

**Joint Meeting of the
JOINT ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN COMMISSION
and the
LUTHERAN-EPISCOPAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of September 24-27, 2018
Niagara Falls, ON**

In attendance:

Anglican Church of Canada

Very Rev. Peter Wall (co-chair)
Bishop Don Phillips
Marion Jenkins
Canon Rob Towler
Rev. Dr. Scott Sharman (staff)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Deacon Pamela Harrington
Dr. Allen Jorgenson
Bishop Larry Kochendorfer
Pastor André Lavergne (staff)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Donald Kreiss (co-chair)
Dr. Mitzie Budde
The Rev. Canon Natalie Hall
Kathryn Johnson (staff)

The Episcopal Church (USA)

Bishop Douglas Sparks (co-chair)
Rev. Nils Chittenden
Rev. Nancy Sargent McGrath Green
Rev. John Perez
Rev. Canon David Perry
Rev. Margaret Rose (staff)
Richard Mammana (staff)

Ecumenical Observers

Fr. Tim Hingston, Roman Catholic Observer

Regrets

Rev. Kari Jo Verhulst
Rev. Dale Gilman (ACIP representative)
Brita Chell (co-chair)
Kathryn Lohre (staff)

Guests

Bishop Susan Bell
Bishop Michael Pryse
Archdeacon Valerie Kerr

Monday Sept. 24

4:30pm - Arrivals

5:30pm - Supper

7:00pm - Opening Eucharist

The Eucharist began with a Smudging Ceremony, led by Archdeacon Valerie Kerr. The preacher was the Very Rev. Peter Wall, and the celebrant Bishop Michael Pryse.

8:00pm - Welcome and introductions

Words of opening and welcome were offered by the co-chairs. Members who had expressed their regrets for the meeting were noted.

The members each took 2-3 minutes going around the table and introducing themselves to one another.

9:00pm - Social Time

Tuesday Sept. 25

8:00am - Breakfast

9:00am - Morning Prayer (Led by members of LECC)

9:30am - JALC/LECC Joint Session 1

“States of the Union”

This session was devoted to what was colloquially described as “states of the union,” with each co-chair taking some time to share recent important developments and decisions in their respective churches. Supplemental contributions were also made by staff.

ELCIC

Acting as ELCIC co-chair for this meeting Bishop Larry Kochendorfer reviewed the 2017 ELCIC Annual Report. From this he drew particular attention to the four components of the emerging ELCIC ‘Vision Priorities’: 1) Courageous Innovation, 2) Reconciled Relationships, 3) One Body Working Together, 3) Empowered Disciples.

From there he went on to reflect on the National Church Council which met in September 2018, highlighting the publication of a recent study document on medical assistance in dying called ‘The Call to Faithfully Journey.’ It does not take a single position, per se,

but emphasizes the importance of pastoral care and sensitivity for those who make this choice. Bishop Larry also noted how the Reformation 500 commemoration in 2017 had provided an important focus of recent work, and that working towards healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada was increasingly a major focus.

The National Convention of the ELCIC will meet in July 2019. It has been meeting every two years but, beginning in 2019, will move to a three year rotation in order to coincide with the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod.

One of the major pieces of the Convention agenda will be discerning a theology of ministry for the 21st century. The document currently under consideration in this regard bears the title "Public Ministry in the ELCIC". Andre Lavergre offered some general orientation to this text, making particular mention of work done to develop the prophetic dimension of Christian ministry especially through the order of the diaconate.

ELCA

Bishop Don Kreiss began by noting the significant changes that are coming to the Conference of Bishops, with 18 elections coming up in 2019. It is assumed that this transition will bring both challenges and opportunities going forward.

Bishop Don also spoke to the significant attention being shown in the ELCA to the question of the shape of the diaconate as a distinct vocation in ministry. This includes discussion of things like how deacons are called, formed, and commissioned. The ELCA is currently considering a liturgical 'Entrance Right' to diaconal ministry, and this is requiring considerable discussion and discernment. This has included several opportunities for consultation with the Episcopal Church, including this meeting.

Another major focus in 2019 will be a national policy statement on interreligious relations. This is very much a growing area of emphasis in the work of the ELCA, and the hope is that this will provide some helpful encouragement and direction to deepen this further.

TEC

Bishop Doug Sparks shared news from the Episcopal Church's General Convention held in July 2018. This was the first General Convention since the beginning of the ministry of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, and there were three main areas of focus that were at the forefront: Evangelism/discipleship, racial reconciliation, and care of creation.

In the area of reconciliation Bishop Doug drew attention to the resource "Becoming Beloved Community", which sets out a process of stages on the way to both personal and structural transformation: 1) Telling the Truth about the Church and Race, 2) Proclaiming the Dream of Beloved Community, 3) Practicing a Way of Love, and 4) Repairing the Breach in Institutions and Society.

He also made mention of the text *The Way of Love: Practices Jesus-centred Life*, which expresses Presiding Bishop Curry's vision of Church that he likes to describe as "The Jesus-Movement." It outlines what is, in effect, a rule or rhythm of life that nurtures growth in the Jesus way, including the following areas of specific commitment: Turning, Learning, Praying, Worshipping, Blessing, Going, Living, and Resting.

At this General Convention the Episcopal Church re-established its connection with the Anglican Church in Cuba after 5-6 decades of separation, and there is ongoing movement taking place to regularize this relationship further. Thanks was expressed to the Anglican Church of Canada for its role in walking alongside the Cuban Anglican Church during these years.

In the ecumenical area, Margaret Rose noted that the General Convention had affirmed the World Council of Churches document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, and had voted to continue the conversation and efforts towards full communion with the United Methodist Church. On the latter front there are challenges related to progress here as a result of the ongoing discernment within the United Methodist Church around human sexuality and the way that this is taking up substantial focus and energy.

ACC

Peter Wall focused his comments on the preparations for the upcoming General Synod in July 2019. There are three major decisions which are coming before the Synod which will have significant impact on the future of the ACC. These include the election of a new Primate to succeed Archbishop Fred Hiltz, steps to enable the creation of a self-determining Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada, and a second reading of the resolution to amend the canon on marriage to allow for the celebration of the marriages of same-gender partners in Dioceses where the Bishop Ordinary grants permission.

From the ecumenical and interfaith portfolio Scott Sharman spoke of work being done to encourage greater dialogue and relationship between Christians and the growing population of Muslims in Canada, noting the now ten year old *A Common Word* initiative as one way that this is being explored and developed.

12:00pm - Lunch

1:30pm - JALC and LECC separate sessions

4:30pm - Social time

5:30pm - Supper

7:00pm - JALC/LECC Joint Session 2

Four-Way Heads of Church Joint Letter

Margaret Rose reported to the group a decision that came out of the March 2018 meeting of the Four-Way Heads of Church meeting in Winnipeg that would see the four national/primate bishops write a joint letter of prayer and mutual encouragement to be read in connection with the national synodical gatherings of each church in 2018/19. This was envisioned as a means of further expressing the growing bonds of affection and connection between the four churches. Such a letter was written and subsequently released during the TEC General Convention in July 2018. The same will happen for ELCA, ELCIC, and ACC during the summer of 2019.

Four-Way Consultation on Leadership

Scott Sharman offered some background on another Four-Way Heads of Church initiative planned for May 2019. The four national/primate bishops expressed a desire to engage in some reflection and discernment together around the question of how we are forming leaders for ministry in light of the needs of the Church and the world in the 21st century. The ACC has taken the lead on putting together a proposed program and process for this consultation, and the document outlining this was reviewed. Members of JALC and LECC affirmed this direction, and offered helpful feedback which will be fed back in to the planning process within the ACC and among the Four-Way leaders.

Confirmation and Full Communion

The evening session concluded with a discussion of the celebration of confirmation in the context of full communion. In the ACC-ELCIC context this has proven to be an area of challenge to the relationship owing to the differences in practice in terms of who each church understands to be the appropriate minister of confirmation. JALC has been working on this issue for a number of years, trying to offer the bishops of the two churches a set of guidelines for confirmation in the context of shared ACC-ELCIC ministries (either joint parishes, Anglican parishes served by a Lutheran pastor, or Lutheran congregations served by an Anglican priest). JALC felt it would be beneficial to hear if and how this is being handled in the ELCA-TEC setting.

A variety of responses from both TEC and ELCA members of LECC were offered, drawing on experiences from the context of shared ministries. While ELCA-TEC experience the same reality as ACC-ELCIC in terms of the differing liturgical and ecclesiological perspectives on confirmation, it has generally not been found to be a particularly pressing point of contention that needs to be resolved.

8:45pm - Evening Prayer (Led by members of JALC)

9:00pm - Social time

Wednesday Sept. 26

8:00am - Breakfast

9:00am - Morning Prayer (led by members of LECC)

9:30am - JALC/LECC Joint Session 3

Discussion of Four-Way Recognition of Full Communion

This session was devoted to a discussion of a cross-border mutual recognition of Anglican-Lutheran full communion agreements that would deepen the communion between the four churches (ACC-ELCIC-ELCA-TEC). JALC and LECC were mandated to spend time on this by their respective national/primatial bishops during the four-way heads of church meeting in March 2018. In particular, they were asked to develop a draft proposal that would “complete the square” - i.e. to enable the ACC to relate to the ELCA as a partner church because of the ELCA full communion relationship with TEC, etc.

Kathryn Johnson was tasked with writing the first version of this draft, which was presented to JALC and LECC for discussion. Kathryn noted that the theological work to enable this step had already been done in the context of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC). While it was deemed not currently possible to say that all churches of the Anglican Communion could be considered full communion partners with all churches of the Lutheran World Federation, this was not seen to preclude particular national full communion relationships from taking such steps among themselves. In fact, this is directly encouraged in the ALIC documents.

While exchanges of members and ministers between the four churches is something that has been taking place for some time, members of JALC and LECC were enthusiastically supportive of moving more concretely to regularize these links and allow for greater coordination and partnership. The cross-border nature of this proposal was especially important given the current political context, including learnings from Indigenous peoples about the trans-national nature of many of their traditional territories and homelands.

On this latter point John Perez suggested that Indigenous voices ought to be directly consulted as part of this discussion, rather than just assuming what we think might be their contribution. Peter Wall and Scott Sharman were tasked with contacting the National Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, Bishop Mark MacDonald, and the director of Indigenous Ministries for the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, The Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, to seek their input and direction.

Two smaller writing groups were convened to work on minor edits and revisions of the draft prior to the afternoon JALC/LECC Joint Session 4.

12:00pm - Lunch

1:30pm - JALC and LECC separate sessions

3:30pm - JALC/LECC Joint Session 4

Discussion of Four-Way Recognition of Full Communion Continued

Peter Wall and Scott Sharman reported on their consultations with contacts in the ACC Indigenous Ministries office. Canon Ginny Doctor proposed some revisions to the section on the transnational nature of traditional territories, suggesting the language of “Turtle Island” in place of “North America” as a way to state this more clearly. The members of both JALC and LECC expressed

The writing group of Alan Jorgenson, Bishop Don Phillips, and Kathryn Johnson reported on their edits to sections related to the theo-political significance of this cross-border proposal.

Scott Sharman took the group through several other suggested minor changes in wording and grammar.

Following this round of revisions the group arrived at a unanimous consensus to approve a proposal under the title A Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion. The co-chairs will compose a joint letter to the respective national/primate bishops commending it to their consideration. Assuming the responses are favourable, each church will need to undertake its own internal processes to seek its approval and implementation. The ecumenical staff members will work to advance this work in their respective contexts.

The Arusha Call to Discipleship

Scott Sharman offered some background to the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism conference held in March 2018 in Arusha Tanzania. This meeting brought together over one thousand participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds and denominational traditions to discuss the state of missiological thought and praxis around the world. At the close of the Conference the participants issued *The Arusha Call to Discipleship*. This text was subsequently circulated by the WCC for the consideration of its 349 member churches as a potential guide to their own internal reflections on these same topics.

After discussion of the content of the document it was agreed that this international ecumenical statement is one which gives voice to many of the same kinds of convictions around discipleship which are increasingly coming into focus in our four churches in Canada. Consensus was that JALC-LECC should write a letter to the four national/primate bishops inviting them to consider issuing a joint letter affirming *The Arusha Call*. Scott was asked to write a draft of this letter for review of the co-chairs. Following their approval the ecumenical staff will forward it to the national/primate bishops.

Moravian Full Communion

A discussion of relations between Anglicans, Lutherans, and Moravians was initiated by the members of JALC. Both ELCA and TEC are in relationships of full communion with the Moravian Church in the United States. Although the Moravian Church is relatively small in Canada, it does have congregations in Alberta, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador. While this does not necessarily imply that the ACC and ELCIC churches have or should have any relationship with the Moravians, the fact that our partner churches in the US do does seem to call for some consideration.

LECC member proceeded to share about the many ways in which their connections with the Moravians have been sources of blessing and creative collaboration, as well as some of the challenges that result from issues such as size disparity and regionality. It was felt that these might be experienced to an even greater degree in the Canadian context. JALC expressed deep appreciation for the insights offered, and indicated a strong desire to continue to draw on the experience and advice of ELCA and TEC in exploring the possibilities of opening a dialogue between ACC-ELCIC and the Moravian Church in Canada.

Full Communion Anniversaries

It was suggested that it would be wise to have some initial conversations about the potential for joint commemorative activities in connection with the 20th anniversaries of Anglican-Lutheran full communion in Canada and the United States. It was noted that at the 10 year anniversary the four churches did something in common, with contingents celebrating concurrently at churches in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie respectively. The official date of full communion for TEC-ELCA is 2000, and ACC-ELCIC in 2001. The lines of communication between the four churches will remain open in this regard, and JALC-LECC will encourage some kind of joint recognition.

Future JALC-LECC Dates

It was agreed that the next joint meeting of JALC-LECC would happen in the fall of 2021.

5:30pm - Supper

7:00pm - Social Time

Thursday Sept. 27

8:00am - Breakfast

9:00am - Departures