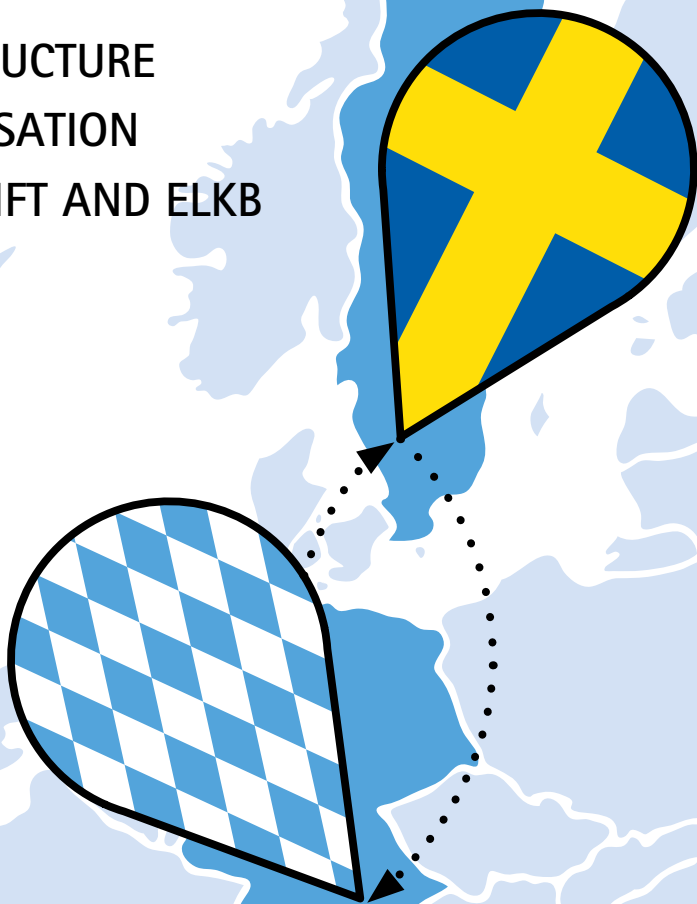


# FIRST INSIGHTS

INTO THE STRUCTURE  
AND ORGANISATION  
OF SKARA STIFT AND ELKB



**Svenska kyrkan**   
SKARA STIFT

Evangelisch-Lutherische  
Kirche in Bayern



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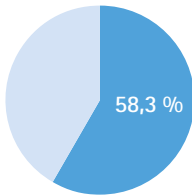
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# STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH IN GERMANY

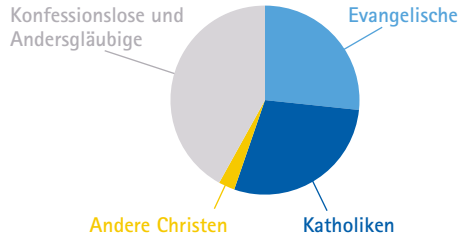
## Religious affiliation in Germany

With a total population of almost **82 million**, approximately **58%** of Germany's inhabitants, **48 million** people, belong to a Christian church. Around half belong to the Roman Catholic church and the other half to the Protestant church. The Evangelical Church in Germany is a communion of its **Evangelical-Lutheran, Reformed** and **United member churches** (the latter, e.g. the Regional Church of Baden). Germany is also home to free churches and free church groups. The Orthodox Church has approximately 1.5 million members in Germany.

Church membership is much lower in Eastern Germany than in Western Germany and much higher in southern Germany than in the north.



*Share of Christians in the population*



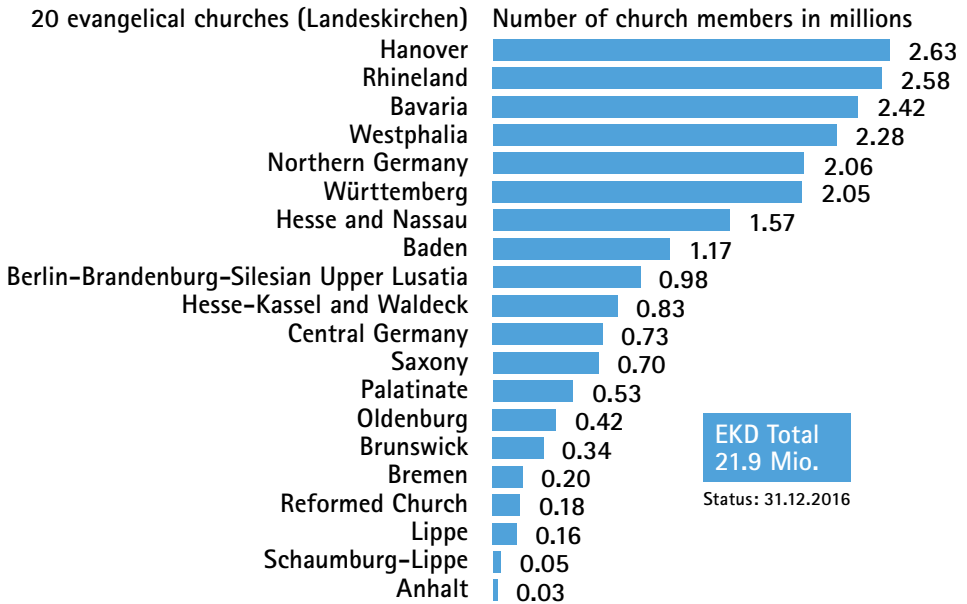
## The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) is a union of 20 evangelical churches. The Chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany is Heinrich Bedford-Strohm. He is also bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria.

The boundaries of these 20 member churches only partially coincide with the borders of the individual German Federal states. Recently, several churches have merged to form larger entities (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany, the Evangelical Church of Central Germany).



*Heinrich Bedford-Strohm*



## United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD)

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany is a union of all Evangelical Lutheran churches in Germany. It comprises 7 regional churches (Landeskirchen), consisting of **9.5 million** members.

- Bavaria
- Brunswick
- Hanover
- Central Germany
- Northern Germany
- Saxony
- Schaumburg - Lippe



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (ELKB)

## BAVARIA

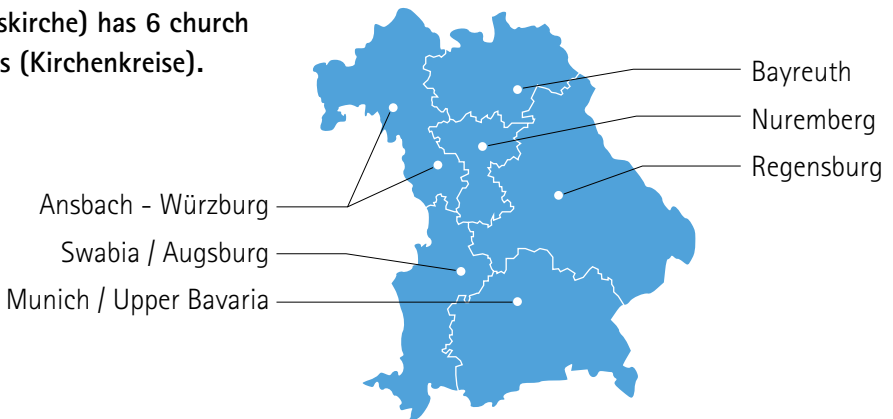
The Bavarian regional church (Landeskirche) exactly coincides with the borders of the state of Bavaria. It is the only church of the 20 regional Protestant churches for which the state and church territories are the same. The total population of Bavaria is 12.8 million. 19.8% (2.3 million) are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. With 51% (6.5 million people), the vast majority of the Bavarian population is Roman Catholic. The remaining 30% (3.8 million) belong to other religions or have no religious affiliation.

The ratio between the Christian denominations in the various regions of Bavaria, however, varies greatly. In some places, as in southern Bavaria (Upper and Lower Bavaria) there are very few Evangelical Lutherans, while they make up the clear majority in Middle and Upper Franconia.

This is linked to historical developments since the Reformation and the principle of the Peace of Augsburg of 1555: *cuius regio, eius religio* (literally translated as "whose realm, his religion"). This meant that the ruler of a state dictated the religion or confession of those ruled. Many territories thus remained uniformly bound to one confession.

It was not until the end of World War II in 1945 that circumstances changed with the arrival of refugees and displaced persons from the former German territories in the East, and throughout Germany many new congregations were founded and new churches built.

**The evangelical church of Bavaria (Landeskirche) has 6 church districts (Kirchenkreise).**








The church districts (Kirchenkreise) are not similar to the 13 dioceses (Swedish: stift) in the Swedish church when comparing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria to the svenska kyrkan. Every church district is headed by a regional bishop.

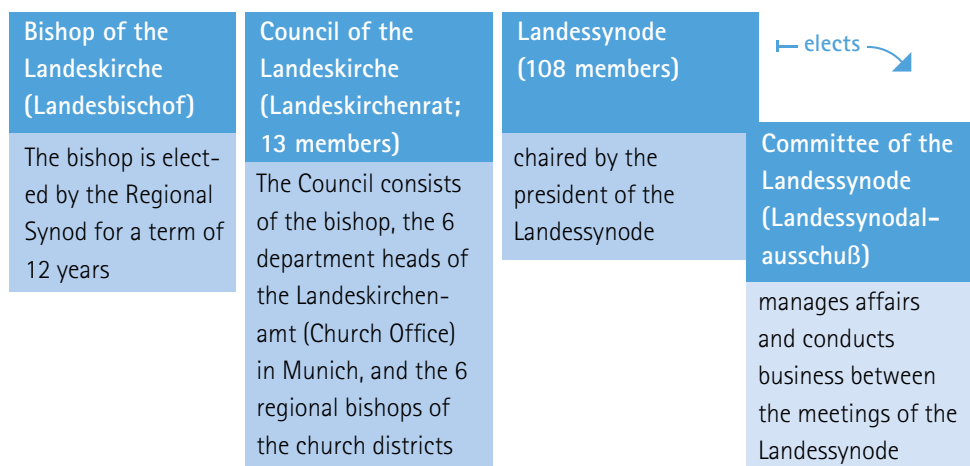
### These church districts have

- 67** deaneries
- 1538** congregations
- 1930** church buildings and chapels

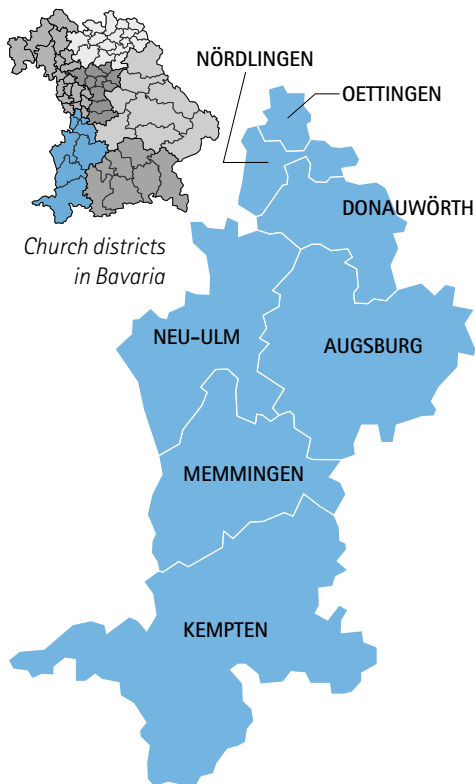
### Full-time staff in the church districts

-  **2441** pastors
-  **335** deacons serving in diaconical organisations and **363** in local congregations and the administration of the ELKB
-  **104** church musicians (full-time positions)
-  **2400** church musicians are employed part-time
-  **1082** religious educators (Religionspädagogen) (they mainly teach religion in schools and, in addition to social education workers, also take part in youth and community work)

### CHURCH LEADERSHIP OF THE ELKB



# THE CHURCH DISTRICT OF SWABIA/AUGSBURG – AN EXAMPLE



The church district of Swabia/Augsburg is representative of the **6 church districts** in the Bavarian regional church. This district is typical of a region with very different denominations.

The church district of Swabia/Augsburg is headed by the current regional bishop Axel Piper from his official office in Augsburg. The church district of Swabia/Augsburg consists of **7 deaneries** with **10 deans** in office.

*The church district of Swabia/Augsburg with the individual deaneries.*

## OETTINGEN / NÖRDLINGEN / DONAUWÖRTH

These three deaneries are geographically part of the Ries Basin and are noted for a high percentage of Evangelical Lutherans. By area the deaneries are not very large - almost all villages have an Evangelical Lutheran church and a pastorate.

## NEU-ULM / MEMMINGEN / KEMPTEN

All three deaneries are bordered to the west by Baden-Württemberg and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Baden and of Württemberg. By area the three deaneries are very large, encompass several administrative districts, and the Evangelical Lutherans are a minority (diaspora) with the exception of the areas belonging to the Free Imperial City of Ulm (in the deanery of Neu-Ulm), the Free Imperial City of Memmingen (in the deanery of Memmingen) and to the Free Imperial City of Kempten (in the deanery of Kempten).



The Roman Catholic church is traditionally better represented in these areas. Many of the Evangelical Lutheran churches were built just 50 to 100 years ago, and many pastorates and parishes were founded at that time.

## AUGSBURG

Augsburg was also a Free Imperial City and played an important role in the history of the Protestant church. The denominations in the city are relatively equally distributed.

Martin Luther met Cardinal Thomas Cajetan in Augsburg. In 1530, the Confessio Augustana was presented in Augsburg, and in 1555, the Peace of Augsburg was negotiated and agreed in the city.



*Martin Luther*

*Cardinal Cajetan*

It is why the city of Augsburg celebrates a very special festival that is now a local holiday: the Augsburg High Festival of Peace is still commemorated every year on August 8. It honors the religious peace of 1555 and is meant to serve as a reminder that different denominations and religions can live in peace.



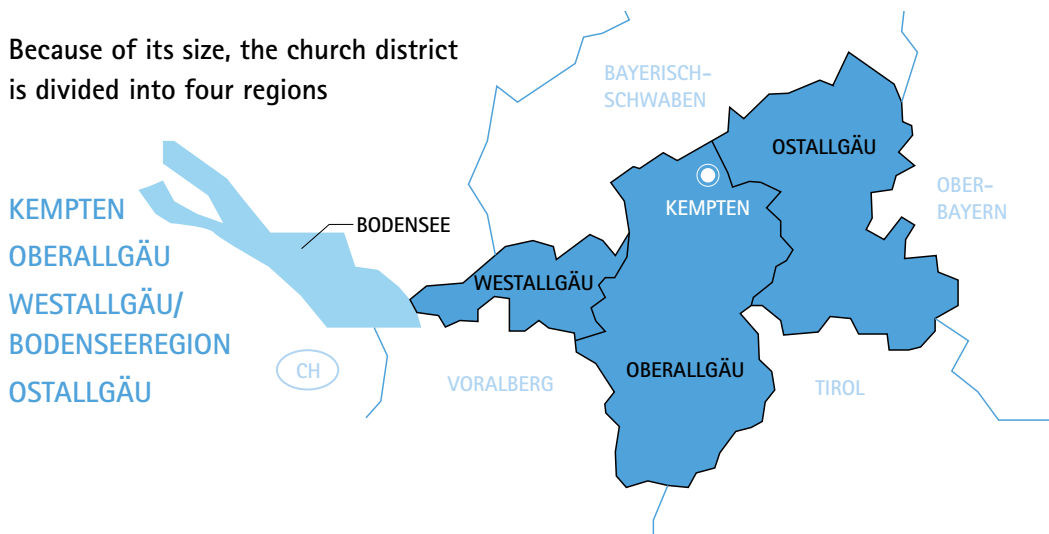
*Image: © Irmard Hoffmann/bayern-evangelisch.de*

# THE DEANERY DISTRICT OF KEMPTEN

## – AN EXAMPLE

The church district of Kempten is representative of the 67 deaneries in the Bavarian regional church. By area, this church district is among the largest deaneries of the ELKB. It covers an area of 3000 km<sup>2</sup>, has 26 parishes with 50 pastors serving 64,000 members.

Because of its size, the church district is divided into four regions



There are 5-7 parishes with up to 16 "pastorates" in each region.

**Full-time staff in the deanery district:**



**50** pastors (serving congregations and in special ministries in hospitals, retirement homes, prisons)



**4** church musicians, full-time



**4** youth workers

Among the part-time staff in all parishes are church musicians (organists and choir directors), sextons and custodians.

3300 people are committed to voluntary work in different areas of the church.

## Religious education:



**77** religion teachers employed by the church, including 2 school chaplains, 25 specialists for religious education, 12 catechists, 38 pastors (as part of their community service duties)



**90** Educators employed by the state

The individual congregations in some cases also act as employers for persons working in kindergartens, daycare centers, retirement homes and other institutions of the Diakonie, the social welfare organization of Germany's Protestant churches. Cemeteries maintained by the church are rare in southern Bavaria, but in Franconia, the parishes ( i.e. the pastors) are often involved with their administration.



## CHURCH AND STATE

In Germany and thus also in Bavaria, the separation of church and state is considered "imperfect". The relationship between church and state was newly regulated after the end of World War I (1918). The ideological neutrality of the state was assumed along with the right to self-determination of religious groups.

Religious practice is referred to as a matter of public concern, not a private matter, but does not fall under state control. Cooperation is possible and often even necessary. Churches have the status of a **"corporation under public law"**.

They have the right to levy church tax. Christian holidays are protected by national law, religious instruction is part of the regular curriculum of state schools.

This is why in Germany there is no strict separation between church and state nor can the Evangelical Lutheran Church be considered a state church. The situation of all German churches is that of an intermediate model.

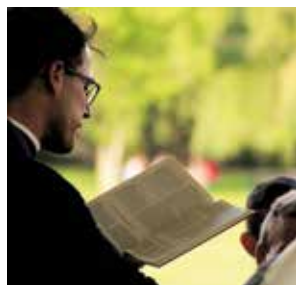
Other effects are still today the "principle of subsidiarity" which says that the church and other non-government organisations assume tasks previously entrusted to the state. This is still true of areas involving social services and institutions such as kindergartens, hospitals, retirement and nursing homes and other social institutions. If they are operated by the church, they receive financial support from the state, but must also comply with government requirements.

This also applies to schools run and maintained by the church. They may be allowed to charge school fees to ensure their operation.

## Diakonisches Werk

The **Diakonisches Werk** is a charitable and social welfare organization of Protestant churches that focuses on diaconal and social issues related to the church. It is one of the largest employers in Bavaria.

**State-church treaties** also govern the obligations to build and maintain church buildings such as rectories in certain regions. The state of Bavaria, for example, also reimburses the church for the remuneration for the regional bishop (Landesbischof). In a very small number of congregations, patronage still exists, i.e. a local patron has the right to a say in the filling of a pastor's post.



# STRUCTURES WITHIN THE CHURCH

The ELKB has **full-time, part-time and voluntary** staff. The numbers involved vary and depend on the region, size of the city and the denominational distribution.

It can generally be said that only one pastor works in one or several parishes in rural settings. Part-time work then includes paid hours for church secretary, sexton and custodian and church music. All other tasks are performed by volunteers (or assumed by those in full-time ministry).

In the deaneries and larger cities, full-time positions often include church musicians, church secretary and sexton. Educational positions in children and youth work ministries often cover an entire church district or region and are only to be found in very large parishes.

This is one of the **major differences to the Swedish church** where even in the sparsely populated countryside full-time positions are available for sexton vergers, church music and children and youth ministries.

This has an impact on the intensity of the work as well as on its organization. In Bavaria, planning sessions and meetings always only take place in the evening when volunteers have free time. There are also no contracts or official regulations that apply to volunteers. They volunteer their time, and their commitment can end at any time. New and committed volunteers are not found through job advertisements, but through personal contacts.

The "law on volunteering" has provided a framework for these services for several years.



# HISTORY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

● **2004** was the year in which the first contact was established between ELKB and the diocese of Skara. Erik Aurelius, the former bishop, opened the doors of the diocese to international relations and particularly to Germany.

● The ambitious goal of the cooperation from the very beginning was the idea to learn from each other. The structures of society in Sweden and Germany are similar in many areas, but how and why the church is involved and acts is very different in many others.

● **2008** saw the launch of an „exchange program“ between the diocese of Skara and the ELKB. Four theologians from each church took part. The Swedish and Bavarian theologians visited their partners in the other church for three weeks with the aim of looking over their shoulders. This program has taken place four times to date, most recently in 2017/18 with different occupational groups from a deanery and a pastorate.

● It soon became apparent that both churches work in completely different structures. In Sweden, inter-professional teams work in associations of local churches (= pastorates). It was not possible in Sweden to just „look over the shoulder“ of one’s partner. The Bavarians found themselves dealing with entire teams.

● Both the Council of the Regional Church (Landeskirche) as one of the governing bodies of the ELKB and senior members of the Council as well as young people and full-time personnel from the youth organizations Evangelische Jugend in Munich and Bamberg visited Skara on an exchange. Likewise the bishop, full-time personnel and young people from the dioceses of Skara visited Bavaria.

● In **2010** a declaration of intent between the dioceses of Skara and the ELKB and in **2016** the revised declaration, now „Agreement“, was signed with Skara.

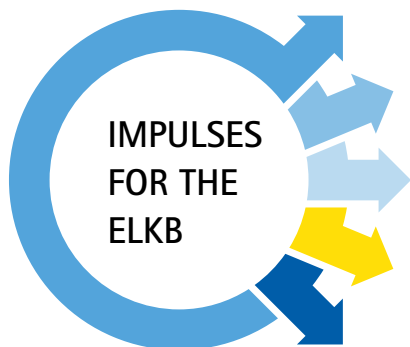
Whether the close association will continue is reviewed every five years.

## The relationship between the ELKB and Skara Stift

The Swedish church and the ELKB are both members of the Lutheran World Federation and are thus part of a church fellowship.

Both churches (ELKB and Skara Stift) have established a very lively relationship, inspiring and learning from each other.

The partnership extends to all levels of church life and is evident in many different areas, including a regular exchange program with full-time personnel from different professional groups, encounters between youth ministries, parishes/deaneries with pastorates, church institutions as well as regular contact between the bishops and others in the governing bodies of the churches.



- In general, the approach of "tillsammans" (together) which can be seen in the natural cooperation of inter-professional teams is inspiring:
- Clear, consistent hierarchies
- Transparency and appreciation of the work of individuals
- The great importance of church music
- Corporate identity of the entire Svenska Kyrkan, those involved always focus on the entire church and not just on the local situation
- Conversion of church buildings into integrated community centers



# CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN GERMANY

## Social developments in Germany

After World War II ended, Germany was a society in ruins. Almost every area of life had to be rebuilt or newly established. This demanded enormous effort from the war's survivors. Refugees and displaced persons also had to be integrated in society.



*Cologne 1945, © pixabay.com*

At the same time, Germany was divided into East and West Germany by the establishing of the GDR in 1949 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 – which resulted in fundamentally different living conditions – in all areas of life, economic, political, cultural, social, ...



*1950er-Jahre: Soziale Marktwirtschaft und Wirtschaftswunder, © Ullstein-Bild/VW/Audi*

The greatest changes have taken place since the 1960's. Economically, Germany has evolved from an agrarian society to an industrialized country but has also significantly expanded the service and education sectors.



*Berlin wall © pixabay.com*





*Bernauer Straße, Berlin, © pixabay.com*

After the fall of the wall in 1989 and German reunification, some differences are still apparent even after 30 years. In some cases, there are major regional differences between the 16 German states. The Federal Republic of Germany is a federal system in which every state has its own rights.

Bavaria is one of the German states that is economically very well off and that continues to experience strong growth in many areas.



*Munich, © pixabay.com*

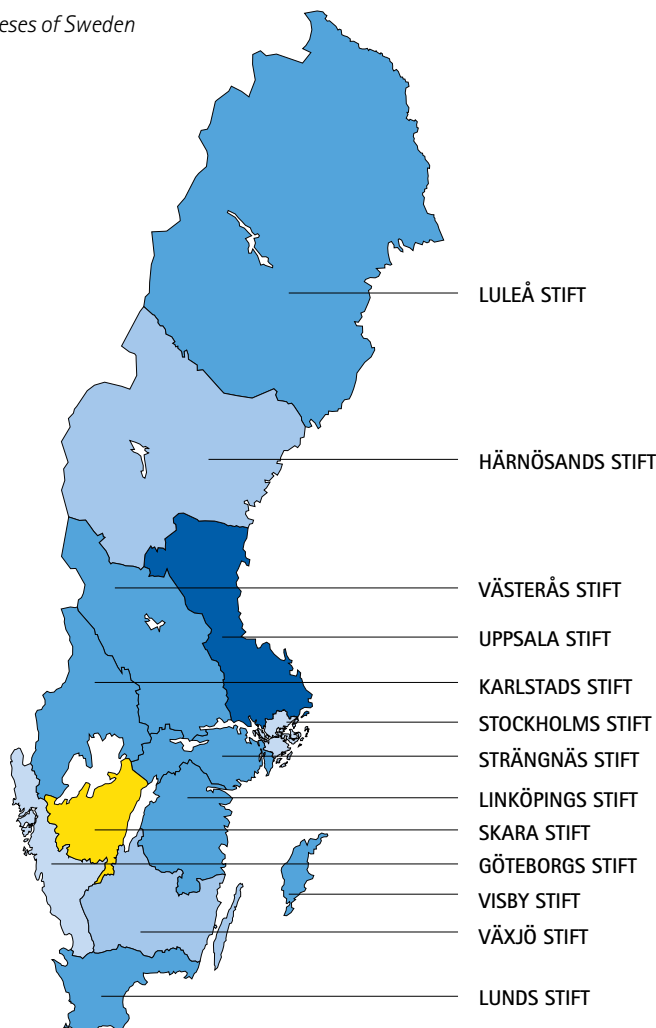
The school system in Bavaria provides general primary school education for grades 1 to 4. Thereafter the children move on to secondary schools that are either more vocationally or academically oriented. There is thus a very early segregation based on academic performance. The level of education largely depends on family background and the region where the children are raised. The culture of *tilsamman* as lived in Sweden is not practiced in Germany or Bavaria from early childhood.

# THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN

The Church of Sweden is an **Evangelical Lutheran** church with **6.1 million members**. There are **3,500 churches** in Sweden, and **13 dioceses**.

Until the 20th century, the Church of Sweden was the only church recognised by the state and its affairs were regulated by the parliament (riksdag).

*The 13 dioceses of Sweden*



## Separation from the state in 2000

The present situation is controlled by a radical set of laws, which came into force on 1st of January 2000. The Church of Sweden was then declared a "faith-community" which, along with others, like the free churches, Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims etc, could register themselves as such with the state and have their church dues collected by the state along with income tax.

## Bishop election

Each diocese is led by a **bishop**, whose tasks include ordaining the candidates to the priesthood and diaconate, and holding visitations regularly in every parish. The bishop is elected by the priests and deacons of the diocese together with an equal number of lay delegates. He/she is assisted by the **chapter** (domkapitlet) and by a **diocesan synod** (stiftsstyrelse).

The chapter, consisting of clergy and laity, oversees the parishes and clergy, ensuring that they keep to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Sweden; since there are no suffragan bishops or archdeacons, the dean of the cathedral is the bishop's deputy in the diocese.

In every parish (with a population averaging 2,225), there is a Parish council (kyrkoråd), which, together with the rector (kyrkoherde), is responsible for the liturgy, and for educational, social and evangelistic work.

**Every four years**, elections are held for all the decision-making bodies within the church, at parish, diocese and national level. Every member of the Church of Sweden over the age of 16 is entitled to vote. To be a candidate for office, one has to be a member, baptised and at least 18.

## Employees

There are employed persons in every parish: a priest, a musician and often also a deacon. In the smaller, often rural, settings these officers are responsible for services and pastoral care in several parishes. Others can be employed according to the needs of the parish, such as church workers, teachers, vergers, office personnel, children- and youth leaders, cleaners etc.

At the **national level**, the church is led by the **Archbishop** of Uppsala, who represents the Church of Sweden in international and ecumenical matters and speaks at the Bishop's Conference, for all bishops.

The decision-making body of the Church of Sweden is the Church Assembly (Kyrkomötet); it consists of 251 members, meeting twice annually and decides on all matters concerning the regulation of church life (kyrkoordning). The Church Assembly elects the Central Board.

## Close relationships all over the world

The Church of Sweden is part of the global fellowship of churches, with close relationships to other churches around the world. It's active in the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Conference of European Churches and the Christian Council of Sweden. As one of the churches and organizations in the Act Alliance network, we play an active role in long term development work, humanitarian assistance and international advocacywork.

All dioceses enjoy close relationships with partner-dioceses all over the world. The Church of Sweden also provides Swedish-speaking-fellowships in 45 locations all over the world.

## Financing the work of the church

The work of the Church of Sweden is mainly financed through the **church membership charge** that all members pay. The amount of the church membership charge is determined locally in each parish.

The total costs each year amount to about **SEK 19 billion**, and because the main activities are conducted in parishes and associations, most of the costs are there. Local variations are considerable as regards what parishes use the church membership charge for.

# THE DIOCESE OF SKARA – SWEDEN'S OLDEST

Christianity came early to these parts, earlier than elsewhere in Sweden. The Diocese of Skara was Sweden's first. According to tradition, it happened in 1014 and Thurgot of Bremen is considered to be the first bishop.

The early missionaries came from England and from Germany.

Christian structures were established at an early stage. In the year 1000 or thereabouts, the man who is traditionally regarded as Sweden's first Christian king, Olof Skötkonung, was baptized at Husaby, situated about 20 km north of Skara.

Recent excavations in Varnhem, a historic area east of Skara, have shown that Christian worship long preceded the formal institutions. Ruins of an old stone church, recently disinterred by archeologists, indicate Christian influences as early as the 10th century – perhaps earlier.

More than a third of Skara Diocese's 428 churches and chapels were built during the Middle Ages. None has kept its original shape – all have been more or less rebuilt during the centuries.

The Diocese of Skara is today one of 13 dioceses of the Church of Sweden. There are more than 570,000 inhabitants inside this rural diocese, a far greater proportion of whom live in the countryside than the Swedish average. The largest town is Borås, with 74,000 inhabitants.



*Skaradomkyrka*



*Varnhem*



*Diocese of Skara Stift*



More than **570,000** inhabitants inside diocese of Skara



Borås, with **74,000** inhabitants

Recent years have seen considerable administrative changes in the diocese as the number of parishes has been consolidated down to 110. Often there is more than one church per parish.

In every parish, there is at least one service a week. About 2.3 per cent of Sweden's population attends a Church of Sweden service every week. Church attendance tends to be higher in the countryside than in the towns, though the figure is converging.

A lot of activities are carried out in the parishes.



For instance, the diocese hosts about **400** choirs with about **7,000** singers.

There are a large number of services and they are of a great variety. Music events are particularly appreciated. The services at Advent and Christmas are also well attended.

## THE DIOCESAN OFFICE

The diocese has its office in Skara. Its tasks are the same as all dioceses: to promote and supervise the work in the parishes. The office consists of four departments: the Parish Department, the Property Department, the Department of Administration and the Bishop's Office.



About **50** people work in the four departments.

The aim of the Parish Department is to promote development. Courses and days for inspiration are organized as well as various projects, where staff often works together with representatives from the parishes.

The Property Department administers the property of the church: forest, farming land and bank accounts of different kinds. Administering large areas of forest and land, this department has a special responsibility to look after nature and environment.



In the Diocese of Skara itself the church, owns about **27,000** hectares of forest and



about **10,000** hectares of farming land.

Profits are used to support the work of the diocese and the parishes.

The Department of Administration deals with economy and personnel questions. IT matters also belong to this department.

The Bishop's Staff organize visits and a lot of other things connected with the supervision of priests and parishes. Many legal questions also belong here.

## THE BISHOP

The Diocese of Skara is headed by **Bishop Åke Bonnier**. He is the 83rd Bishop of the Diocese, and was appointed in 2012.

Åke Bonnier was born in 1957 in Stockholm. He became a parish priest in the Diocese of Stockholm in 1984. In 2006 he became the Dean of Stockholm Cathedral, "Storkyrkan".

His motto as Bishop is "**Glory be to Jesus**". With this motto, he wants to stress Jesus as the centre of Christian spirituality.

The Bishop has many different responsibilities, of which the most important are visiting the parishes and ordaining new priests and deacons.

The Bishop also makes a lot of other visits in the parishes. When a new vicar is received or a church reopened after a renovation, the Bishop attends. There are also a lot of meetings and committees where the presence of the Bishop is called for.

Apart from being the diocese's chief theologian, Bishop Åke Bonnier has become a well-known voice in the theological debate in Sweden. The Bishop also represents the Church of Sweden in many national and international contexts.



*Åke Bonnier*

# A RICH HISTORY

The Diocese of Skara was founded at the beginning of the 11th century, which means that it is the **oldest diocese in Sweden**.

The baptism of Olof Skötkonung at a spring in Husaby around the year 1000 was important for the whole of Sweden. This event is usually regarded as the **beginning of the real Christianisation** of the country.



*Husaby, historical water spring*

It was no coincidence that it happened in Husaby. There was an early royal estate here and probably also an early see, which constituted the foundation for the diocese of Skara.

In the Middle Ages, the diocese was considerably larger than it is today. It also covered the provinces of Värmland and Dalsland north of the present diocese.

Lake Vänern, Sweden's and indeed one of Europe's largest lakes, was consequently in the middle of the diocese and was an important route of communication.

At Läckö, by Vänern, a bishop's castle was built. Later this castle was enlarged into one of the most well-known castles in Sweden.

The much-used pilgrim route to the Cathedral of Nidaros (or Trondheim, as it is known today) passed Läckö, across to the island of Lurö in Vänern, before arriving on the northern shore of the lake and continuing north towards Norway.



*Lake Vänern ©pixabay.com*



At the end of the Middle Ages, the status of the Diocese of Skara changed. The Black Death had stricken the area hard. Sweden had been consolidated as a state. Economic, political and ecclesiastical power shifted over to the Mälars valley with its many governing bodies in the area of Uppsala-Stockholm.

During the 16th century the whole of the Church of Sweden was reformed. In the year 1527, King Gustav Vasa decided to sever the link to the Pope. In 1531 the first Swedish archbishop was consecrated.

Reforms climaxed in 1593 when a church synod accepted the Confession of Augsburg (Confessio Augustana, CA). This was done in opposition to the then king Sigismund, Gustav Vasa's son, who was a Catholic and at the same time king of Poland, as well as Sigismund's successor Karl, who had Calvinistic sympathies.

**Since 1593**, the Church of Sweden has been Evangelical Lutheran.

During the 17th century, the Diocese of Skara got its present borders, as two new dioceses were separated out of the old Diocese of Skara: The Diocese of Karlstad in the north and the Diocese of Gothenburg in the south.

During the first half of the 18th century, Bishop Jesper Swedberg made his mark on the diocese. He was gifted in administration, but also a prolific author. Most of the contributions to the first big hymn book of the Church of Sweden, published in 1695, were made by Swedberg.

He also put in considerable effort into revising the Swedish Bible translation.

A belief in angels was important to Jesper Swedberg. In this he was succeeded by his son Emmanuel Swedenborg, the polymath and thinker who created a religious system involving angels, among other things. Swedenborg's theological teachings have considerable popularity today, especially in the United States.



*Swedish Bible ©pixabay.com*

During the 19th century the Diocese of Skara as well as the whole of western Sweden was affected by the revivalist movement of that time. This movement, with its pietistic elements, greatly influenced parts of the diocese. It still maintains an influence especially the central and western part of the diocese, where church attendance is still high.

# SWEDEN – BRIEF HISTORY

## The Vasa period

The foundations of the Swedish state were laid during the reign of Gustav Vasa (1523–1560). The church was nationalised, its estates confiscated by the crown, and the Protestant Reformation was introduced. Power was concentrated in the hands of the king and hereditary monarchy came into force in 1544.

## 18th/19th century Sweden

After the death of the warrior king Karl XII in 1718 and Sweden's defeat in the Great Northern War, the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) and council were strong enough to introduce a new constitution that abolished royal absolutism and put power in the hands of parliament.

Industry did not begin to grow until the 1890s, although it then developed rapidly between 1900 and 1930 and transformed Sweden into one of Europe's leading industrial nations after World War II.

## The 20th century – a century of reforms

Late 19th-century Sweden was marked by the emergence of strong popular movements that included the free churches, the temperance and women's movements, and above all the labour movement.

The labour movement, whose growth kept pace with industrialization in the late 19th century, was reformist in outlook after the turn of the 20th century.

The first Social Democrats entered government in 1917. Plans for a welfare state were drawn up during the 1930s after the Social Democrats rose to power, and put into effect after World War II.

## The postwar era

During World War II, a coalition of Sweden's four 'democratic' parties (excluding the Communists) formed the government. After the war ended, a purely Social Democratic government resumed office. Under Social Democratic leadership, but in close co-operation with the other democratic parties, a series of reforms were carried out in the 1940s and 1950s that together laid the foundations of the Swedish welfare state.

The monarch is still the head of state, but with few formal powers. In 1979, an amendment to the order of succession gave male and female heirs an equal claim to the throne. Accordingly, Crown Princess Victoria is next in line to the throne.

## Foreign policy

Since 1814 Sweden has not been involved in any wars. Since World War I, Sweden has pursued a policy of non-alignment in peacetime and neutrality in wartime.



**Population:** around **10 million**



**Form of government:** Constitutional monarchy, with parliamentary democracy



**Working hours:** The standard work week is **40 hours**;  
minimum paid holiday allowance is **5 weeks**



**Employment rate** (20–64 years):  
men **84%** | women **80%** | total **82%**



**Parental leave:** **480 days** – three months reserved for each parent

**Education** in Sweden is mandatory for all children between age 6 and age 16 (grundskola). Upper secondary school (gymnasium), three years, is non-compulsory. The gymnasium is divided into two instances where you either prepare for higher education or receive vocational education. After upper secondary school, you can continue to higher education.

# FUN AND "GOOD TO KNOW" FACTS ABOUT SWEDEN

**Fika:** The Swedes love their fika, which has no English translation but generally means a social break, usually at work, with coffee, pastries, and colleagues. And most Swedes do this every day at least once.



© Kristina Johansson



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**Take off your shoes:** You'll quickly notice that shoes are taken off when entering private residences in Sweden. Some explain it with the simple fact that Swedes spend a lot of time outdoors during winter and are prone to dragging in dirt. Others say it's a sign of respect for the home. Either way, you might want to think twice before wearing full lace-up boots when visiting folks.

**Alcohol:** It's not seen as socially acceptable to drink during the week, on the night before a work day, say Monday to Thursday and Sundays. Maybe a beer or a wine in the evening is okay, but it is certainly frowned on to do that every day.

Sweden is restrictive when it comes to alcohol and driving. Don't even start calculating "I'll just have half a glass of wine and I'll be fine." Among Swedes, you had better drink absolutely no alcohol if you are going to drive your car later that night. Drink driving laws, if the police catches you, are tough.



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All intake of alcohol and drugs is prohibited by the regulations of the Swedish Church Youth, as is the case for use of tobacco for participants under the age of 18.

**Allemansrätten:** Something typically Swedish, if you ask a Swede, is not only köttbullar (meatballs), lagom (moderate) and Ikea, but also a special right called "Allemansrätten" – the right of public access.

The right of public access is written in the constitution of Sweden: "Alla ska ha tillgång till naturen", "Everyone shall have access to nature".

This right gives you permission to go wherever you want – and camp wherever you want, for one night. Any field, forest or even, theoretically, your neighbour's garden – though permission is best asked if you seriously consider the latter. Then, once you have permission, just put up your tent and follow the rule "don't disturb and don't destroy".

You are even allowed to pick berries and mushrooms for personal consumption.



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**First name, informality:** Sweden is known for being a culture where no one is put on a pedestal and this is demonstrated by the way Swedes address each other. Regardless of age, social class and sex, Swedes use "du" (you) when speaking to a single person. There is also a polite form to address someone, Ni (Equivalent for German 'Sie'), but it is considered overly polite these days, although elderly people still sometimes use it. Swedes tend to call people by their first names regardless of their status.

**Sources about Sweden:**

[www.hejsverige.nu](http://www.hejsverige.nu)

[www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se)




[www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)






# SWEDISH FOR BEGINNERS

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Important words  
and phrases –  
also for use in the  
church




Swedish 	Deutsch 	English 	Definition ⓘ
<i>Sekulär</i>	<i>Weltliches</i>	<i>Secular life</i>	
du	du	you	Everyone is on a first name basis. Supposedly, only the king is spoken to in a more formal form of address. Doors in offices are kept open. Name tags often drop titles only giving first names and last names (even bishops are addressed by their first names).
Tack.	Danke.	Thank you.	„Tack“ is always used and constantly overused.
Tack så mycket. [tak so mücke]	Vielen Dank.	Thank you very much.	Sincere thanks. A phrase that is also used constantly. The Germans are sometimes considered impolite and stressed out because they forget to say „thank you“.
Tack så jätte mycket.	Vielen riesigen Dank.	Thanks a lot. Thank you so much.	Even saying thank you can be improved upon and varied.
Tack för senast.	Danke für das letzte Mal.	Thanks very much for yesterday, by the way. <b>or</b> Nice to see you again.	It bears repeating your thanks, e.g. if you see each other the next day.

Swedish 🇸🇪	Deutsch 🇩🇪	English 🇬🇧	Definition ⓘ
Varsågod [warschogud]	Bitte.	You're welcome.	
Förlåt [förloot]	Entschuldigung.	I'm sorry. Pardon. Excuse me.	
lagom	genau richtig	just right	Everything in moderation. A basic philosophy of life in Sweden.
lördagsgodis	Samstagsbonbons	saturday's candy	To prevent children from eating too much candy, their parents often only give them sweets on Saturdays, but not during the week. Supermarket shelves stock sweets in bulk to be weighed before purchase, and the number of different kinds is overwhelming.
fredagsmys [[fre-dags myys]]	Relaxen am Freitagabend	cosy Friday	This is a tradition that started just a generation ago. Families get together Friday evening and spend time together. A Friday evening church service would thus be problematic. That's also why we only experienced Sunday evening services and were left to ourselves Friday evenings.
tillsammans	zusammen	together	This means, pastors, deacons, musicians and pedagogues work together in teams.

Swedish 	Deutsch 	English 	Definition ⓘ
husesyn [hüsesün]	Hausbesichtigung	home tour	When invited to a private home, the host will almost always give you a tour. We only ever saw tidy and uncluttered private homes, including children's rooms that looked like something out of an IKEA catalog. Oh, and you'll also be shown bedrooms and bathrooms.
bonusbarn	Stiefkinder	bonus bairns, if you're Scottish; stepchildren, if you're not.	The term has positive connotations and is in no way negative. It is an appreciation of the reality of many patchwork families.
midsommar	Mittsommer	midsummer	June 24 is celebrated everywhere by everyone; on the Friday, between June 19 and June 25. Start of the summer holiday season.
fika [/'fi: ,ka/]	Kaffeepause	coffee break/ snack	It's always time for Fika. Coffee machines with free coffee for staff members can be found in the break room. A coffee break is also the time to prepare or follow up on something in peace and to exchange ideas amicably. Something is generally eaten for Fika: e.g. pastries (with cinnamon: kanelbul-lar) or cookies.



Swedish 	Deutsch 	English 	Definition ⓘ
<i>Kyrklig</i>	<i>Kirchliches</i>	<i>Church life</i>	
Skara stift	Diözese Skara	Diocese of Skara	
församling	Gemeinde	congregation or parish	
församlingshem	Gemeindehaus	parish hall	
Jag är präst. [jo är präst]	Ich bin Pfarrer.	I am a pastor.	Clergymen of the Svenska kyrkan care called präst (=priest). Only the ministers of free churches are pastors.
mässa	Messe	mass	Church service including communion, also högmessa.
gudstjänst [güdschänst]	Gottesdienst	church service	Without communion, often also with special musical accompaniment.
bön	Gebet	prayer	Prayer or devotions
vaktmästare	Hausmeister, Mesner	custodian, sexton	An indispensable part of every church service. Looks after all equipment from projectors to mixing consoles, makes sure that every celebrant wears a headset during the service and that the microphone is always on when the celebrant speaks. The vaktmästare also makes sure that clean liturgical vestments are available in the sacristy and that the pastor can find the right one to wear.

Swedish 	Deutsch 	English 	Definition ⓘ
Alla helgons dag	Allerheiligen und Allerseelen	All Saints' and All Souls' Day	Commemoration of the dead, celebrated on Novem- ber 1 at cemeteries with lots and lots of candles. For practicality's sake, often moved to the first Saturday between October 31 and November 6 so that every- one has time to visit the graves of their loved ones.
Mikaelidagen	Michaelis	Michaelmas	There are a number of other days that are (and can be) celebrated traditionally.
Lucia			Saint Lucy's Day on December 13 (with candle-lit wreaths) ...
St. Knut			Celebrated on January 13 (the Christmas tree is taken down); also the royal birth- days are remembered.

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[www.bayern-evangelisch.de](http://www.bayern-evangelisch.de)