

Greetings from the Diocese of Strängnäs, December 2021

Veni, veni Emmanuel,
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei filio.
Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel;
Nascetur pro te Israel.

O come, O come Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel;
shall come to thee, O Israel.

This Advent Hymn is maybe more important than ever. Come Emmanuel, release us! Help us endure the pandemic, which is now taking a stronger hold on us once again. When the summer was ending, the church life (and life in society) was slowly going back to normal, or at least nearly normal, with many of the Covid-19 restrictions lifted. The parishioners returned to services and prayers, praising and hymn singing were filling churches and cathedrals again. The activities with children, youths and adults came into new life.

During fall, the bishop of Strängnäs, Johan Dalman, has been busy visiting congregations and parishes, meeting church workers and church members, and also welcoming a couple of new vicars in the diocese. A new head of the diocesan office started to work in August and the staff gradually switched working site from home to office.

The first Advent Sunday filled the churches, as usual, and the Lucia Day festivities were indeed a celebration to the light in the darkest time of the year.

In December the restrictions started to return, and just a couple of days before Christmas, new directions came into force because of the growing numbers of people infected with Covid-19. For gatherings over 20 people (including services and concerts in churches), vaccination certificates are now required if a distance of one meter cannot be held. But despite this, we are still able to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in services in our chapels, churches, and cathedrals.



Lucia Day celebrations in Strängnäs Cathedral.



Strängnäs Cathedral in the shape of a gingerbread house.

Apology to the Sami people

On November 24, the Archbishop presented the Church of Sweden's public apology to the Sami people, the indigenous people of the Northern countries, for the injustices the church (and the state) have exposed them for during history. It was made in a solemn service in Uppsala Cathedral and will be followed up in Luleå (in the north of Sweden) at the planned conference *Ságastallamat* (a Sami word meaning dialogue) in 2022. The apology is followed by eight commitments that are implemented over ten years. Read more on <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/samiska/ursakt-till-det-samiska-folket>.



Sami handicraft.

From all of us in the Diocese of Strängnäs, to all our friends in the Diocese of Truro we wish you a Happy and Blessed 2022.

Rev. Dr. Magdalena Öhrling

BISHOP'S CHAPLAIN

DIOCESE OF STRÄNGNÄS, CHURCH OF SWEDEN