

FIELD PAPER · ENGLISH VERSION

Den Nye Fælled

The Church of Denmark as a holder of space for green transition, living soil, commons, lament, the sacred, and peaceful co-creation in Denmark and the Realm Community

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Green Papers series is a quiet publication layer: working notes, field notes, and slow inquiries rather than closed final products. The series is conceived as a place for shared stewardship, living protocols, and gentle civic imagination. This paper follows that form: not as a finished answer, but as an open, precise, and practice-grounded invitation.

AUTHOR'S NOTE — AI CO-CREATION

This paper has been co-written through dialogue between Lars A. Engberg and AI language systems. Final responsibility for the content, major claims, omissions, and interpretations rests with the author. The paper's site already carries a corresponding note on AI-assisted drafting and human responsibility.

ABSTRACT

This green paper proposes that, in the coming years, the Church of Denmark may step forward more clearly as a holder of space for green transition, living soil, commons practice, local peace practice, lament, human dignity, and an open meeting place between religious and non-religious forms of connectedness.

The paper suggests that the Church of Denmark stands in a particular moment of opening. It remains one of Denmark's most present institutions, with 4,217,476 members, corresponding to 70.0% of the population as of 1 January 2026, and it carries a nationwide local infrastructure of staff, volunteers, parish councils, buildings, and lands. At the same time, a concrete green movement is already underway through Folkekirkens Grønne Omstilling, with a focus that includes church lands, biodiversity, energy, waste, transport, procurement, and local collaborations.

In this context, Den Nye Fælled is introduced as a possible pilot name and pilot field: an open, non-confessional, transparent, and citizen-science-based collaborative space in which the Church of Denmark and civil society can together explore how soil, biodiversity, food systems, local communities,

refugee questions, peaceful coexistence, human regulation, collective grief work, and commons governance may be connected in ways that serve life.

The paper also draws on the Penguin Dashboard logic, where Denmark is not read in isolation but through an explicit realm-community lens that includes both Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and on Water Into Dry Riverbeds, where regenerative fields are read as flow architectures for land, stewards, and planetary commons. Together, they suggest that green transition is not only a matter of technique or attitude, but also of governance, habitat literacy, and local peace capacity.

01

Introduction: when an institution rediscovers its function

There are historical moments in which an institution is called not primarily to protect its form, but to rediscover its function.

The Church of Denmark, as this paper sees it, stands in such a moment.

The Church of Denmark — in Danish, *folkekirken* — remains deeply present in Denmark. Not only as buildings, rituals, and traditions, but as a living infrastructure of people, places, land, councils, employees, volunteers, practices, and rhythms. At the same time, it is clear that the Church of Denmark has become smaller in public consciousness than it really is. For many, it now appears primarily as a framework for baptism, weddings, funerals, holidays, and

cultural heritage. All of this matters. But it does not exhaust the church's possibility.

Beneath the surface, something is already moving. Green transition, church lands, biodiversity, night church, pilgrimage routes, local communities, open church rooms, and new forms of co-creation all point toward a different weighting. Folkekirkens Grønne Omstilling itself describes church lands as a central focus area, and the Diocese of Helsingør connects green transition with local rootedness and renewal.

This green paper is written into that opening. Not in order to define the Church of Denmark from the outside, but to ask a single question:

Can the Church of Denmark become a clearer holder of space for a new common place in Denmark and the Realm Community — a place where green transition, commons, peaceful co-creation, lament, the sacred, and human dignity may meet in practice?

The problem field: a society running too hot

The time we are living in is marked by the convergence of many kinds of crisis and many kinds of rupture. Climate, biodiversity, soil, water, migration, mental

strain, institutional mistrust, food systems, geopolitical unrest, and cultural polarization increasingly slide together.

Much that could previously be treated separately is now experienced as one dense, overheated field.

- Farmers and biologists often meet each other in mutual defensiveness.
- Citizens and systems meet in mistrust.
- Schools are under pressure from struggles around well-being, tempo, and overload.
- Migration and refugee questions are easily captured in administrative or ideological language.
- The church risks remaining as a ceremonial remnant while the society around it is calling for something more alive.

What is missing is not primarily information. What is missing is form.

What is missing are places where people can meet without immediately having to defend themselves, perform an identity, or enter into battle over the narrative. What is missing are fields in which soil, care, rhythm, presence, and shared observation can come before positioning.

In this situation, the Church of Denmark becomes interesting in a new way. Not as the institution that must explain everything, but as a possible host for a low-temperature, dignified, and fruitful encounter.

The next phase in the Church of Denmark may be to speak less and hold more space.

This is not a rejection of proclamation, theology, or liturgy. It is a shift in emphasis. In a society where people are already being explained, analysed, positioned, and persuaded from all sides, a deep longing arises for spaces in which life can appear before interpretation is laid over it.

To hold space is not passivity. It is a discipline.

- It is the capacity to carry a room without taking it over.
- To protect the emergence of meaning without forcing it.
- To hold the rhythm without dominating the content.
- To receive people without immediately trying to correct them.

Here the church may grow stronger not necessarily by saying more, but by being more: more host, more listening, more circular, more rooted, more capable of holding a field in which people may sit together, walk together, cultivate together, grieve together, listen together, and inquire together.

Night church, pilgrimage walks, and open church rooms already point in that direction as forms of practice in which presence, calm, and openness carry a substantial part of the room's meaning.

An important language in this context is Moral Biology.

What is meant by this is not a new ideology, but a simple insight: that ethics is not only about what we believe, but also about what living systems can actually bear.

- Human beings are not only opinions. They are nervous systems.
- Communities are not only values. They are rhythms, atmospheres, and capacities.
- Institutions are not only rules. They are fields that either regulate or overload.

When a human being, a classroom, a local community, a workplace, or an institution is persistently dysregulated, conversation becomes harder, thinking becomes narrower, and relationships become more fragile. Green transition and the social peace process must therefore be understood not only as questions of attitude and policy, but also as questions of viable conditions.

This points toward something very concrete:

- that people need healthy roots,
- that places need living soil,
- that relationships need rhythm and decency,
- that institutions need forms that do not betray the life they are meant to serve.

There is also a more bodily layer here, one modern societies often underestimate. People do in fact feel in the body what gives life and what takes from life. Aggression, chronic pressure, constant conflict, and brutality do not

settle only as opinions, but also as biological burden. When a field becomes too harsh, people lose both nuance and breath. Peace is therefore not only a moral ideal. It is also a form of regulation.

05

Healthy roots: a society's peace depends on rootedness

A recurring motif in this paper is the phrase *healthy roots*.

It points to something basic: people need to feel at home somewhere if they are not to become hardened, desperate, or unmoored. Home is not only property. Home is also participation, ground connection, belonging, dignity, rhythm, and the possibility of contributing.

- When people lose roots, something happens to them.
- When local communities lose roots, something happens to them.
- When institutions lose roots, something happens to them.

Healthy roots therefore does not mean nostalgia. Nor does it mean national romanticism. It means creating the concrete conditions in which life can take root without becoming trapped.

- This applies to children in schools.
- It applies to stressed teachers.
- It applies to farmers who feel pressed into identity war.
- It applies to biologists who struggle to be heard without being hated.
- It applies to refugees and displaced people.

- It applies to priests and congregations.
- It applies to all of us.

And perhaps it is precisely here that the Church of Denmark may become a new kind of anchor institution: not by insisting on superiority, but by helping to restore roots.

06

Everyday life, pause, and the Danish feeling of habitat

There is also a more ordinary layer in this paper that should not be overlooked.

Many people in Denmark love everyday life. Not because everyday life is always easy, but because it carries a particular homeliness: the summer light, the shore, the garden, the coffee, the wind, the song of skylarks, the nearby community, the temporary pause from noise. There is something deeply Danish in the longing for the ordinary, the close-to-home, and the quiet life, even while society is also marked by stress, performance pressure, and overheating.

This matters because green transition is often described in terms so large or so technical that one forgets what is actually at stake. It is not only about reduction targets, system design, and governance tools. It is also about whether people are able to breathe freely in their own lives. Whether there are places where they are not all the time in yellow or red. Whether community feels like a habitat one actually wants to inhabit.

Here the Church of Denmark and the longing of many people may meet more deeply than is often said aloud. Not because everyone is religious. But because

many people intuitively know that a society must also have places where ordinary life is nourished, and where pause is allowed to return.

07

Church land: from asset to calling

One of the strongest concrete fields in this transition is church land.

When the Church of Denmark holds land, it holds more than an administrative asset. It holds the possibility of making a common ground available. Land is not only a resource. It is also a possibility for meeting, learning, healing, biodiversity, food practice, stillness, regenerative demonstration, and shared observation.

The church's own material highlights that church lands can be transformed and brought into new green communities, including nature, ecology, and forest.

- Church land can be more than a passive appendix to buildings.
- It can become a living common.
- A place where people meet around something that grows.
- A place where community gets soil under its feet.
- A place where green transition becomes sensory and shared.

Small areas are enough to begin. The decisive thing is not size, but the quality of the field.

Den Nye Fælled: a name, a pilot field, an invitation

Den Nye Fælled is proposed here as a name for a possible pilot field.

- Not as a legal entity.
- Not as a new church superstructure.
- Not as permanent branding.

But as a pilot name. An inviting name. A name that points toward a shared place where something new can begin.

The common is a strong Danish word. It carries the history of commons, of shared land, cultivation, passage, conflict, use, and being together. It is not sterile. It holds both the peaceful and the unresolved. That is precisely why the word is good. This movement is not about artificial harmony. It is about creating a field where people with different interests can meet without being forced back into the usual trenches.

What is new in Den Nye Fælled does not mean that everything old must go. It means that a new common form is needed. A new commons. A new meeting place. A new clarity in the field.

- A place where the church may host without owning.
- A place where civil society may participate without capture.

- A place where soil, rhythm, ritual, observation, and peaceful co-creation may stand side by side.
-

09

A clean field: why purity is structural and not decorative

In a field as inflamed as climate, migration, agriculture, religion, and public life, purity is not an optional good. It is a necessity.

A clean field does not mean a neutral field in the empty sense. It means a field that is not contaminated by hidden domination.

- no party-political capture
- no missionary takeover
- no VIP logic
- no moral shaming as method
- no branding that uses people as symbolic props
- no hidden economic power that drains trust
- no false inclusion where everything has in reality already been decided

If Den Nye Fælled is to have credibility, the field must be kept clean. Not perfect, but clean enough that people can feel they are not entering yet another machine.

That is also why an open and non-confessional collaborative field is a strength. Precisely because it is not a mission field, it can meet the Church of Denmark in a dignified and open way.

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Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands: Den Nye Fælled in a Realm Community under change

If the Church of Denmark is, in the coming years, to step forward more clearly as a holder of space for green transition, living soil, and peaceful co-creation, this must also be read in the light of the relationship between Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands.

- Not as an afterthought.
- Not as a marginal note.
- Not as something that can simply be added later.

But as part of the field of truth itself.

For the Realm Community is not a homogeneous space. It is a shared political and historical field marked by different territorial conditions, different experiences with power, different forms of vulnerability, and different horizons of sovereignty, home, and future. This applies to Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands alike, even where the ecclesial arrangements are not identical.

Here Penguin Dashboard is an important mirror. Report 04 describes the Denmark pilot not as “Denmark alone,” but as a field that must also be understood through Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Greenland should not be

treated as a marginal addition, but as the place where the macro-logical model becomes more demanding: through dispersed settlement, supply dependence, housing and infrastructure vulnerability, Arctic logistics, fisheries, energy, extraction, and the question of who receives value, and how much returns to local resilience rather than leaking outward. The Faroe Islands must likewise be read as a distinct part of the Realm Community, with their own ecclesial, cultural, and geographic conditions.

The Church of Denmark's own channels also show that Greenland stood high on the agenda at the bishops' meeting in early 2026, and that bishops from Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Denmark together spoke of the reconciliatory conversation within the varied circle of the Realm Community. At the same time, precision matters: the Faroe Islands should not be described as ecclesially subordinate to the Church of Denmark, but as part of the wider ecclesial and historical horizon of the Realm Community.

Green transition in the Church of Denmark therefore cannot be only about local land projects in Denmark alone. It must also have a relational and historical dimension. It must be able to hold the question of how to be together in a shared space without hiding asymmetry, and without flattening the different ecclesial, historical, geographic, and political conditions that shape Greenland and the Faroe Islands in different ways.

Den Nye Fælled must not be understood as a purely Danish affair, even though it emerges in Danish soil, Danish language, and Danish institutional reality.

It must be understood as a local response to a planetary condition.

- We live on one planet.
- We are one humanity.
- We do not have several earths to negotiate with.
- We do not have another place to retreat to if living systems collapse.

And however different our cultures, religions, languages, historical experiences, and political systems may be, we share the most basic condition: we are living beings in a living shared system.

This does not mean that differences disappear. It does not mean that conflicts become irrelevant. It does not mean that history, power, and inequality should be smoothed away.

It means that beneath those differences there is a common denominator that cannot be negotiated away: air, water, soil, food, rhythm, rootedness, grief, care, boundaries, participation, and the need for places where life may be protected and nourished.

In this sense, Den Nye Fælled is not only a Danish pilot. It is a local commons with planetary resonance.

If Den Nye Fælled is to be more than a beautiful image, it must also be understood as a governance field.

It is not enough to say that we live on one planet, and that we are one humanity, if we do not at the same time ask how people actually learn to be with soil, habitat, and one another over time. For the common does not arise by itself. It is carried by practice, by boundaries, by knowledge, by local experience, and by the rules people develop together when they actually want a living field to endure.

Here Elinor Ostrom's work is decisive. Her studies of commons showed that in many places around the world people are in fact able to govern shared resources without either total state control or private dissolution — but only when certain conditions are present. People must be able to know one another, read the field, follow what is happening, adjust rules locally, and resolve conflicts quickly and decently.

The same applies to habitat. If people over time are with the soil, with species, with water, with the seasons, and with the concrete conditions of life in a place, another kind of knowledge arises. Not an overview from above, but a participatory intelligence. A person, a local community, or a steward circle learns something by being with a place long enough.

This understanding is not only theoretical. It is also lived. As a young PhD student, the author had the opportunity to meet Vincent and Elinor Ostrom in their home and academic milieu. What made a lasting impression was not only their concepts, but their way of being: hospitable, warm, precise, and welcoming. They embodied a clear coherence between what they studied as scholars and the way they actually met other human beings. Commons here

became not only an analytical field, but also a practice of decency, attention, and generosity. Precisely this unity between thinking and lived form is central to Den Nye Fælled.

Here Vincent Ostrom's thought of polycentric governance is important. It points to the fact that large living systems do not necessarily have to be governed from one centre, but may consist of several autonomous, coordinated action spaces. Den Nye Fælled may be read in that tradition: as a local, safe, and transparent action arena in which people learn to be with habitat without having to wait for total agreement or total control.

Den Nye Fælled is not merely a meeting place. It is a practice ground for civic and civilizational maturation.

- to be with the earth without exhausting it,
- to be with one another without immediately going to war,
- to be with difference without losing common ground,
- and to be with the living without reducing it to service alone.

Refugees, sense of home, and peace practice

One of the places where this line of thought deepens is in the encounter with refugees and displaced people.

Far too often, people in flight are reduced to administration, opinion, control, and political symbolism. But at a more basic level, their situation is also about rootedness, nervous system, participation, and dignity.

Here Den Nye Fælled and the church's hosting function may open another layer.

- Not as paternalistic aid.
- Not as a naïve fantasy of harmony.
- But as shared practice around soil, food systems, biodiversity, local community, and regenerative participation.

If people meet around living practice — around soil, planting, observation, food, rhythm, season — another kind of relation becomes possible than the one produced by pure administration or pure debate.

This too may be read as a peace process.

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Farmers, biologists, and the porch

A concrete and powerful image in this context is the church porch.

In church tradition, the porch is the place where one used to lay down one's weapons before entering. That image holds something deeply usable today.

Danish society is full of fields in which people meet one another carrying symbolic weapons. Not least in the relationship between agriculture, nature,

biodiversity, climate, and governance. Very quickly, people arrive as positions: one defending, the other accusing, and both already armed.

But if the meeting is moved to a new common, held by another kind of hosting, something may change. The temperature may fall. The earth may become a shared third. The observable may come before ideology. People may discover that they in fact stand on the same ground.

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Citizen science as shared ground

A significant strength in the material underlying this vision is the development of a simple and open citizen-science logic. The point is not to turn everyone into experts, but to make the field more legible to more people.

When people are able to observe a place together — soil, water, growth, biodiversity, micro-changes, well-being — a shared ground comes into being that does not first require agreement about the whole worldview.

Citizen science here becomes not only data collection. It becomes democratic attentiveness: a practice in which different people may meet around what is actually happening, and not only around their ideas of one another.

It is a good place to begin because it is low-threshold, concrete, and dignified.

16

Penguin Economics: rotation, replenishment, and fair burden-sharing

If a field like this is to remain clean and sustainable, economy must also be thought cleanly.

Here the logic of Penguin Economics matters: rotation rather than hoarding, replenishment rather than exhaustion, burden-sharing rather than invisible overload.

- Too much good work breaks because it is carried by too few.
- Too much idealism collapses because there is no economic rhythm.
- Too many communities become skewed because some give everything while others only consume.

A field like Den Nye Fælled must therefore think economy as something that protects life in the field. Not as maximization, but as viability.

17

The Church of Denmark as anchor institution in a new time

The Church of Denmark can do something particular right now.

- It is not only cultural history.
- It is not only public administration.
- It is not only religious service.

It is one of the few remaining institutions that can still be local, ritual, historical, spacious, and hosting at the same time. The Church of Denmark itself states that it employs more than 12,000 staff and is supported by several thousand volunteers.

If the Church of Denmark enters more deeply into this hosting function, it may become an anchor institution in a new form: less concerned with prestige as superiority, more concerned with credibility as presence. Less bound to the monopoly of sermon, more open to silence, circle, soil, and shared practice.

When confirmation students are able to stay overnight in a church and experience the room as marked by calm, safety, and trust, it says something important about what the church may still be. Not only a place for words and ritual, but a place that holds. Such a room is not only symbolic. It is also humanly and regulatively real. In a time marked by overheating, unrest, and aggression, that capacity is in itself a social resource.

18

Lament as infrastructure: the Church of Denmark and the public capacity for grief

There is a field still too absent from much green, social, and institutional transition, and that is the field of grief.

- Not grief as private weakness.
- Not grief as a sentimental pause from the “real” work.
- But grief as a necessary part of any living correction.

When people, local communities, and institutions live under prolonged pressure, not only conflict and misunderstanding arise. Accumulated grief arises as well.

In Report 02 — *The Correction Loop: AI Governance as Living Practice* — “lament as infrastructure” is described as part of the operative protocol itself. The report makes clear that when institutions systematically skip correction, secondary harm, erosion of trust, and biological overload arise. And when grief is not regulated, institutions will instead demand sacrifices.

If the Church of Denmark is to become a holder of space for green transition, living soil, and peaceful co-creation, it must also be able to hold space for lament. Not as yet another sermon about suffering, but as a room in which people may actually breathe, weep, be silent, listen, and remain together in what hurts, without being pushed onward too quickly.

Lament is not the opposite of action. Lament is what makes action truer.

- Den Nye Fælled must therefore also be a place of slowness.
- A place of silence.
- A place of tears.
- A place of breath.
- A place where people meet not only around what is to grow, but also around what has already been lost.

The sacred without monopoly: an open field on church land

An important relation in this paper is that Den Nye Fælled is not conceived as a religious field in a narrow or confessional sense.

This does not mean that the field is empty of spirit, depth, or holiness. Nor does it mean that the religious is pushed away. It means that the field should not be closed by one particular right of interpretation.

There must be places in a society where the religious and the non-religious may meet on common ground without one form having to absorb the other.

The sacred here points not first of all to dogma. It points to that which must be protected because it carries life. It may be soil. It may be a human being's boundaries. It may be grief. It may be silence. It may be a shared room where decency, rhythm, and presence are allowed to stand without being invaded.

In this sense, the sacred must not be monopolized. It must be able to be met, shared, and practiced in different forms without the field thereby becoming empty or relativistic.

Hold space likewise points to a particular hosting function: not merely to arrange a meeting, but to protect the conditions in which people may be present without immediately being explained, judged, mobilized, or corrected.

Pilot tracks

At Assistens Cemetery, ballpoint pens are placed in Dan Turèll's grave. No one asked for it. No one administers it. It is love finding a form — an intimacy with the intimate, the poetry of the ordinary, out in the open.

It may be the closest we come to a definition of sanctuary: a place where nature, culture, and the reality of life are allowed to be themselves, for the individual and yet within a shared field.

Den Nye Fælled begins there.

If this paper is to point toward concrete first movements, they could be these:

PILOT TRACK 1

A conversation in Helsingør. Helsingør appears as an obvious first point of contact because green transition is already clearly present there, and because the leadership of the diocese stands at the intersection of ecclesial responsibility and green movement.

PILOT TRACK 2

A parish-near experimental field. A concrete site near a church may be used as the first common: a small place where soil, biodiversity, meeting, stillness, and shared observation begin to take form.

PILOT TRACK 3

Circles and field-holding. Not only meetings in nature, but also circular rooms in which priests, citizens, young people, farmers, teachers, refugees, or others may be together without immediately having to deliver solutions.

PILOT TRACK 4

Citizen science and shared documentation. A simple observation practice may make the field transparent and learning-oriented without becoming heavy.

PILOT TRACK 5

Regenerative peace practice. Food-forest-like interventions, biodiversity fields, shared cultivation, and care may function as concrete peace architecture.

Delimitations and risks

This paper is not blind to risk.

- There is a risk that the field becomes too diffuse.
- There is a risk that church actors experience it as too open.
- There is a risk that non-church actors experience it as too church-near.

- There is a risk of capture, prestige play, branding, or well-intentioned overreach.
- There is a risk that old patterns simply repeat themselves in new language.

Everything must therefore begin small, calm, and honest. No one should be persuaded too quickly. Nothing should grow faster than it can bear.

Gold before flowering. Roots before crown. Field before scale.

22

Invitation to conversation, pilot, and shared inquiry

This paper is not a demand for theological restructuring. It is not a party-political programme. It is not a finished project proposal with every answer already in place.

It is an invitation.

- An invitation to conversation.
- An invitation to inquire whether the Church of Denmark, in this time, may carry a deeper hosting function.
- An invitation to test small, local, and learning-oriented pilot forms.
- An invitation to let soil, rhythm, grief, silence, observation, and peaceful coexistence take concrete form in a shared field.

If this paper speaks truthfully into the Church of Denmark's present opening, the next step is not first of all a large programme. The next step is a conversation. A listening. A testing. A first common.

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Conclusion: an invitation to hold a new place

This paper is not written to tell the Church of Denmark what it ought to be.

It is written to point toward the fact that an opening already exists.

- An opening toward more soil.
- More hosting.
- More silence.
- More shared ground.
- More living responsibility.
- More room for people to meet without being seized by the usual mechanisms.

The Church of Denmark cannot solve everything. But it may be able to help hold a place where more may begin.

That place could be Den Nye Fælled.

- Not as system.
- Not as slogan.
- Not as programmatic imposition.

— But as a clean field.

A field in which soil, ritual, neighbour-love, citizen science, biodiversity, peace work, commons, lament, the sacred, and human dignity may stand alongside one another without having to melt into a single ideology.

A field where human beings may once again come into view as human beings. Before they become roles. Before they become conflicts. Before they become arguments.

If the Church of Denmark is willing to help hold such a field, this will not only be a green act. It will be a deeply social act. A peaceful act. An earthbound act. An act that answers the times with something other than more noise.

And in a time like this, that is not a small thing.

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