted about 40 psalms to Swedish. Some of our congregations use them every Sunday and others now and then.

### **My third red hymnal**

For some reason, which I don't remember I bought a copy of the newest Swedish hymnal from 1986. Maybe it was because there were people in our church who didn't want us to adopt the red "Lutheran hymnal" as the LBK hymnal before evaluating the Swedish hymnal. Studying it I realized that 92 of the hymns were the same as in the Lutheran hymnal. I compared the texts. Some of them were better in the Swedish hymnal and some in the Lutheran hymnal. Then I found all these good hymns, which were not in the Lutheran hymnal.

We were three people, myself, Seth and Birgitta Erlandsson who read through the whole Swedish hymnal and marked all the hymns we could use in the LBK. Altogether about 450! An LBK hymn list was prepared which listed only those hymns we can use and congregations, that purchased this hymnal, could insert this list in them. Now three congregations use this hymnal as their main hymnal and three use the Lutheran Hymnal.

## **Hymnal choices in LBK**

There has never been a consensus on which hymnals to use in the LBK. Two congregations have used the Swedish hymnal 1937 as their main hymnal and the Lutheran hymnal as a supplement. Other congregations have used the Lutheran hymnal as their main and only hymnal and one has used Bible Faithful Friends' hymnal as supplement. Now three congregations use the Swedish hymnal 1986 as their main hymnal with additional hymns in the liturgy booklets.

## **What do our people know and think about hymns and liturgy?**

So, what do the people in our church think about the liturgies and hymns we use in our church. What do they know about the liturgy? What hymns do they like, and what hymns do they miss? How much training do our pastors have in liturgy? I did a little survey among our people to find out:

**The hymns:** Generally people are happy with the type of hymns we have. There is no strong yearning for a lot of praise songs of the type evangelicals have in their services. People want a mix of Lutheran hymnody, the traditional "reader" songs and modern hymns with more modern music. In some congregations it is necessary to have hymns, which can be accompanied on guitar. Guitar chords on all hymns! Older people have many more favorites than young people.

At a youth camp a few years ago the leaders introduced many new modern hymns and praise songs but in the survey afterwards the youth wanted more of the traditional Lutheran hymns instead.

### **The liturgy:**

Let's start with the pastors: All of our pastors say they have little to no training in liturgy. They have learnt along the way.

The lay people: A handful of laypeople know something about the ancient origin of the liturgy. Some understand that the liturgy helps us to focus on the right things in the church service. Many think it is there for the sake of good order and so that visitors will know what is going on. Most people think our liturgies are easy to follow.

### **Where are we going from here?**

While working with people who translate Christ Light into Swedish I noticed that we have a few people in our church who are good at rhyming and I began sending them English and German hymn texts for translation. This is how it all started. We have translated several hymns from Christian Worship and the supplement. For example we received permission from Thankyou music to translate "In Christ Alone", even though there were two Swedish translations already, but they were not very good, one of them was more like a "google translate"-version than anything else. Work with the psalms is also still continuing.

This is how we work: One person is the main translator of the hymn. She makes a draft, which is sent to the others and we come up with suggestions for changes. This procedure usually inspires the main translator to new ideas for rhymes and expressions.

We continue until everybody is happy with the result. The main translator has the final say. This way we are able to make new translations from the original of well-liked hymns in the Red Lutheran hymnal, make a modern translation and use them without violating copyright rules. We have also translated more than 20 hymns from CW.

I must admit that for a long time we were very ignorant of copyright rules but we have learned. For many years we had three songs written to music composed to other texts. When we realized we were violating copyright laws we asked for permission but we didn't get it. Then I sent the texts to various musicians who compose hymn music. But I didn't get any response. Either they thought the rhythm of the text was strange or they immediately understood which melody the text was written for and just gave up because those melodies are so famous in Sweden. What to do? Well, I thought, why not do something just the opposite to the original melody? I tried that and then I took the melody with chords to my organ teacher who gave me some good advice. Two of the texts now have their own new music. And if I could come up with a melody I hope that will inspire those who are true musicians in our church to compose much better melodies to other texts than I will ever be able to do.

### **Listen to last verse of "Utan Guds Son"**

Another resource is the "Large net-hymnal" (Stora nätpsalm-boken) operated by a teacher/organist with a special interest in hymns. It is a collection of more than 1000 hymns, old and new, and often new translations or alterations to more modern language. Here we have found a lot of good material. And the owner of the site generously gives us all the material we want to use!

How do we spread the new hymns?

New hymns are usually spread at our annual summer camps because we usually publish a camp booklet with hymns and liturgy for these camps. We also put those that are public domain on our website.

### **The liturgy**

When LBK started pastor Per Jonsson produced a "Handbook for Church Rites" for the pastors, which included a lectionary and prayer of the day and the rites of Divine service, baptism, wedding, funeral. The musician could use the handbook for music from the Swedish church. But there was nothing for the people.

Piteå in the 1990-ies: Now and then we had visitors to our services in Piteå. But we didn't have anything to put in their hands so they could follow the service. Most of these people were accustomed to the traditional services in the Swedish church and ours wasn't much different. But we realized we needed to make a small agenda of the service to help people.

In 1999, when we received an American pastor to help us with training future pastors, John Vogt, it became even more evident that something had to be done with the liturgy. After the installation service in Ljungby he and his wife Sandy said that they didn't have a clue to what was said or going on in that service. And they had studied Swedish! Nobody had prepared anything for them so they could understand the order of the service. Imagine being installed into an office without knowing what the people are saying! Something had to be done quickly.

I studied Christian Worship and compared it with the Swedish liturgies. Some ideas emerged where I could use some aspects in your liturgies and incorporate them in the Swedish liturgy, for example, the use of psalms, verse of the day, the song of Simeon. At the annual summer camp I gave each LBK pastor a copy of a “pew edition” and “musician edition” of a liturgy for the “Trinity season”. Soon most of our congregations used this order of service. Three more booklets followed with liturgies for the Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons. Here I included both psalms and hymns.

### **New influences in liturgy**

We received new influences regarding liturgy when pastor Tim Buelow served in Norrköping for two years. He and his wife Sara used more WELS material than we did in the other congregations. They also translated some hymns.

When my husband took the call to Norrköping in 2006 we came to a congregation, which was used to a printed order of service with the hymns inserted every Sunday. They had no hymnals. Because of what we know about copyright now it wasn't possible to continue that way.

Based on the liturgy used in Norrköping I started all over and produced new booklets, with a modernized liturgy, for the four seasons of the church year. The congregation started using the Swedish hymnal. They were unfamiliar with the Lutheran Hymnal. I finished three seasons but for the Trinity season I simply didn't have the time to compile both hymns and psalms.

In 2011 I was part of the planning committee for our annual summer camp. At the same time Norrköping needed a more complete Trinity booklet. The Church board gave me permission to combine this work with doing a camp booklet.

Inspiration came from CW supplement which I received at the Worship conference in 2008. I also wanted to see if it is at all possible for a small church to produce a hymnal. The church board gave me permission to produce this “Trinity season – liturgy and hymns” with 120 pages.

It contains the

- Gathering rite on Holy Baptism –the baptism hymn (Baptized into your name most holy) was translated into Swedish for the first time ever.
- Gathering rite on the Word of God – we added verse four to the familiar hymn.
- A Trinity liturgy of the Word and Sacrament. Here we included “Prayer and Praise from CW’s Service of word and sacrament.
- We used the prefaces and “Prayer of Thanksgiving” from “Divine service II” in CW supplement.
- There are 19 psalms and 61 hymns. When choosing hymns I focused on gathering those we have translated, finding hymns that have better translations than what you find in the Swedish “Lutheran hymnal”, and hymns which we have learned to love because of our close fellowship with LBK in Norway. Lutheran heritage, fellowship heritage, Scandinavian heritage.

So, as you can see, we get a lot of inspiration from your hymnals. We don't create anything completely new, it's more like a pick and choose exercise.

I spent a lot of time on copyright issues. Some hymns had to be excluded because we didn't get permission to use the music.

One hymn had 7 copyright holders! After contacting all seven we got permission for free! I called pastor Steven Starke. Besides giving permission he had CPH send me the Lutheran Service book and Jaroslav Vajda's and his own hymn booklets for free!

Besides the "pew edition" I also made a "music edition" with the liturgy and one with psalms and hymns for the organist. The meditations on the Catechism were gathered in a small devotion booklet. By this work I think I have proven that our church is capable of producing a hymnal. After all it only took me a few months even though I worked full time as a teacher at the same time. I also used part of my vacation.

### **The future!**

God has blessed the LBK when it comes to hymns and music! We have a great heritage. We have good translators and hymn writers. We now have people interested in the liturgy.

So, how do we continue?

At LBKs business meeting this summer a proposal to produce a hymnal for LBK was passed. It is good timing because we can make use of how WELS is working towards a new hymnal.

This is what we need to do:

- A complete evaluation and study of the lectionary so that the best texts are chosen for each theme. Three texts every Sunday in a three years series. One theme for each Sunday.
- A complete revision of the prayer of the day.
- A study of which hymns are used on different Sundays in our church. Which types of hymns do we lack?
- Encourage our people to tell us which hymns are their favorites for every season and certain Sundays and festivals. Other favorite meditational hymns. What type of hymns do we lack?
- More work with liturgy, morning praise, compline and so on.
- More work with psalms and revising their texts to the best Swedish Bible translation.

**There is a need for different liturgies and a modern language.** An example: The first liturgies I made followed closely the Swedish church liturgy from 1942. It begins like this:

*Holy holy holy is the Lord Almighty. All the earth is full of his glory.*

*The Lord is in his holy temple. His throne is in heaven. He also comes to those who have a humble and contrite spirit. He hears the sighs of those who repent and turns to their prayers.*

There is nothing wrong with this, but for me, being brought up in a State church setting, this means: God is in the church building on the hill. When I left the Swedish state church in 1973 I was told this also meant that I left the holy Christian Church, which God had intended for Sweden. But liturgies in other Lutheran Churches begin differently, so I was curious about why the beginning of the service was so different in Sweden. Maybe it was an expression of the distance between the laypeople and the pastors and officials in Sweden as a church and state combined into one unit?

This wording was not possible to change immediately.

How did the service begin back in 1695 when the first Swedish hymnal was published? Listen to this:

*Dear friends, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. We have gathered here to celebrate the divine service, thank God for all his divine blessings and also to pray for what we need in life both for our body and our soul, and we realize that we are sinners and want to be freed from our sins. Therefore we want to kneel and humble ourselves before our heavenly Father with heart and mouth and confess that we are sinners...*

So something happened along the way here.

Because of pastor Tim Buelows work with liturgies in Norrköping we could make some changes in the liturgy there. The new Norrköping liturgies begin either with: The apostolic blessing for the Trinity season when we focus on the Christian life, or "The Lord is among us!" for the festival seasons when we focus on Christ's life on earth. In a New Testament setting I think we can apply what Jesus said to the woman at the well: "An hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father." Our LBK settings in Sweden are humble houses or rented spaces instead of landmark church buildings. And we are sure he is among us even when we just meet in homes.

WELS has provided us with very good resources but sometimes I also look at what happens in the Swedish church. They are in the process of modernizing their liturgies and they have a lot of expertise in language. The pitfalls are the theology: When they pray "Let your kingdom come" in the prayer of the church they mean something completely different from us – just earthly peace and equality. So what do you do when a heretic church uses the same words but mean something different?

It seems to me that there are some more or less universal trends in liturgy:

Some of the things I experienced with the liturgy at the 2008 Worship conference are used in the Swedish church. Gospel processions, the pastor saying, "This is the word of the Lord" and the congregation answering, "God we thank you."

Both liberal and conservative churches now use the three readings in their services and a psalm for each Sunday. Compare this to evangelicals who often only have one reading.

Both liberal and conservative churches like to have themes for each Sunday in the church year. Compare that to evangelicals who don't follow the church year so much.

WELS liturgies encourage a lot of corporate participation. We were not used to that until we got our new liturgies. I think it is much easier to keep focus when I can participate in responsive readings in the service.

We need:

Morning praise liturgy

Evening service liturgy

A variety of regular divine service liturgies

Simple devotion liturgy to be used in the home.

Children's service liturgy

Wedding liturgy

Burial liturgy

Baptism liturgy