

# STANDING COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS

## Membership

The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin, <i>Chair</i>	Western New York, II	2024
The Rev. David Simmons, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Milwaukee, V	2027
Dr. Lucinda Mosher, <i>Secretary</i>	Florida, IV	2027
Ms. Erin Wolf, Clerk	Fond du Lac, V	2024
Dr. Liza Anderson	Minnesota, VI	2024
The Ven. Dr. Walter Baer	Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, II	2027
Dr. Michael Booker	Missouri, V	2027
El Rvdo. Ramón Canela	Dominican Republic, IX	2024
Dr. Mary Caroline Cravens	Atlanta, IV	2024
The Rt. Rev. Peter Eaton	Southeast Florida, IV	2024
The Rt. Rev. Mark Edington	Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, II	2027
The Rt. Rev. Robert Fitzpatrick	Hawai'i, VIII	2027
The Rev. Dr. Kirsten Guidero	Northern Indiana, V	2024
The Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris	Virginia, III	2024
Dr. Elizabeth Jordan	Eastern Michigan, V	2024
Prof. Willis H. A. Moore	Hawai'i, VIII	2027
Mr. Daniel Pigg	West Tennessee, IV	2027
Dr. Eugene Schlesinger	El Camino Real, VIII	2027
Ms. Ellen Singer	Texas, VII	2024
The Rev Canon Dr. C. Denise Yarbrough	Rochester, II	2024
Ms. Julia Ayala Harris, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Oklahoma, VII	
The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Dr. Deborah Jackson, <i>Liaison of Executive Council</i>	Florida, IV	
The Rev. Margaret Rose, <i>Staff</i>		

## Acknowledgements

The SCEIR would like to thank and acknowledge the work and support of The Rev. Margaret Rose, The Rev. Canon Charles Robertson, The Rev. Dr. Elise Johnstone (TEC-PCUSA Dialogue Chair), Ms. Martha Gardner (Standing Commission on World Missions), and the Ecclesiology Committee of the House of Bishops.

## Mandate

### 2022 - Canon I.1.2.n.5

5. A Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. It shall be the duty of the Commission to:

- i. Coordinate and encourage the work of church unity among Christian partners and collaboration and peacebuilding with interfaith partners, conciliar, and interfaith organizations.
- ii. Recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention for the affirmation and development of ecumenical and interreligious partnerships.
- iii. Collaborate with ecumenical and interreligious partners, conciliar and interfaith bodies to develop tools which address issues of power, racial justice, colonialism, imperialism, and the historical racial bias in ecumenical endeavors.
- iv. Support Diocesan and local engagement in interreligious and ecumenical ministry.
- v. Encourage theological work that recognizes the current and future ecumenical and religious landscape, contextual theologies and partnerships with conciliar bodies and others to address the Gospel issues of unity, justice, and peace, and to respond as requested to Conciliar, ecumenical, or other interreligious documents.
- vi. In collaboration with the churchwide Office on Ecumenical and Inter-religious relations, develop and recommend to the General Convention comprehensive and coordinated policies and guidelines for inter-religious relations and ecumenical dialogues and conversations.
- vii. Recommend strategies and policies to General Convention for training and leadership development, with networks, diocesan ecumenical officers, faith-based bodies within and beyond the Episcopal Church
- viii. Study the needs and trends of the ecumenical and interreligious landscape, to support and encourage the development of resources for ecumenical and interreligious formation.

## Summary of Work

### Meetings

- November 13–17, 2022, Baltimore, Maryland
- December 15, 2022, Zoom
- April 10, 2023, Zoom
- August 30, 2023, Zoom
- October 11–14, 2023, Baltimore, Maryland
- November 13, 2023, Zoom
- January 23, 2024, Zoom

### STANDING COMMISSION STRUCTURE AND AREAS OF FOCUS

Following initial discussion on the work that is and should be happening under this umbrella, four subcommittees were developed to address the mandate: Theology – Ecumenical; Theology – Interreligious; Global/Anglican; Constitutions and Canons. Additional ecumenical and interfaith projects are being acted upon by individuals and/or TEC staff members.

#### **THEOLOGY – ECUMENICAL (KIRSTEN GUIDERO, CHAIR)**

This subcommittee convened to consider how best to support TEC ecumenical endeavors through current issues with four dialogue and full communion partners: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB), and the Presbyterian Church-USA (PCUSA). The pressing matter of discerning towards full communion with the ELKB brought members of this subcommittee to consult with members of the House of Bishops and historical theologians on understandings of the episcopacy. They developed a full resolution with supporting documents to share with the House of Bishops, General Convention deputies, and the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO), the full texts of which are appended to this report. Concerning the UMC dialogue, the subcommittee’s resolution and accompanying document focused on articulating wholehearted support for that ecclesial community as it continues to discern its polity structure and theology through a season of intense division. For our full communion partner the ELCA, the subcommittee developed a resolution that clarifies the interchangeability of deacons, attached. For this stage of dialogue and exploration of partnerships with the PCUSA, no tasks were necessary for the theology subcommittee. Rather, the subcommittee on constitutions and canons began preparing resolutions that would support future work towards full communion.

**THEOLOGY – INTERRELIGIOUS (LUCINDA MOSHER, CHAIR)**

During this biennium, the Interreligious Relations Subcommittee undertook and completed a thorough revision of three documents memorialized by the 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention. This subcommittee's three resolutions, if passed, will bring about adoption of *Holding Difference Together: Episcopal Theological and Practical Guidelines for Interreligious Relations*, plus *Christian-Jewish Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians* and *Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians* for churchwide use in developing and maintaining interreligious conversation or collaboration.

**GLOBAL/ANGLICAN (MARK EDINGTON, CHAIR)**

A subcommittee of the Commissioned gathered to consider how best the Episcopal Church might respond to recent developments in the Anglican Communion. Historically, the work of the General Convention on Anglican Communion matters has been the remit of the Standing Commission on World Mission; yet it seems evident that the years ahead may bring about a wholesale reconsideration of the instruments of Communion and the basic expectations of relationships between the independent, autonomous provinces of the Anglican Communion. Together with colleagues from the Standing Commission on World Mission, this subcommittee developed a draft resolution to propose to the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention calling for the creation of a Task Force to study Anglican Communion Relationships, with particular emphasis on (1) conducting a study of issues impairing relationships of Communion between The Episcopal Church and other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and the development of proposals for engaging constructively across differences; (2) proposing systematic ways for the Episcopal Church to respond to theological statements issued by the instruments of Communion; (3) proposing a means of establishing clear guidance for representatives of the Episcopal Church to the Triennial meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council; and (4) supporting the work of the offices of Ministry Beyond the Episcopal Church as it relates to relationships with our Anglican Communion partners.

**CONSTITUTIONS AND CANONS (DAVID SIMMONS, CHAIR)**

The Primary role of the Constitutions and Canons Subcommittee for this triennium has been examining the Constitutions and Canons for ways to deepen ties with other Christian Denominations. The resolutions for a constitutional change and canon to enable "Limited Ecumenical Partnerships" (LEP) such as the Church of England has is a result of that process. The LEP concept, if implemented, will enable further collaborative mission with other Christian denominations while maintaining the distinctives of Episcopal Ecclesiology.

## **RESOLUTIONS REFERRED BY THE 80<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CONVENTION**

### **Resolutions Referred to the Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical & Interreligious Work**

#### **Resolution 2018-C059 Commend Dialogue with the Evangelical Church in Bavaria**

*Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention approve and commend the existing relationship between the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe (Convocation) and the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (Evangelical Church in Bavaria); and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention approve and commend the process of exploring deeper relations and the dialogue toward full communion between The Episcopal Church and the ELKB.

*Please refer to the “Proposed Resolutions” section for Resolution text and subsequent explanation, as the language has been updated from the previous Referred Resolution from the 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention.*

## **PARTNERS IN WORK**

By its definition, this Standing Commission does not stand alone. To accomplish the mandate of General Convention, the SCEIR is connected to other parts of TEC engaged in interfaith and/or ecumenical efforts. The closest relationship is with the TEC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Their work, as well as the breadth and depth of their knowledge, has been a crucial part of this effort.

Other partners include the Offices of Team Beyond, the Episcopal Church, work at the United Nations, the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) group, the National Workshop on Christian Unity, Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), the National Council of Churches (NCC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), Shoulder-to-Shoulder, Religions for Peace USA, Christian Churches Together (CCT), and the other various task forces, commissions, committees, and dialogue groups who are engaged in specific relationships, such as the TEC-PCUSA dialogue.

## **Blue Book Report of the On-going Work of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations**

Submitted to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

### **Summary of Work**

#### **Churches Uniting in Christ**

Along with eight fellow churches, The Episcopal Church remains an active member of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), the successor to the Consultation on Church Union. This multilateral dialogue continues to work toward interchangeability of ministry among its members and to eliminate the scourge of racism as a barrier to unity.

#### **National Council of Churches**

The National Council of Churches is an ecumenical body of 37 communions representing Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, evangelical, historic African American, and historic Peace churches. Its two current priorities are combating mass incarceration and the racial bias it carries and working to foster interreligious peacemaking. The NCC also provides a vehicle by which The Episcopal Church engages in interreligious dialogue with Jewish and Muslim partners. Episcopalians are in leadership in the Convening Tables and ongoing anti-racism work, Friendship Press and the NRSVue, and the governing board.

#### **World Council of Churches**

The World Council of Churches is the most inclusive worldwide ecumenical body, composed of Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant Churches from more than 110 countries. The WCC's 11th Assembly (governing body) took place in Karlsruhe, Germany in the summer of 2022. Daily prayer, Bible study, and fellowship marked the Assembly, which also addressed topics including the politicization of religion, rights of religious minorities, reunification of the Korean peninsula, and just peace, especially in Palestine and Israel and Armenia as well as Ukraine. Episcopalians serve on the Central Committee and four delegates attended the Karlsruhe event.

#### **Christian Churches Together in the USA**

Christian Churches Together (CCT) is the broadest ecumenical organization in the United States, with participants from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, mainline, evangelical, and Pentecostal branches of the Christian family. CCT hosts an annual forum as well as webinars and educational forums throughout the year. The 2023 Forum topic was "Baptism: Waters that Unite, Waters that Divide." The Episcopal Church was a founder of CCT and continues to serve on the Steering Committee.

### **Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers Network**

The Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) is the network of Ecumenical Interreligious Officers appointed by Diocesan bishops. EDEIO is an organizer of the National Workshop on Christian Unity. Throughout the year, EDEIO hosts network calls among EDEIO officers of the Episcopal Church, supporting their local work and offering engagement and information on church-wide ecumenical/interreligious work.

### **Philippine Independent Church-Episcopal Church Concordat Council**

Since 1961, the Philippine Independent Church (PIC), also known as the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), and The Episcopal Church have worked together under a concordat of full communion. Meetings during the current triennium have established common mission goals as well as theological dialogues. Ongoing conversation regarding the work of the IFI in the United States and partnerships in the Philippines, as well as participation of the Obispo Maximo in Episcopal Church meetings, continue to deepen the partnership. There are currently two IFI dioceses in the United States who work closely with Episcopal Church partners in Southwest Florida, Chicago, California, and Hawaii.

### **Religions for Peace USA**

RFPUSA is a national interreligious affiliate of Religions for Peace, which supports a network of nearly 100 national and regional global affiliates. Religions for Peace USA is the largest and most broadly-based representative multi-religious forum in the United States, with participants from about 50 religious communities, representing each of the major faith traditions. The organization identifies shared commitments among religious communities in the U.S., enhances mutual understanding among these communities, and facilitates collaboration to address issues of common concern. The Episcopal Church serves on its Steering Committee and is an active partner in its mission.

### **Shoulder to Shoulder**

The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign is a national multifaith coalition of religious denominations and faith-based organizations who are committed to ending anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination, and violence in the United States of America. The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign connects, equips, and mobilizes faith communities in the United States of America as strategic partners in countering, addressing, and preventing anti-Muslim hatred, discrimination, and violence. The Episcopal Church is an active partner in this coalition and also serves on its Steering Committee. Most recently, The Episcopal Church hosted Shoulder to Shoulder's flagship "Faith Over Fear" training at It's All About Love: A Festival for the Jesus Movement.

### **International Anglican Communion Ecumenical Dialogues**

The Episcopal Church is represented on the Anglican Communion's international dialogues. These include the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (The Rev. Dr. Christopher Beeley, representative); the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue (Dr. Liza Anderson, representative); and the Anglican-Roman

Catholic International Commission (The Rev. Dr. Stewart Clem, representative). Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order (The Rev. Dr. Katherine Sonderegger and The Rt. Rev. Eugene Sutton, representatives).



## Blue Book Report of the Moravian Episcopal Coordinating Committee

Submitted to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

### Members

The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit, Chair	Bethlehem, III	2024
Mrs. DeDreana, Freeman	North Carolina, IV	2024
The Rev. Dale Grandfield	Bethlehem, III	2024
The Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman	North Carolina, IV	2024
The Rev. Barbara Seward	Bethlehem, III	2024
Ms. Julia Ayala Harris, Ex Officio	Oklahoma, VII	2024
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Ex Officio	North Carolina, IV	2024

### Representation at General Convention

*Bishop Samuel Rodman will be present at General Convention.*

### Moravian Members

The Episcopal members of the Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee worked with the following Moravian members:

The Rev. Derek French (Northern Province), Co-Chair

The Rt. Rev. M. Blair Couch (Northern Province)

The Rt. Rev. Sam Gray (Southern Province)

The Rev. Fran Saylor (Southern Province) through April 2023

The Rev. Scott Rainey (Southern Province) beginning June 2023

### Mandate

#### Resolution 2018-A036

*Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention joyfully affirms the continuation of the ecumenical dialogues in which The Episcopal Church is engaged: the Presbyterian Church (USA)-Episcopal Dialogue; the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue (ARCUSA), noting particularly a renewed round of conversations; and the work toward full communion with the United Methodist Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention joyfully affirms the continued coordinating committee work with our full communion partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church (Northern Province and Southern Province); and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention celebrates with joy and gratitude the deepening international relationship among the leaders of The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and commends the members of these churches for the work they have done together and the statements and study documents they have jointly issued.

## Summary of Work

### **Work between the last Blue Book Report and the new triennium**

Since the last Blue Book Report (February 2020), The Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (MECC) had a virtual 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Full Communion Between the Moravian Church, Northern and Southern Province, and the Episcopal Church, on February 10, 2021, and started a Racial Reconciliation Working Group, in April 2021. At the General Convention held in July 2022, MECC distributed over two hundred copies of the Moravian Daily Texts, along with a one-page document describing our full communion relationship, to deputies and bishops.

### **Work during this triennium**

#### Meetings

During this triennium, MECC had three meetings:

- February 21, 2023, Zoom meeting
- May 1-3, 2023, In-person meeting in Bethlehem, PA
- September 13, 2023, Zoom meeting

Two more meetings are planned before General Convention

### **Racial Reconciliation Working Group**

#### Past Reckoning Webinar Series

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Full Communion service included a commissioning for the work of racial reconciliation, which has largely shaped the work of MECC during this triennium.

The MECC Racial Reconciliation Working Group, formed in response to this commission, created a three-webinar series, *Past Reckoning: Exploring the Racial History of the Moravian and Episcopal Churches*, which aired January 25, February 1 & 8, 2023. Christopher Sikkema and Jeremy Tackett of the Episcopal Church Office of Communications worked with the Working Group to promote and host the series. Mike Reiss, of the Moravian Interprovincial Board of Communications helped us promote it to the Moravian Church. The webinars were:

- Evangelizing Enslaved People: Good News or Control?

- The Silent Protest Parade: Responses to Racial Violence and Black Leadership in the Church
- The Church and the City: Integration, Segregation, and White Flight

Over 500 people registered for the series and each webinar had over 100 live participants.

Follow-up on the webinar series includes the following:

- the webinars were posted on the Episcopal Church Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations website for 6 months;
- a survey of participants gave helpful feedback and suggestions for further webinars or activities, as well as a new member for the Working Group;
- The Racial Reconciliation Working Group is turning the series into an Adult Education offering, with shortened videos and a study guide, available October 2023;
- The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit, Chair of the Racial Reconciliation Working Group, wrote an article on the webinar series for the “Engaged History” column of *Anglican & Episcopal History*, scheduled to appear in the December 2023 issue.

### **Full Communion Sacred Ground**

The Racial Reconciliation Working Group also promotes racial reconciliation through a full communion *Sacred Ground* program. Now in its third year, this Zoom program has had roughly 50 participants (including 7 facilitators) from the Moravian, Episcopal, and Lutheran Churches, as well as other denominations, in 2022-23 and in the series that began in August 2023. The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit is the coordinator of the groups. She wrote an article, [“Finding Full Communion on Sacred Ground”](#) which was posted on the Episcopal Church Racial Reconciliation website, in February 2023.

The Racial Reconciliation Working Group also promoted, through ENS, a Moravian Church Northern Province Racial Justice Team’s 2022 Zoom Advent Series, *A New Way of Being: Light, Wind, Healing, Home*. It featured Dr. Catherine Meeks, Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing, who had helped lead 75 Northern Province clergy in a Racial Justice Pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama. A number of Episcopalians participated in the Advent Series.

### **Document on Moravian and Episcopal congregations considering merger or closer relationships**

In addition to the work on racial reconciliation, MECC interviewed the leaders from an Episcopal congregation in the Diocese of Los Angeles which had opened its doors to a neighboring Moravian church which was closing. The planned merger was not able to be sustained, partly due to the pandemic. MECC used the leaders’ reflections on the experience to create a document for Episcopal diocesan bishops and Moravian District presidents to use as a resource when Episcopal and Moravian churches are exploring merger or closer relationships. It is initially being sent to a small group of bishops and District presidents for review and comments.

### **Worship Working Group**

At the May 2023 meeting, the work of the Racial Reconciliation Working Group was commended and encouraged to continue. A Worship Working Group was also created, to help our communions learn about each other's rich traditions in music and liturgy. It has had an initial meeting and the leaders are recruiting members from the two denominations. MECC meetings regularly include instructed Eucharists or other worship experiences to introduce and inform members about liturgical practices.

### **Representing the Episcopal Church at Moravian Synods**

Two members of MECC, The Rt. Rev. Samuel Rodman, and The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit, attended the Northern Province Synod, June 22-24, to represent the Episcopal Church. The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit also brought greetings to the Southern Province Synod, in June 2022.

### **Relationships with other Coordinating Committees**

MECC has reached out to other Coordinating Committees to see how there might be more collaboration among these bodies. The Moravian Church has been pushing the question of whether siloed full communion coordinating committees are the best way to live into the unity to which Christ calls us, or whether we are being called to develop a new vision of how we might work together when we share multiple full communion partners.

Through a relationship with Mitzi Budde, a member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, The Rev. Maria Tjeltveit gave a presentation about the work of MECC, "Building Beloved Community Ecumenically" to Budde's Virginia Seminary class, *Ecumenical Mission of the Church*, in March 2023.

### **Conclusion**

The primary work of the Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee is to facilitate building relationships between Moravians and Episcopalians, so that we can live into full communion and work together more effectively for Christ's mission. As the Moravian Church is not well known to Episcopalians, MECC is using the successful webinar series to explore how to use various tools--webinars, podcasts, social media, news stories—to enable our two denominations to learn about each other and enter into relationship with one another. It is blessing to work with our Moravian siblings in this creative and life-giving work.

## Blue Book Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States

### Members

The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt, *Chair*, 2024 – Tennessee, IV  
The Rev. Dr. Michael Cover, 2024 – Dallas, VII  
Rev. Dr. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, 2024 – California, VIII  
Dr. John Kiess, 2024 – Maryland, III  
The Rev. Charles McCarron, 2024 – Long Island, II  
The Rev. Canon Dr. C. Denise Yarbrough, 2024 – Rochester, II  
Ms. Julia Ayala Harris, *Ex Officio* – Oklahoma, VII  
The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, *Ex Officio* – North Carolina, IV

### Changes to membership during triennium:

The Rev. Charles McCarron (2022)

### Mandate:

#### 2022 Resolution A094

*Resolved*, That the 80th General Convention joyfully affirms the continuation of the ecumenical dialogues in which The Episcopal Church is engaged: the Presbyterian Church (USA)-Episcopal Dialogue; the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue (ARCUSA), and the work toward full communion with the United Methodist Church (UMC). And be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention joyfully affirms the continuation of work of the dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern) and commends the document *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* to the church for consideration. And be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention joyfully affirms the continued coordinating committee work with our full communion partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Moravian Church (Northern Province and Southern Province). And be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention joyfully affirms our representation and participation in national ecumenical bodies, including the National Council of Churches (NCC), Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) and Christian Churches Together (CCT).

### **Preface from the Cochairs**

Since 1965, the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church have sponsored a bilateral theological dialogue, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States of America, sometimes known as ARC-USA. As a part of this dialogue, ARC-USA has over the years produced a number of agreed statements on theological subjects of concern to the two churches, most recently a statement on “Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment” (2014). Our dialogue has taken place within the larger context of the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), contributing to and responding to the broader work of reconciliation between our churches.

In 2015 the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, asked ARC-USA to address the topic, “Reconciliation in Holy Scripture and Christian Tradition.” Our mandate included consideration of the theological, pastoral, and personal implications of reconciliation for our two churches. Scriptural, historical, and theological perspectives were also to be brought to bear on reconciliation, not only between the churches, but also within the churches, and in the world.

The work of this iteration of ARC-USA began in 2017, and the topic was eagerly embraced by the members of the dialogue. Participants were mindful that the theme of reconciliation was one that built upon emerging emphases of both the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and Pope Francis. As a broad theological theme, the topic was multi-faceted, involving not only the classic ecumenical concern for reconciliation between the churches, but also interreligious, racial, and ecological reconciliation.

This document includes an exploration of the theme of reconciliation in Holy Scripture and develops three interrelated aspects involved in reconciliation: recognition, repair, and restoration. These aspects are scripturally based but have a wider applicability within broader societal divisions. An attempt is made to speak forcefully into our present moment without losing the wider eschatological horizon of reconciliation. An addendum is also included, a liturgy of reconciliation for Episcopalians and Catholics that we hope will be useful in other contexts. We believe that our churches have learned from our ecumenical dialogue, in our search for full visible unity, and as humble learners ourselves offer these gifts for the wider work of reconciliation.

We are mindful that there are many related subjects within this broad topic that we were not able to take up. A good portion of our dialogue took place in the time of COVID-19, with its own stresses and strains that only underscored the need for reconciliation. The developing situation in Israel and Gaza in September 2023 emerged too late for us to incorporate in our work. We could not have imagined in 2015 the challenges that our world would face, or the even greater timeliness of this topic.

Furthermore, we cannot help but note that our topic’s timeliness seems more than fortuitous. Indeed, the seemingly exponential, global growth of hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia,

corruption, and violence—a good bit of it religiously motivated—in the eight years since we began our work may be somewhat like the Elysian trumpet the document describes, in this case a clarion call from the Spirit to the churches to engage in an ecumenism of repentance and reconciliation, of witness to the healing power of Christ and the call of Christians to be the ministers of this healing in a world awash in pain and violence. May our work provide at least a little inspiration and encouragement for Catholics and Episcopalians to assume this task together in new ways and with a renewed sense of responsibility to the world. We believe that the work of Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to God can only be completed by human beings becoming reconciled to one another.

We are grateful to the members of the dialogue for their good work. This extraordinary group of scholars and pastors has grown together through this time. In many ways, the experience of the members of the dialogue has mirrored the topic we were discussing. As we grew in relationship, we discovered the grace of reconciliation present in our midst. We found ourselves inspired by the presence of Christ among us in the power of the Spirit. We pray that this agreed statement from members of our churches will inspire others, and bring closer that day when the world will be reconciled to God.

The Most Rev. John Michael Botean

Bishop, Romanian Eparchy of St. George in Canton, Ohio

The Rt. Rev'd John C. Bauerschmidt

Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

### **Notes on Usage**

In keeping with common ecumenical parlance, we refer in this document to our two churches, communions, and communities, and to the one Church of Christ confessed in the creeds. This marks a rough and approximate usage. The Episcopal Church describes itself both as a church and as a member of the Anglican Communion of churches. There is no precisely parallel Roman Catholic counterpart in the United States, for several reasons, though the Roman Catholic Church comprises a communion of distinct, local churches worldwide. As used here, the term “Roman Catholic” refers to all the local churches in full communion with the Bishop of Rome, and not simply the Latin Church.

Likewise in keeping with standard ecumenical and Roman Catholic parlance, we shift freely between Roman Catholic and Catholic without presuming a simple identification between the two.

## Summary of Work and Meetings during the Triennium

Over fifty years ARC-USA has issued a number of agreed statements concerning a range of topics. These have included the doctrine of the Eucharist, the Ordination of Women, and a response to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's 1998 document "The Gift of Authority." Most recently in 2014 the Consultation produced the statement "Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment." The statements are collected here: [http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/ecumenical-documents-and-news-releases.cfm#CP\\_JUMP\\_106433](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/ecumenical-documents-and-news-releases.cfm#CP_JUMP_106433)

Since 2017, our work has centered on a new theme determined in 2014: "Reconciliation in Holy Scripture and Christian Tradition." An inter-disciplinary group of theologians and pastors were assembled as members to resource the work. The dialogue has reported on its meetings and progress to the 2018 and 2022 General Conventions.

Since our last report, the Consultation met virtually on April 15-16, 2021; as well as on November 11-13, 2021, at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita, KS. Work continued with a virtual meeting on May 19, 2022, as well as a meeting on October 5-8 at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD; on May 23-26, 2023, at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum Heights, MD; and a final meeting of this round of the dialogue, on November 8-11 at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in Marriottsville, MD.

Work on the agreed statement has now been completed. This document includes an exploration of the theme of reconciliation in Holy Scripture and develops three interrelated aspects involved in reconciliation: recognition, repair, and restoration. These aspects are scripturally based but have a wider applicability within broader societal divisions. An attempt is made to speak forcefully into our present moment without losing the wider eschatological horizon of reconciliation. An addendum is also included, a liturgy of reconciliation for Episcopalians and Catholics that we hope will be useful in other contexts. We believe that our churches have learned from our ecumenical dialogue, in our search for full visible unity, and as humble learners ourselves offer these gifts for the wider work of reconciliation.

We are mindful that there are many related subjects within this broad topic that we were not able to take up. A good portion of our dialogue took place in the time of COVID-19, with its own stresses and strains that only underscored the need for reconciliation. The developing situation in Israel and Gaza in September 2023 emerged too late for us to incorporate in our work. We could not have imagined in 2015 the challenges that our world would face, or the even greater timeliness of this topic.

### **Continuance recommendation**

We recommend continuance of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the United States during the next Triennium. The Consultation has continued to engage significant theological topics of common importance to our churches, in the furtherance of the goal of full, visible unity. The ongoing work of theological dialogue is valuable to our two churches, helping to determine the extent of agreement, and the limits of disagreement.



## Blue Book Report of the Episcopal-Presbyterian Dialogue

Submitted to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

### Membership

2022-2024 Membership: The Rev. Canon Elise B Johnstone, D.Min, Episcopal co-chair; The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, The Rev. Joseph Wolyniak, Dr. Michael Booker; along with The Rev. Margaret Rose, the Presiding Bishop's Deputy for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and EIR staff, The Rev. Salmoon Bashir, with additional support from EIR staff member The Rev. Hank Jeannel

Our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) counterparts are Dr. Anne Wainstein Bond, Ruling Elder, Presbyterian co-chair; The Rev. Dr. Neal D. Presa, Presbyterian co-vice chair; The Rev. Christian D. Boyd; The Rev. Robert Foltz-Morrison; The Rev. Terri Ofori; The Rev. Brian Entz; along with Dr. Y. Dianna Wright, representing the Office of the General Assembly

### Summary of Work

The Dialogue members met three times in this shorter triennium: in February 1-3, 2023, in Austin, Texas, by Zoom in March 2023, and again in person in October 29-31, 2023 in Denver, Colorado at Central Presbyterian Church, Denver. The February meeting was intended to be hosted by the Seminary of the Southwest, but an ice storm caused the seminary to close, and we met at our hotel.

The Episcopal-Presbyterian Dialogue was encouraged by the passage for study of the proposed "Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries" by both the 2022 General Convention and the 2022 General Assembly. The proposed document was shared publicly in late 2022 and early 2023 with a request for feedback, and we received numerous responses which were predominantly favorable of the proposal and offered constructive edits. The dialogue team incorporated some of the suggestions and produced a revised "Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries." With the assistance of The Rev. David Simmons, Rector of St. Matthias Episcopal Church and Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Waukesha, WI, a website was created to share both historic and current agreements, background information, and videos supporting the work of the dialogue and the proposal from some bishops including The Rt. Rev. Mark Van Koevering, Bishop of Lexington, The Rev. Philip Lotspeich, General Presbyter, Transylvania Presbytery, The Rt. Rev. Wayne Smith, Bishop Provisional of Southern Ohio, and most recently The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton of Maryland. The website [WWW.PCUSA-TEC.ORG](http://WWW.PCUSA-TEC.ORG) will continue to be a resource for this ecumenical work.

The Dialogue team invited The Rev. Canon Sharon Alexander, The Rev. Dr. Tom Ferguson, and The Rev. David Simmons to consult on how a path can be created for this proposal from a constitutional/canonical perspective, and the team is grateful for their time and efforts.

The Dialogue team is grateful to the SCEIR, for their reception and support of this proposal and for putting forward resolutions to make a constitutional/canonical path forward for this work, that is similar to how this work is occurring in the Church of England. It is hoped that this constitutional change will be received well by the General Convention in 2024 and again in 2027, and that the revised proposal can be approved by the 2027 General Convention.

This Dialogue also commends the report being presented to the PCUSA's General Assembly on our shared work. [Report to 2024 General Assembly TEC-PCUSA Dialogue](#)

**GOALS FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM**

- Attention to Ecumenical Digital Communities.
- Engagement of Christian bodies with which The Episcopal Church is not presently in dialogue.
- Development of guidelines for Buddhist-Episcopal, Sikh-Episcopal, and Hindu-Episcopal engagement.
- Development of a Federated Church Canon.
- Work on multireligious fluency as an aspect for theological education.

## Proposed Resolutions

### **A037 Accepting the agreement "Sharing the Gifts of Communion" between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria**

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive and commend *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* as set forth following as the basis for a relationship of full communion to be established between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria); and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church accept the affirmation of *Sharing the Gifts of Communion (Augsburg Agreement)* that our churches have the basis for full communion with each other to be inaugurated through a service of reconciliation between the two churches; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Presiding Bishop appoint four members to the Continuation Committee called for in *Sharing the Gifts of Communion (Augsburg Agreement)* to represent The Episcopal Church in the ongoing work of furthering our relationship; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Title 1, Canon 20, Section 1 be amended by adding a new subsection e. as follows:

**<Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (\*\*\*\*\*) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.>**

e. The Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (via the acceptance of *Sharing the Gifts of Communion [Augsburg Agreement]* of 2022)

\*\*\*\*\*

**<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>**

e. *The Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (via the acceptance of Sharing the Gifts of Communion [Augsburg Agreement] of 2022)*

#### EXPLANATION

An earlier version of this resolution was referred from the 80th General Convention. It was listed as 2022-B001 and referred to Legislative Committee 19 - Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations. It has been entered as resolution 2024-A009. The Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations is proposing this amended version of the resolution.

## THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAVARIA

The discussions between the Evangelische-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) and The Episcopal Church (TEC) began as the result of a meeting in June 2013 between then Landesbischof Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and then Presiding Bishop the Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts-Schori. In their meeting, the two Presiding Bishops expressed the wish and challenge for the two churches to explore the possibility of closer communion, including, if possible, full communion with interchange of ministers and sharing of the sacraments.

A close relationship has existed for over 50 years between Episcopal Church and the ELKB in Munich, especially between the Church of the Ascension in Munich, a parish of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, and the Emmauskirche, a parish of the ELKB. Ascension has shared space in the Emmauskirche since 1970. Elsewhere in Bavaria, a similar close TEC-ELKB relationship exists with the Episcopal missions in Nuremberg and Augsburg, who also share space with ELKB parishes.

Conversations between representatives of the ELKB and TEC began in 2013 shortly after the encounter between Presiding Bishops Jefferts-Schori and Bedford-Strohm, and soon took on the characteristics of a dialogue. Meetings in subsequent years took place in New York, Tutzing, Paris, and Augsburg. Numerous smaller meetings took place between in-person meetings.

The conversation/dialogue committee included representatives from TEC, the ELKB, and:

The Director for Unity, Faith, and Order of the **Anglican Communion Office**,

The Director of the Council for Christian Unity of the **Church of England**,

A representative of **Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith, and Order**

The Church Executive of the **German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation**,

The Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) co-secretary of the **Meissen Commission**, and

**CURRENT EPISCOPAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE TEC-ELKB CONVERSATION:**

The Rt. Rev. Mark D.W. Edington (2019-present)

The Rev. Christopher Easthill (2019-present)

The Ven. Walter Baer (2017-present)

The Rev. Margaret Rose (2013-present) *TEC staff representative*

Kathryn L. Johnson, PhD (2013-present), Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ELCA)

Resolution 2018-C059 ***approved and commended the process of exploring deeper relations and the dialogue toward full communion between TEC and the ELKB.***

Based on this **mandate**, between the 79<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> General Conventions, the dialogue committee developed a proposed agreement of full communion between TEC and the ELKB, found at the conclusion of this Blue Report. The agreement “Sharing the Gifts of Communion: An Agreement of Full Communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and The Episcopal Church (Augsburg Agreement)” was proposed to the 80th General Convention, in Resolution 2022-A091, for which 2022’s Legislative Committee 19 substituted Resolution 2022-B001. The Convention deferred consideration of Resolution 2022-B001 to the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention.

Following upon this, the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations has engaged in continued study of the document, consultation with theological experts and concerned parties, particularly around questions of the historic episcopate, and commends the agreement document, which is included at the end of this report, to the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention for implementation.

**Support Documents:**

["Sharing the Gifts of Communion \(Augsburg Agreement\)"](#)

[Commentary on "Sharing the Gifts of Communion \(the Augsburg Agreement\)"](#)

### **A038 Practical Guidance for Interreligious Relations**

Resolved, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopt “Holding Difference Together: Episcopal Theological and Practical Guidelines for Interreligious Relations” as a resource for use by dioceses, parishes, and other Episcopal communities to develop and maintain interreligious relationships through conversation, collaboration, or other joint service or ministry initiatives with their neighbors of other faiths.

#### **EXPLANATION**

This document (attached as a supplemental document) reviews the history and theology behind The Episcopal Church’s participation in interreligious engagement. It offers practical guidance for people engaged in that work. It builds on *Theological Statement on Interreligious Relations* (2009) adopted by the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention.

#### **Support Document:**

[Holding Difference Together: Episcopal Theological and Practical Guidelines for Interreligious Relations](#)

### **A039 Practical Guidance for Episcopal-Jewish Relations**

Resolved, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopt “Christian-Jewish Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for The Episcopal Church” as a resource for use by dioceses, parishes, and other Episcopal communities as they develop and maintain healthy and respectful relationships through conversation, collaboration, or other joint service or ministry initiatives with their Jewish neighbors.

#### **EXPLANATION**

This document (attached below as a supplemental document) updates a previous set of guidelines for Christian-Jewish relations, adopted by General Convention in 1988. It reviews the history and theology behind The Episcopal Church’s participation in Christian-Jewish relations and offers practical guidance for people engaged in that work.

#### **Support Document:**

[Christian-Jewish Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians](#)

### **A040 Practical Guidance for Christian-Muslim Relations**

*Resolved*, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopt “Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for the Episcopal Church” as a resource for use by dioceses, parishes, and other Episcopal communities as they develop and maintain healthy and respectful relationships with their Muslim neighbors through conversation, collaboration, or other joint service or ministry initiatives.

#### EXPLANATION

This document (attached below as a supplemental document) reviews the history and theology behind The Episcopal Church’s participation in dialogue with Muslim communities. It offers practical guidance for people engaged in that work.

#### **Support Document:**

[Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians](#)

### **A041 Create of a Task Force on The Episcopal Church-Anglican Communion Relationships**

*Resolved*, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention , pursuant to Joint Rule VII, create a task force on The Episcopal Church-Anglican Communion relationships, to work in collaboration with the Presiding Bishop, and whose mandate includes, but is not limited to, (1) conducting a study of issues impairing relationships of communion between The Episcopal Church and other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, and the development of proposals for engaging constructively across differences; (2) proposing systematic ways for the Episcopal Church to respond to theological statements issued by the instruments of the Communion; (3) proposing a means of establishing clear guidance for representatives of The Episcopal Church to the triennial meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council; and (4) supporting the work of the Offices of Ministry Beyond the Episcopal Church as it relates to relationships with our Anglican Communion partners; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the task force begin its work no later than January 1, 2025, with the task force concluding its work at the conclusion of the 82nd General Convention, unless its mandate is extended by the 82nd Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the task force report annually to the Executive Council’s Joint Standing Committee on Ministry Beyond the Episcopal Church and a report with recommendations to the 82nd General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the membership of this task force be appointed by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies and include up to three Bishops appointed by the Presiding Bishop; up to three Clergy and up to three Lay Persons appointed by the President of the House of Deputies; up to two members of the Standing Commission on World Mission (SCWM) appointed by the SCWM; up to two members of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (SCEIR), appointed by the SCEIR; and up to four representatives with expertise in the history and polity of the Anglican Communion; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Presiding Bishop appoint a member of staff from the Presiding Bishop's Office to serve as consultant to the task force; and be it further

*Resolved*, That \$30,000 be budgeted for the implementation of this resolution.

#### EXPLANATION

In the short time since the 80th General Convention concluded, significant developments have made clear the possibility of important changes in the relationships between Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Statements by leaders of some Anglican provinces that they no longer regard themselves as in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury—a *sine qua non* of the bonds of Communion relationships—is one example.

The Episcopal Church should be a constructive voice in the conversations shaping the future of the Anglican Communion. Locating the responsibility for these issues within an Interim Body of the General Convention would be a clear signal to partner churches in the Communion of the seriousness with which our church will offer its voice in those conversations.

*Joint resolution between the Standing Commission on World Mission and the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations*



### **A042 Commend PCUSA-TEC Dialogue**

*Resolved*, That this 81st General Convention receives with gratitude the revised “Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries” which was prepared and distributed by the Episcopal Church-Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Dialogue; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention gladly affirms the growing number of local ministries between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that are enriching the Body of Christ, and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention authorizes the continuing bi-lateral dialogue between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention encourages and strongly supports prayerful consideration by all Episcopalians over this coming triennium as we work towards closer relations with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

#### **Support Document:**

[Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries](#)

### **A043 Amend Constitution Article VIII regarding Clergy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

*Resolved*, That the 81st General Convention amend Article VIII of the Constitution by adding the following paragraph at the end of the existing article:

**<Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (\*\*\*\*\*) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.>**

Of Clergy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships

An ordained minister in good standing of one of the constituent denominations serving in a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership may be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the ministry is located to serve as an ordained minister of this Church within that specific ministry and as governed by the relevant canons.

\*\*\*\*\*

**<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>**

*Of Clergy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships*

*An ordained minister in good standing of one of the constituent denominations serving in a formal Local Ecumenical Partnership may be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the ministry is located to serve as an ordained minister of this Church within that specific ministry and as governed by the relevant canons.*

EXPLANATION

Many dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church already contain combined ministries with other Christian denominations. The Church of England calls these “Local Ecumenical Partnerships” and shares them with various Christian denominations. In the Episcopal Church’s context, this is increasingly becoming a missional reality in rural communities and college chaplaincies. The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church have no explicit provision for these combined ministries to operate with ordained leadership other than Episcopal ministers or those in formal full-communion agreements. The Standing Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations believes this constitutional change and a relevant canon (also submitted to the 81st General Convention) would make that provision and lay out the limited circumstances under which such partnerships could be formed. The canon also makes clear that this only applies to denominations whom the Episcopal Church has affirmed their “apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments” by act of general convention or membership in organizations chartered to do so and that ordained ministers of these denominations are credentialed only within the bounds of the ministry of the Limited Ecumenical Partnership.

## **A047 Amend Title I regarding Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention amend Title I of the Canons by adding the following Canon 21.

<Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (\*\*\*\*\*) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.>

Canon 21: Of Local Ecumenical Partnerships

**Sec 1.** Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are ministries that may be formed between Episcopal dioceses and their parallels in other Christian denominations in order to provide shared pastoral leadership.

**Sec. 2** LEPs may be formed with denominations:

- a. Who are in a full communion relationship with this church, or
- b. Whose apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments have been formally recognized by action of General Convention, or
- c. Who are member judicatories of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) or its successor organization(s).

**Sec. 3.** LEPs may encompass congregations, chaplaincies, missions, or other ecclesial bodies.;

**Sec. 4.** LEPs are governed by formal, written agreements between the Ecclesiastical Authority of an Episcopal diocese and the equivalent authorities of other Christian Denominations as qualified in this canon. Such agreements should include provisions for, but are not limited to:

- a. The process for calling ordained leadership
- b. The terms of ordained leadership, including but not limited to:
  1. Method of paying compensation, insurance, and other benefits.
  2. Process for revocation of license and/or employment;
  3. Handling of Ecclesiastical Discipline
- c. The parameters of ecclesial function regarding worship, governance, sacraments, etc.
- d. A time frame and process for regular review of the agreement

**Sec. 5.** A LEP may be served by clergy ordained in and in good standing of any denomination who are part of the formal agreement and approved of by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

**Sec. 6.** Ordained ministers of denominations who are not in full communion with this church are authorized to exercise ministry only within the LEP, and do not retain any credentials within this Church after leaving its ministry.

\*\*\*\*\*

<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>

*Canon 21: Of Local Ecumenical Partnerships*

**Sec 1.** *Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are ministries that may be formed between Episcopal dioceses and their parallels in other Christian denominations in order to provide shared pastoral leadership.*

**Sec. 2** *LEPs may be formed with denominations:*

- a. Who are in a full communion relationship with this church, or*
- b. Whose apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments have been formally recognized by action of General Convention, or*
- c. Who are member judicatories of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) or its successor organization(s).*

**Sec. 3.** *LEPs may encompass congregations, chaplaincies, missions, or other ecclesial bodies.;*

**Sec. 4.** *LEPs are governed by formal, written agreements between the Ecclesiastical Authority of an Episcopal diocese and the equivalent authorities of other Christian Denominations as qualified in this canon. Such agreements should include provisions for, but are not limited to:*

- a. The process for calling ordained leadership*
- b. The terms of ordained leadership, including but not limited to:*
  - 1. Method of paying compensation, insurance, and other benefits.*
  - 2. Process for revocation of license and/or employment;*
  - 3. Handling of Ecclesiastical Discipline*
- c. The parameters of ecclesial function regarding worship, governance, sacraments, etc.*

*d. A time frame and process for regular review of the agreement*

**Sec. 5.** *A LEP may be served by clergy ordained in and in good standing of any denomination who are part of the formal agreement and approved of by the Ecclesiastical Authority.*

**Sec. 6.** *Ordained ministers of denominations who are not in full communion with this church are authorized to exercise ministry only within the LEP, and do not retain any credentials within this Church after leaving its ministry.*

#### EXPLANATION

Many dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church already contain combined ministries with other Christian denominations. The Church of England calls these “Local Ecumenical Partnerships” and shares them with various Christian denominations. In the Episcopal Church’s context, this is increasingly becoming a missional reality in rural communities and college chaplaincies. The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church have no explicit provision for these combined ministries to operate with ordained leadership other than Episcopal ministers or those in formal full-communion agreements. The Standing Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations believes this canon and a relevant change to Article VIII of the Constitution (also submitted to the 81st General Convention) would make that provision and lay out the limited circumstances under which such partnerships could be formed. The canon also makes clear that this only applies to denominations whom the Episcopal Church has affirmed their “apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments” by act of general convention or membership in organizations chartered to do so and that ordained ministers of these denominations are credentialed only within the bounds of the ministry of the Limited Ecumenical Partnership.

## **A048 Adoption of the Proposal for the Exchangeability of the Diaconate in The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

*Resolved*, That the 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention adopt the “Proposal for the Exchangeability of the Diaconate” in the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which is attached.

### EXPLANATION

The proposal has been endorsed by the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee and received by the Executive Councils of the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. It now comes to General Convention as part of its implementation.

### **Support Document:**

[Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate: The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

## **A049 Affirming the Goal of Full Communion between The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church.**

*Resolved*, that this 81<sup>st</sup> General Convention affirms previous resolutions 2018-A041, 2018-A261, and 2006-A055 for The Episcopal Church to continue dialogue with the United Methodist Church with the goal of reaching full communion; and be it further

*Resolved*, that as the United Methodist Church’s General Conference meets in 2024 after a four-year hiatus, this Convention joyfully anticipates advancing towards full communion with the United Methodist Church as outlined in The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Dialogue 2010 document, “[A Theological Foundation for Full Communion between The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church](#)” and then summarized in 2018’s “[A Gift to the World, Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness](#)”; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention encourages all Episcopalians to utilize the many resources available to understand the substance of the dialogue and its goal of full communion. Resources can be found on the websites of The Episcopal Church (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/ecumenical-interreligious/united-methodist-episcopal-dialogue/>), the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers ([edeio.org](http://edeio.org)), and [umc-tec.org](http://umc-tec.org), a website supporting full communion between the United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention encourages and supports prayerful consideration by all Episcopalians during the coming triennium of this significant step forward in response to our Lord’s fervent wish “that all may be one.”

EXPLANATION

Psalm 126: 5-6 (NRSVA): “May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.” 2024 marks 71 years of dialogue between Episcopalians and Methodists in the United States, the last 21 of which have been spent preparing for full communion between our two churches. The creation in 2006 of interim eucharistic sharing (described in Gift lines 19-21) resulted in the 2010 document setting out the theological foundations for full communion between the two churches (see summary in Gift lines 49-57). Both documents are attached for further reading. These carefully nurtured hopes recently experienced delays due to profoundly painful and unjust internal divisions within both our communities.

In 2024, however, new signs of hope for further ecumenical progress may be in view. As both supporting documents explain, the two churches are in harmony on the essentials of our faith. We share compatible views and practices on baptism, Eucharist, Scripture, ordained and lay ministry, mission, and the role of bishops. We believe our two churches will soon be poised to affirm full communion together as two branches of the same Jesus Movement tree, and to share in ministry by producing leaves fruitful for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22; quoted in Gift lines 12-15). As we prepare for that future, we commend the continued study and reception of the many gifts offered by the United Methodist Church that can enrich and sustain our life as The Episcopal Church.

**Support Documents and Links:**

[A Gift to the World, Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness](#)

[A Theological Foundation for Full Communion between The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church](#)

[Supporting Full Communion between the United Methodist and Episcopal Churches](#)

[Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers](#)

[United Methodist Episcopal Dialogue](#)

## Supplementary Materials

Document: [\*Sharing the Gifts of Communion \(Augsburg Agreement\)\*](#)

Document: [\*Commentary on Sharing the Gifts of Communion\*](#)

Document: [\*Holding Difference Together Episcopal Theological and Practical Guidelines for Interreligious Relations\*](#)

Document: [\*Christian-Jewish Relations Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians\*](#)

Document: [\*Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians\*](#)

Document: [\*Report to the 2024 General Assembly: The Episcopal Church – Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) Dialogue\*](#)

Document: [\*Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate: The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America\*](#)

Document: [\*A Gift to the World, Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness\*](#)

External Link: [\*A Theological Foundation for Full Communion between The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church\*](#)



1 *Proposal*

2 **Sharing the Gifts of Communion (Augsburg Agreement)**

3 **An Agreement of Full Communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
4 **in Bavaria and The Episcopal Church.**

5

6 **Introduction**

7 1 Since the 1970s, a fruitful partnership has been built up in Bavaria between the  
8 Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, part of The Episcopal Church (TEC), and the  
9 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern; ELKB),  
10 which expresses itself in a consistent history of sharing in worship and prayer, and  
11 working together in diaconal projects.

12

13 2 Through this work together, Episcopalians and Lutherans in Bavaria have come to  
14 understand more deeply their shared mission and the bonds between their churches.  
15 Building on existing agreements between Anglicans/Episcopalians and Lutherans in  
16 Germany, North America and Northern Europe, TEC and the ELKB are now ready to move  
17 into a relationship of full communion, enabling full interchangeability of ministries and  
18 full participation in one another's mission.

19

20 3 This current agreement, made specifically between TEC and the ELKB, has been informed  
21 by a number of previous agreements between Anglican and Lutheran churches:

22 • the *Meissen Agreement* (1991), between the Church of England and the  
23 Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), achieves mutual recognition of  
24 churches and mutual Eucharistic hospitality, but does not achieve full  
25 communion or interchangeability of ordained ministries;<sup>1</sup>

26 and on the three regional agreements of (full) communion between Anglicans and  
27 Lutherans:

28 • the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1992/93), between the European member  
29 churches of the Anglican Communion and most of the Nordic and Baltic  
30 Lutheran churches;<sup>2</sup>

31 • *Called to Common Mission* (1999/2000), between TEC and the Evangelical  
32 Lutheran Church in America;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The ELKB is a party to the *Meissen Agreement* through the EKD

<sup>2</sup> Neither the ELKB nor TEC is a party to the *Porvoo Common Statement*. The signatories of the *Porvoo Common Statement* are, from the LWF: the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, the Church of Iceland, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia Abroad, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Church of Norway, the Church of Sweden; and from the Anglican Communion: the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain, and the Church in Wales. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia has observer status, which is intended to lead to membership. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD), of which ELKB is a part, has the less binding guest status.

<sup>3</sup> TEC is one of the signatory churches of *Called to Common Mission*.

- 33 • the *Waterloo Declaration* (2001), between the Anglican Church of  
34 Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.<sup>4</sup>

35 Through its membership in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the ELKB is in  
36 communion with the Scandinavian and Nordic Lutheran churches, the Evangelical  
37 Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. TEC,  
38 the Anglican Church of Canada, and the British and Irish Anglican churches are in  
39 communion through their membership of the Anglican Communion. The LWF and the  
40 Anglican Communion are also linked through the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of*  
41 *Justification* (1999) agreed between the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church, the  
42 substance of which was affirmed by the Anglican Communion in 2017.

43 4 In many parts of the world, member churches of the LWF and the Anglican Communion  
44 work in close cooperation, with or without an agreement, and the Third Anglican  
45 Lutheran International Commission urged churches to develop or adopt agreements that  
46 reflect this cooperation.<sup>5</sup> In this spirit, this agreement is offered as a further example and  
47 invitation to other member churches of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran  
48 World Federation to consider in their contexts how such a move forward could be  
49 accomplished.

50  
51  
52 5 Relationships between TEC and the ELKB have thus developed within the context of a  
53 long history of ecumenical dialogue between Lutheran and Anglican/Episcopal churches,  
54 which has shaped and enriched the experiences of many Anglicans and Lutherans. In  
55 particular, through *Called to Common Mission*, mutual relationships between the ELCA  
56 and TEC have become a lived reality. As distinctive churches with their own particular  
57 relationships, in making this current agreement, TEC and the ELKB draw on the extensive  
58 network of mutual experience of mission and ministry, as well as the experience of  
59 working and worshipping together locally. The purpose of the current agreement is to  
60 foster and deepen that common work through recognizing a relationship of full  
61 communion between TEC and the ELKB.

62  
63 6 TEC and the ELKB have already taken important steps towards full communion. The 1987  
64 *Niagara Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee and  
65 *Receiving One Another's Ordained Ministries* of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission  
66 on Unity, Faith and Order (received by ACC-16, 2016), define stages of relations between  
67 churches. Relationships between the TEC and the ELKB have long-since reached stage 1  
68 (recognition of one another as churches) and stage 2 (provisional structures exist which  
69 promote mutual growth). The intention in this agreement is to move to stage 3, the  
70 exploration of changing particular practices with respect to *episkopé* which will enable  
71 the full interchangeability of ministries, and stage 4, the public declaration and  
72 celebration of full communion.

73  
74 7 In moving into this relationship, TEC and the ELKB understand full communion to be a  
75 relation between distinct churches in which each recognizes the other as a catholic and  
76 apostolic church holding the essentials of the Christian faith. Within this new relation,  
77 churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. Full communion

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<sup>4</sup> Neither the ELKB nor TEC is a party to the *Waterloo Declaration*, but the purpose of the *Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion* is to link the *Waterloo Declaration* and *Called to Common Mission*.

<sup>5</sup> *Jerusalem Report*, pp. 53.56 [Appendix 3].

- 78 includes the establishment of appropriate recognized organs of regular consultation and  
79 communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship  
80 and enable common witness, life, and service. Diversity is preserved, but this diversity  
81 does not divide and is not static. Neither church seeks to remake the other in its own  
82 image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his  
83 mission. They are together committed to a visible unity in the church’s mission to  
84 proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments.<sup>6</sup>  
85
- 86 8 Specifically, TEC and the ELKB understand this to include welcoming one another’s  
87 members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations; mutual recognition  
88 and interchangeability of ordained ministries; freedom to use one another’s liturgies;  
89 mutual invitations to participate liturgically in one another’s ordinations and installations  
90 of clergy, including bishops; and the development of suitable structures for consultation  
91 to express, strengthen, and enable common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God  
92 and the salvation of the world.<sup>7</sup>  
93
- 94 9 Such a relationship is based on:  
95 • a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and life;  
96 • the sharing of one baptism, the celebration of one eucharist and the service of a  
97 reconciled, common ministry;  
98 • bonds of communion which support the churches at every level to guard and  
99 interpret the apostolic faith, to teach authoritatively, to share resources, and to bear  
100 effective witness in the world.<sup>8</sup>

## 101 **Signs of Communion that already exist**

- 102 10 Lutherans and Anglicans recognize that they already share communion in the Triune God  
103 through their acceptance of the common gift of the Holy Scriptures; their affirmation of  
104 the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist as constituent for the church; their shared  
105 affirmation of the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds; their shared traditions of worship,  
106 spirituality and theology; and their distinct but related experiences of the Reformation.  
107
- 108 11 Anglicans and Lutherans both recognize Christ’s church as “the assembly of all believers  
109 among whom the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are rightly administered”.<sup>9</sup>  
110 Anglicans and Lutherans hold the ordained ministry of Word and sacrament to be a gift  
111 of God to the church, and recognize the necessity of structures of pastoral oversight and  
112 authority.  
113
- 114 12 Anglicans and Lutherans have never condemned one another as churches. TEC and the  
115 ELKB now affirm that they recognize in one another the essentials of the one catholic and  
116 apostolic faith, to which their statements of faith witness, including the *Augsburg*  
117 *Confession*, *Luther’s Small Catechism*, and *TEC’s Book of Common Prayer (1979)*, and they  
118 affirm the substance of the doctrinal consensus articulated by successive international  
119 Anglican-Lutheran dialogues.

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<sup>6</sup> This paragraph adapted from *Called to Common Mission*, §2.

<sup>7</sup> This paragraph is adapted from the *Waterloo Declaration*, §7, and the *Porvoo Common Statement*, §58(b).

<sup>8</sup> These points are based on the headings of the *Meissen Agreement*, §8.

<sup>9</sup> *Augsburg Confession*, art. 7, translation of the Latin text in Robert Kolb/Timothy Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 43. Compare also the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, art. 19.

120

121 13 TEC and the ELKB affirm the cooperation between Episcopalians and Lutherans in  
122 Bavaria, including the mutual invitation to receive communion, to share services and  
123 joint diaconal work. In the absence of a formal agreement, the provisions of the Meissen  
124 Agreement pertaining to ministry and worship have tacitly been taken to apply for TEC  
125 and the ELKB in this local context.

## 126 **Ministry and oversight**

127 14 The key question for this ecumenical relationship has been that of the theology of  
128 ordained ministry, and in particular that of episcopal ministry and its relation to  
129 succession. This agreement welcomes the consensus reached on this question through  
130 the *Porvoo Common Statement, Called to Common Mission*, and the *Waterloo*  
131 *Declaration* and affirms the theological contribution made by those agreements in  
132 moving towards a shared understanding. This agreement draws on those earlier  
133 agreements, as well as on further reflection specific to the relationship between TEC and  
134 the ELKB, to apply the consensus already reached to the specific situation in Bavaria, and  
135 thus to the German context.

136

137 15 Together with the *Porvoo Common Statement*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that “the primary  
138 manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the  
139 Church as a whole. The succession is an expression of the permanence and, therefore, of  
140 the continuity of Christ’s own mission in which the Church participates.”<sup>10</sup>

141

142 16 Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB “acknowledge that one  
143 another’s ordained ministries are and have been given by God to be instruments of God’s  
144 grace in the service of God’s people, and possess not only the inward call of the Spirit,  
145 but also Christ’s commission through his body, the church.” They agree that “ordained  
146 ministers are called and set apart for the one ministry of Word and Sacrament, and that  
147 they do not cease thereby to share in the priesthood of all believers”, and that these  
148 ministers “fulfill their particular ministries within the community of the faithful and not  
149 apart from it.” They recognize that “the priesthood of all believers affirms the need for  
150 ordained ministry, while at the same time setting ministry in proper relationship to the  
151 laity.”<sup>11</sup>

152

153 17 Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB also affirm that “personal,  
154 collegial, and communal oversight is embodied and exercised in both [...] churches in a  
155 diversity of forms, in fidelity to the teaching and mission of the apostles.”<sup>12</sup> Together with  
156 the LWF’s 2007 Statement *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church*, TEC  
157 and the ELKB affirm that in both churches, “Bishops are called to a special role of  
158 oversight in the church, but the wider community also is called to participate in oversight  
159 and to judge the way in which episcopal ministry is being carried out.”<sup>13</sup> They  
160 acknowledge also that in some other churches of the LWF, and also some other churches  
161 of the EKD, those who exercise such “special role of oversight” are not referred to as  
162 bishop, but rather, for instance, as Church President or *Präses*, similarly a Regional

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<sup>10</sup> *Porvoo Common Statement*, §39.

<sup>11</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §7.

<sup>12</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §7. The terminology “personal, collegial, and communal” is drawn from the discussion of ministry in *Baptism – Eucharist – Ministry* (WCC Faith and Order Paper 111; 1982), §26.

<sup>13</sup> *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church* (The Lund Statement), § 50.

163 Bishop may be known as *Landessuperintendent* or *Oberkirchenrat*.<sup>14</sup> TEC and the ELKB  
164 also recognize that this ministry of oversight – *episkopé* – is exercised not only through  
165 bishops but also through the synods and other leadership structures of the two churches,  
166 and that the relationship between bishops and these structures is an important aspect of  
167 the ministry of oversight in both churches.<sup>15</sup>  
168  
169 18 Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB agree that the historic  
170 episcopate “can be locally adapted and reformed in the service of the gospel.”<sup>16</sup> Since  
171 the  
172 sixteenth century, the traditions from which both churches emerged have experienced  
173 both continuity and change in their structures of *episkopé*. Different practices of  
174 oversight developed in local contexts in response to diverse ecclesiological and political  
175 realities and theological understandings. Anglicans maintained episcopal-diocesan  
176 structures and continued to use the term “bishop” to describe these ministries after the  
177 Reformation. Lutherans in Germany provided *episkopé* by adapting existing structures,  
178 and described these ministries using a variety of terms, including “superintendent”, their  
179 preferred translation of the New Testament term *episkopos*.  
180 19 The establishment of Anglican parishes on the North American continent spread steadily  
181 following the first recorded Anglican celebration of Holy Communion in North America in  
182 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia. Prior to the American Revolution, representatives of the  
183 Bishop of London known as commissaries provided oversight in some colonies. In the  
184 context of American Independence from Great Britain, the first American bishops were  
185 elected, and in 1789 The Episcopal Church was constituted as a separate ecclesiastical  
186 jurisdiction and as a church independent of state authority. From this time TEC has  
187 affirmed the importance of synodical government and bishops have been elected. The  
188 structures established in 1789 continue to the present.  
189  
190 20 General Convention, made up of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (equal  
191 numbers of elected clergy and lay people), sets the policy of the Episcopal Church. Its  
192 bishops are democratically elected by their respective diocesan conventions or synods  
193 and are answerable to the House of Bishops; they are to be servants of the church and  
194 not its lords. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is a member of the House of  
195 Bishops, who since 1926 has been elected by that House, with confirmation by the House  
196 of Deputies. A similar structure is mirrored in the dioceses, which have diocesan  
197 conventions (made up of the diocesan clergy and elected lay delegates), that work  
198 closely with the bishop. A bishop is elected at the diocesan convention by the clergy and  
199 lay delegates, and is consecrated only after confirmation of this election by a majority of  
200 TEC’s diocesan bishops and diocesan standing committees representing the whole  
201 church. At the consecration, bishops are consecrated through prayer and laying on of  
202 hands by at least three bishops, usually including bishops of the ELCA and other full  
203 communion partners, with the involvement of representatives of the diocese, both  
204 priests and lay persons, especially in presenting the bishop-elect for consecration, and in  
205 the liturgy.  
206

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<sup>14</sup> The *Lund Statement* summarizes these roles as “episcopal ministers”; to avoid confusion, this present statement refers to “ministers exercising episkopé”.

<sup>15</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §7.

<sup>16</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §24.

- 207 21 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria was formed in 1808 after the foundation of  
208 the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. The General Synod was established in 1848, initially  
209 sharing responsibility with the ruling (Roman-Catholic) Bavarian monarch who acted as  
210 *summus episcopus*, in direct continuity with the role of the late medieval German prince  
211 bishops.<sup>17</sup> After the fall of the Bavarian monarchy in 1918, the ELKB (*Landeskirche*) was  
212 constituted, with a church president (*Kirchenpräsident*), who since 1933 has been  
213 referred to as bishop (*Landesbischof*). The bishop works together with the Synod  
214 (*Landessynode*, made up of two-thirds lay people and one third clergy) and its Executive  
215 Committee (*Landessynodalausschuss*), and also chairs the Church Governing Board  
216 (*Landeskirchenrat*), which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the church.  
217 Oversight is exercised through these four church-governing bodies. The *Landessynode*  
218 elects the *Landesbischof*. Regional bishops (*Regionalbischofe*) or *Oberkirchenräte*, who  
219 are members of the *Landeskirchenrat*, share the responsibility for oversight in their  
220 episcopal areas or areas of responsibility through ordination and visitation.  
221
- 222 22 Today, pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria are ordained by the  
223 *Landesbischof* or regional bishops. Ordination is a onetime act. Central elements of the  
224 liturgy are the prayer for the Holy Spirit, the laying on of hands and the blessing of the  
225 ordinand. The ordination rite provides that assistants say a biblical word of blessing and  
226 also lay on hands. These assistants are not restricted to the ordained, and may include  
227 (for instance) members of the parish council (vestry) or the candidate’s family and  
228 friends. The installation of a bishop is understood as the installation of an already  
229 ordained pastor into a new office now with episcopal functions. The *Landesbischof* is  
230 installed by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany; the  
231 regional bishops are installed by the *Landesbischof*. It is good practice – but not strictly  
232 necessary – that at such installations bishops or ministers exercising *episkopé* in sister  
233 churches within the Lutheran World Federation or other denominations are present and  
234 assist in the laying on of hands.  
235
- 236 23 In both TEC and the ELKB, these ministries of *episkopé* are therefore exercised personally,  
237 collegially and communally.<sup>18</sup> Bishops share the exercise of *episkopé* with the synodical  
238 structures of the church. Ministers exercising *episkopé* constitute “a supra-  
239 congregational form of ordained ministry for the sake of spiritual discernment and  
240 leadership.”<sup>19</sup> In both churches, clergy are ordained only by ministers who exercise  
241 *episkopé*: the diocesan bishop or *Landesbischof*, suffragan or regional bishops.  
242
- 243 24 Together with the LWF’s Lund Statement, *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the*  
244 *Church*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that these forms of *episkopé* are intended to preserve  
245 the apostolic nature of the church and to interpret it for today. Through these structures  
246 of *episkopé*, the church “exercises responsibility for its doctrine and practices through  
247 open, critical deliberation and transparent ecclesial processes.”<sup>20</sup>  
248
- 249 25 TEC and the ELKB affirm also with the *Lund Statement* that a bishop does not exercise  
250 his/her ministry in isolation: “together with teachers of theology, pastors in  
251 congregations, persons called to a ministry of education and committed lay persons,

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<sup>17</sup> This concept of church government was known as the *Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment*.

<sup>18</sup> See *Baptism – Eucharist – Ministry*, §26.

<sup>19</sup> *Lund Statement*, §4.

<sup>20</sup> *Lund Statement*, §52.

252 episcopal ministers [i.e. ministers exercising *episkopé* – ed.] are especially called to judge  
253 doctrine in the life of the church, and to reject teaching that is contradictory to the  
254 gospel. The responsibility of governing bodies in the church (parish councils and church  
255 synods) is also to take formal decisions to ensure that the institutional, practical life of  
256 the church is in good keeping with the message of the gospel and witnesses to it.”<sup>21</sup>

257

258 26 In the words of the Anglican Bishops’ *Appeal to All Christian People* (1920), TEC and the  
259 ELKB affirm that both churches have maintained and been served by an ordained  
260 ministry truly faithful to the gospel, and that the ordained ministries of both churches  
261 have always been, and continue to be, “manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit  
262 as effective means of grace”.<sup>22</sup>

263

264 27 The four articles of the Anglican *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1888) remain the  
265 foundation for Anglican/Episcopal ecumenical relations. Anglicans and Lutherans have  
266 long agreed on its first three articles which affirm the foundational nature of Holy  
267 Scripture, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the Apostles’ and Nicene  
268 Creeds. The *Quadrilateral* sets out as the fourth basis for church unity: “the historic  
269 episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of  
270 the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of [God’s] Church.”<sup>23</sup> TEC and the  
271 ELKB affirm that in both churches, *episkopé* is exercised in a form that is congruent with  
272 this article.

273

274 28 With the *Meissen Agreement*, TEC and the ELKB “acknowledge that personal and collegial  
275 oversight (*episkopé*) is embodied and exercised in [their] churches in a variety of forms,  
276 episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church’s unity and continuity in  
277 apostolic life, mission and ministry.”<sup>24</sup> However, the ELKB and TEC can go further than  
278 the *Meissen Agreement*: on the basis of the congruence in their understanding and  
279 practice of *episkopé* and synodical government TEC and the ELKB are able to enter into a  
280 relationship of full communion, with interchangeability of ordained ministries.

281

## 282 **Continuity in the Gospel: Historic and evangelical succession**

283 29 For both TEC and the ELKB, continuity in the proclamation of the gospel is of primary  
284 importance in establishing the apostolic character of the Church. This is preserved  
285 through “succession” However, the focus of the term “succession” is different in the  
286 traditions of the two churches.

287

288 30 Within TEC succession is understood as the orderly succession of bishops ordained by  
289 their predecessors as integral to the preservation of apostolic continuity in the  
290 proclamation of the gospel. This represents an episcopal tradition which can be traced to  
291 the ancient church, in which bishops already in this succession maintain the integrity of  
292 the faith by ordaining newly elected bishops with prayer and the laying on of hands.<sup>25</sup>  
293 TEC, like all the churches of the Anglican Communion, asserts that its bishops stand in  
294 historic succession understood in this way, through the consecration of new bishops

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<sup>21</sup> *Lund Statement*. §52.

<sup>22</sup> Lambeth Conference 1920, Resolution 9.vii.

<sup>23</sup> Lambeth Conference 1888, Resolution 11.d.

<sup>24</sup> *Meissen Agreement* §VI 17 A.4.

<sup>25</sup> This definition is found in *Called to Common Mission*, §11.

- 295 through prayer and laying on of hands by at least three existing bishops. Acknowledging  
296 this background, Anglicans have still recognized in their previous agreements of (full)  
297 communion that the apostolic faith is preserved, not exclusively through the succession  
298 of bishops, but by the whole church, that is, also through the ministry of priests and  
299 deacons and of the whole people of God.  
300
- 301 31 The ELKB understands succession in terms of the continuity of this apostolic faith, rooted  
302 in the proclamation of the gospel and supported by the ordained ministry. As expressed  
303 in the Augsburg Confession (art. 7), the Reformation emphasized the church as  
304 evangelical, established through the continuous preaching of the gospel and the  
305 celebration of the sacraments. This is the basis of the apostolic succession. The Augsburg  
306 Confession (art. 14) teaches that “no one should publicly teach in the Church or  
307 administer the Sacraments unless properly called.” Commenting on this, Article 14 of the  
308 *Apology* (1531) affirms the Lutheran commitment to “willingly retain ecclesiastical and  
309 canonical order”. Luther and other Reformers worked to ensure that structures were put  
310 in place to maintain the true preaching of the gospel and celebration of the sacraments.  
311 These structures have always included forms of oversight such as superintendents and  
312 visitations. Through and since the Reformation, this continuity in local structures has  
313 therefore been associated with a conscious conviction that apostolic teaching and faith  
314 must be not only rediscovered but also preserved. Those involved in oversight are  
315 installed through prayer and the laying on of hands.  
316
- 317 32 Both TEC and the ELKB therefore recognize, as affirmed by *Called to Common Mission*,  
318 that in the context of the ordained ministry and the ministry of the whole people of God  
319 both churches “value and maintain a ministry of *episkopé* as one of the ways ... in which  
320 the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in  
321 fidelity to the gospel through the ages.”<sup>26</sup>  
322
- 323 33 In moving forward together, TEC and the ELKB commit to share an episcopal succession  
324 that is both evangelical (true to the gospel) and historic (true to tradition), including  
325 regularly a bishop of the other church to participate with at least two other ministers  
326 exercising *episkopé* in the laying on of hands at the ordinations/installations of their own  
327 bishops as a sign of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church.<sup>27</sup> TEC and the  
328 ELKB believe that the fullness of the apostolic tradition preserved in each church will  
329 deepen as a result of the relationship of full communion, through the shared ministry of  
330 bishops and presbyters and of the whole people of God.  
331
- 332 34 TEC and the ELKB share congruent understandings of *episkopé*, but this does not commit  
333 the two churches to a unified concept of the office of bishop. TEC and the ELKB  
334 acknowledge that there is a diversity of how the office of bishops is lived out in each  
335 church. TEC and the ELKB affirm that the fact that the liturgy of introducing bishops into  
336 office can be understood as installation or as ordination, or that tenure in office may  
337 vary, or that the status of bishops when they leave office may differ does not hinder us  
338 entering into full communion.  
339

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<sup>26</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §12.

<sup>27</sup> *Called to Common Mission*, §12.



- 340 35 In order to demonstrate more clearly the shared nature of the *episkopé* exercised by  
341 bishops, both churches commit to ensuring that at the ordination/installation of bishops,  
342 the whole church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants  
343 in the ordination/installation and to working to include in their installation/ordination  
344 rites an affirmation that the bishop will exercise *episkopé* in conjunction with the  
345 synodical government of the church.  
346
- 347 36 Each church remains free to explore its particular interpretation of the ministry of  
348 bishops in evangelical and historic succession. This should be done in consultation with  
349 one another. Each church maintains and can enter into relationships with other  
350 churches, including relationships of (full) communion, which do not oblige the other  
351 church to engage in that relationship. That is, this declaration of full communion does not  
352 imply automatic communion of the one church with the communion partners of the  
353 other church, although each church is encouraged to seek communion with the churches  
354 with which the other is in communion.  
355
- 356 37 Recognizing one another as churches that truly preach the gospel and duly administer  
357 the holy sacraments,<sup>28</sup> TEC and the ELKB receive with thanksgiving the gift of unity which  
358 is already given in Christ. Christians have repeatedly echoed the scriptural confession  
359 that the unity of the church is both Christ's own work and his call to all Christians. It is the  
360 task of the churches, and of all Christians, as well as Christ's gift. Every Christian – and  
361 every church – must “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of  
362 peace” (Ephesians 4:3), praying that they may rely upon, and willingly receive from one  
363 another, the gifts given by Christ through his Spirit “for building up the body of Christ” in  
364 love (Ephesians 4:16).  
365
- 366 38 As TEC and the ELKB, we do not know to what new, recovered, or continuing tasks of  
367 mission this relationship of full communion will lead our churches, but we give thanks to  
368 God for leading us to this point, and entrust ourselves to that leading in the future,  
369 confident that our full communion will be a witness to the gift and goal already present  
370 in Christ, “so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

371

## 372 **Actions and Commitments**

- 373 39 We, The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, declare  
374 ourselves to be in full communion. Together,  
375 a. We commit ourselves to continue and deepen our common life in mission and service,  
376 to pray for and with one another and to share resources as appropriate in Bavaria,  
377 recognizing that TEC is a very small minority there. We encourage regular collaboration 7  
378 and consultation among members of our churches at all levels as appropriate.  
379 b. We commit ourselves to offer sacramental and pastoral ministry to members of one  
380 another's churches.  
381 c. We commit ourselves to receive those who formally leave one church to move to the  
382 other with the same status (for example baptized, communicant, confirmed) that they  
383 held in their previous church.

---

<sup>28</sup> CA VII; 39 Articles Art. XIX.

- 384 40 The declaration of full communion between our two churches implies the immediate  
385 recognition of currently serving bishops and pastors/priests of the one church by the  
386 other.<sup>29</sup> TEC fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and pastors currently  
387 existing within the ELKB, acknowledging its pastors as ordained ministers in the Church of  
388 God and its bishops and regional bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal  
389 *episkopé*. Likewise, the ELKB fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and priests  
390 currently existing within TEC, acknowledging its priests as ordained ministers in the  
391 Church of God and its bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal *episkopé*.
- 392 41 With full communion, interchangeability of ministries is given. We therefore commit  
393 ourselves to welcome persons ordained in either of our churches to the office of  
394 priest/pastor to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which are in  
395 force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination. We affirm that  
396 bishops may be invited to carry out in the other church, as appropriate, those ministries  
397 which they exercise in their own, such as confirmation.
- 398 42 We commit ourselves, as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church, to invite  
399 a. one another's bishops regularly to participate in the laying on of hands at the  
400 installation/ordination of bishops, with the expectation that a bishop from the other  
401 church will be present at the ordination of the bishop of the Convocation and the  
402 installation of the *Landesbischof*;  
403 b. one another's pastors and priests to participate in the laying on of hands at the  
404 ordination of pastors or priests in one another's churches;  
405 c. one another's lay people, including both those who share in the exercise of *episkopé*  
406 and members of local congregations, to participate in our churches'  
407 ordinations/installations in ways which celebrate the ministry of the whole people of  
408 God.  
409 Such mutual invitations are understood as a call for the deepening of the lived  
410 experience of our communion.
- 411 43 We commit ourselves also to continue our practice of inviting representatives of other  
412 churches, representing the worldwide church, to participate at the  
413 installation/ordination of bishops.
- 414 44 We commit ourselves to ensure that at the ordination/installation of bishops, the whole  
415 church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants in the  
416 ordination/installation and to work to include in our installation/ordination rites an  
417 affirmation that the bishop will exercise *episkopé* in conjunction with the synodical  
418 government of the church.
- 419 45 We commit ourselves to invite a representative of TEC to attend the synod of the ELKB  
420 and a representative of the ELKB to attend the Convention of the Convocation of the  
421 Episcopal Churches in Europe, and to keep one another informed about developments in  
422 our two churches.

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<sup>29</sup> Deacons are not explicitly mentioned in this agreement. The *Jerusalem Report* of the Third Anglican Lutheran International Commission concluded that the church's expression of its diaconal character is context specific, so that different understandings of and practices with relation to the diaconate are to be expected and are therefore not communion dividing.

423 46 We commit ourselves to establishing a small continuation committee which for at least  
424 seven years will undertake regular (at least annual) consultation regarding our  
425 relationship, will initiate further work as needed, and can be consulted should any  
426 questions or difficulties arise.

427 47 Each church agrees that the other church will continue its full communion relationship  
428 with all the churches with whom it is already in communion. We encourage one another  
429 to seek communion with these churches as well, but recognize that our declaration of full  
430 communion does not imply automatic communion of the one church with the  
431 communion partners of the other church.

432 48 We commit ourselves to work together to proclaim Christ’s gospel through word and  
433 deed, and to further the unity of the whole of Christ’s church, recognizing that entering a  
434 relationship of full communion will bring new opportunities and levels of shared  
435 evangelism, witness, and service.

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As of 22.02.2022

# Commentary on “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” (the “Augsburg Agreement”)

*An Explanatory Memorandum on the historical development of the ministry of episkopé in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Since 2013, following the initiative of the then-Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, The Episcopal Church has been engaged in a dialogue with the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, or ELKB), with a view to exploring the possibility of a relationship of full communion between our churches.
- 1.2. This dialogue has explored theological, practical, and ministry aspects of our relationship as churches called to respond to God’s initiative in mission. It takes as its foundation the gift of our shared presence in the ancient land of Bavaria for more than a hundred years. The Episcopal Church is the only Anglican presence in Bavaria; all of our communities worship in spaces of the ELKB.
- 1.3. In our conversations together, the Episcopal delegation has given careful attention to a study of the history of Bavarian Lutheran Church, and its development into its present-day form. This post-Reformation history is more than twice as long as our own, and has witnessed the response of the church through a number of passages without parallel in our own story: the shattering of church unity during the Reformation; the confrontation with the Reformed tradition; the long trauma of the Thirty Years’ War, which claimed the lives of nearly a third of all people living in Western Europe, and nearly half in some parts of Germany; the dominance of state power over questions of church organization and practice; the catastrophe of National Socialism, and the painful division of Germany for forty-five years.
- 1.4. As Episcopalians and Anglicans, we begin in ecumenical dialogue understanding that “[h]istorically, Anglican ecclesiology has said interchangeability of ministries requires reconciliation of episcopal ministries.”<sup>1</sup> This means that the line dividing churches with whom we are in *relationship* from churches with which we are in *communion* ultimately devolves to the question of whether we recognize in another church the sign of the historic episcopate that we feel we have received as the gift of our own inheritance in faith. Our view on precisely what that sign signifies has changed over time, the fruit of both our deepening encounters with other churches and our own growing awareness of the contingent nature of our origins as a church

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Faith, Unity, and Order, “Receiving One Another’s Ordained Ministries,” study document received by ACC-16, April 2016.

## “Sharing the Gifts of Communion”: Commentary

that shaped its own “local adaptation” of the ministry of *episkopé* under conditions of exigency.

- 1.5. Having prayerfully reflected on the study of this history, the Episcopal delegation has come to the settled view that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria is indeed characterized by the continuous presence of the historic episcopate throughout its history, locally adapted—as the fourth provision of the Lambeth Quadrilateral describes—“to the varying needs of the nations and peoples” who are the today the faithful people of the ELKB. Accordingly, affirming the conclusion of “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” that the Episcopal Church and the ELKB are churches in communion does not necessitate a suspension of the ordinal of this church.
- 1.6. To say this, however, is additionally to put forward an answer to a question of definition: What is the “historic episcopate”? What are the episcopal ministries that must be reconciled for the interchangeability of ministries to be not only possible, but in some sense required? If, in the words of the “Appeal to All Christian People” issued at the close of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, the episcopate is “one means” of providing “a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body,” then is the sign we seek that of the presence of the historic episcopate a sign of those qualities, or instead that of a particular form of their expression?
- 1.7. As we have studied together as Anglicans and Lutherans recent ecumenical agreements leading to the interchangeability of ministers, we note a shift away from a test grounded on specific forms of episcopal ministry and toward a focus on exactly these qualities in the expression of the ministry of *episkopé*—*apostolicity*, in the sense of proclamation and witness; *continuity*, as a lived awareness of the church’s obligation to obediently receive and faithfully transmit the teaching and witness of the church, and discern and form the vocation of a new generation of ordained ministers; *oversight*, or the assurance of order and ecclesial discipline in the church; and *ecumenicism*, the personification of the church’s catholicity and the expression of its longing for, and labors toward, the unity of all Christians in response to Christ’s own call.
- 1.8. Accordingly, we offer for the consideration of the wider Episcopal Church the view that the question of whether a reconciliation in episcopal ministries is possible—that is, whether the “sign of the historic episcopate,” the necessary condition of the interchangeability of ministries, is present—should be based on *an examination of the qualities intrinsic to that ministry*. Said differently, we feel we stand squarely on present Anglican ecumenical practice by saying that our work has sought to discern whether the sign of historic *episkopé*—as contrasted to the narrower construction of the “historic episcopate” as the succession of bishops—has been continuously present in another church. We are deeply persuaded that in the case of the ELKB, this is certainly true.

## 2. The historic expression of *episkopé* in the ELKB

- 2.1. While this brief memorandum cannot possibly encompass the long and complex history of the emergence of the ELKB from the crucible of both Reformation and religious war, it is vitally important for those considering this proposal of communion from an American perspective to bear in mind that while our story begins in separation from both the Church and crown of England, the Lutheran Church in Bavaria has contended throughout its history—a history longer than that of Anglicanism itself—with the complexities of entanglement with state power.
- 2.2. Even in late medieval and early modern Germany, long before the rupture of unity at the Reformation, the German aristocracy—a rising class of local and regional nobility beneath, but not entirely subservient to, the Holy Roman Emperor—held sway in the church. The emergence of this class was in a sense a consequence of the Investiture Controversy, the eleventh- and twelfth-century contest between the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor over who had power to appoint bishops and abbots. In feudal Germany, this newly emergent class of local nobility, whose status did not merely rest on being representatives and agents of the emperor, “entered wholeheartedly into an alliance with the Gregorian church....”<sup>2</sup> By 1500, the majority of German bishops were required to be members of this class, and German bishops were territorial princes as well as—and often effectively prior to—their spiritual responsibilities.
- 2.3. The parallel emergence of Luther’s Reformation and the first stirrings of the nation-state in Early Modern Europe are well known. The protection of Martin Luther by Frederick III, Elector of Saxony,<sup>3</sup> personalizes what was in fact an important historical reality—the alignment of state power and church development. Luther felt—as did the earliest Anglicans—that he was correcting and continuing the Christian faith; “Luther never intended to found a new Church, rather he wished to restore the original Church, which had been perverted by the Roman papacy.”<sup>4</sup>
- 2.4. Yet Luther distinguished between the spiritual and secular aspects of that task, believing that the former could be entrusted to the unyielding power of the Gospel when correctly proclaimed, and the latter to those with the capacity to assure order in a time of instability and crisis. “In ecclesiastical affairs the princes or magistrates were not to act as secular rulers, but as the most eminent members of the congregation. In this [Luther] followed a conception that had been developed in the Middle Ages,

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<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 142.

<sup>3</sup> An “elector” was one of the handful of princes given the right to vote in the election of the Holy Roman Emperor. Three of them were bishops—the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne; and four were lay princes (the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg)

<sup>4</sup> Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 185.

namely that in the case of a breakdown of order in the Church the secular authorities had the right to act as temporary bishops for the restoration of normal conditions.”<sup>5</sup>

- 2.5. As a general observation, this points to a development in the history of the Lutheran Church in Bavaria and elsewhere in Germany that runs somewhat opposite of that in the history of Anglicanism. In the Anglican branch of the Reformation, the medieval bishops who had been in the pejorative phrase, “prince bishops” lost much of that political power, although they remained members of the English House of Lords. In Germany, by contrast, owing to the different circumstances in which Luther’s reform emerged, the reverse was true—the bishops who had been princes were replaced by princes who became bishops, at least to the extent of determining the way in which the Christian faith would be expressed in the lands they controlled, and (under the terms of the Peace of Westphalia) also guaranteeing that those of minority Christian beliefs had the right to worship as their conscience dictated.
- 2.6. In Bavaria’s case, this ultimately meant that all through the tumultuous process of Germany’s consolidation as a nation from dozens of separate principalities—through the 1806 dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the Revolutions of 1848, the unification of the German Empire in 1871, and the final collapse of the Bavarian monarchy as a consequence of Germany’s defeat in World War I—the sovereign of Bavaria held principal responsibility for assuring the tranquility of the church. Indeed, with the creation of the Bavarian Monarchy in 1805, the king of Bavaria—generally himself a Roman Catholic—also held the role of *summus episcopus* for the Lutheran churches there. This title was, over its long history, less a means of control than a responsibility of protection and facilitation; it had an organizational function (the Church Office of the Bavarian Lutheran Church was part of the Bavarian government), but it also expressed in a different way the constitutive quality of oversight by the episcopate, assuring that contending expressions of the Christian faith could coexist peacefully and worship without fear of reprisal or recrimination.
- 2.7. Throughout this long history, the doctrinal guidance and prophetic witness of the ELKB belonged not to the king but to its own leaders. If administrative oversight of the church was provided by a hybrid apparatus combining elements of church and state—the pastors were, after all, paid by the state, and the Peace of Westphalia established the principle that to the sovereign fell the duty of defending the free exercise of religion—the ecclesial oversight of the teaching of the faith, the conduct of ministries of service and witness, the raising up of new ministers, and the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel, were all the responsibility of the church itself, and of those who were, in ways appropriate to Bavaria’s culture and context, identified and lifted up as leaders in that church under a variety of titles.
- 2.8. That the Lutheran tradition resisted the specific title “bishop” (*bischof*) for this ministry has less to do with a rejection of the need for apostolicity, continuity, oversight, and

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<sup>5</sup> Holborn, A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation, 186-7.

ecumenism in the leadership of the church, and far more to do with a deep historic and cultural need to differentiate their church from the tradition Luther intended to both continue and reform. The conscious choice to render the scriptural witness ἐπίσκοπος in different ways—*Oberkonsistorialpräsident* (Senior President of the Consistory), *Kirchenpräsident* (Church President), or (since 1933) *Landesbischof* (Bishop of the Region [of Bavaria])—translated by our Bavarian colleagues in our joint work by the simple term “superintendent”—should not be read as in some way expressing a rejection of either the ministry or the sign of episkopé. Rather, in the local circumstances, language, and culture of the church it serves, these have been the ways in which the ELKB has named the continuing presence of the apostolic witness in their church.

- 2.9. It is also important for Episcopalians—who have never been, since our emergence as an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion, an established church with state entanglements—to note the history of movements within the Bavarian Lutheran Church, roughly paralleling the Oxford Movement in England, to sever all ties with state authority. The nineteenth-century “neo-Lutherans,” who emerged in the years following the revolutions of 1848, wrote to defend the deposit of Lutheran doctrine and standards against state-driven demands for church union (between Lutheran and Reformed traditions); to emphasize the normative authority of the witness of scripture; and to reassert the understanding of the church as a divine, not a civil, institution. As Walter Conser has observed, there were broad similarities between the neo-Lutherans and the Tractarians in their resistance to the incursion of state power on the church’s responsibilities and privileges. A leading thinker in this movement, Wilhelm Löhe, was a pastor and theologian of the Bavarian church. Importantly, this moment also revealed important differences between Anglicans and Lutherans on the source of the authority of episkopé in the church: “Where the Oxford movement had located authority in apostolic succession and then gone on to ground the church’s commission on that basis, the neo-Lutherans located this authority in the biblical word and founded the church on that base.”<sup>6</sup>
- 2.10. Can we see in this choice of a locus for the authority of the church’s teaching and witness a recognizable sign of historic episkopé in the ELKB? **The Episcopal delegation believes that the fruits of the continuous presence of this ministry in the ELKB could not be more plainly shown than through a consideration of its survival as an *intakte Kirche* (“intact church”) through the trauma of National Socialism and the years of World War II.** The *intakten Kirchen* were the few regional churches in Germany who did not capitulate, in the plebiscites forced on the German churches by the Nazi government on July 23, 1933, by electing into their leadership a majority of so-called *Deutschen Christen*, representatives of the Nazi-controlled “German Christian” faction. The ELKB did not. That did not mean, of course, that there were not Nazi supporters within the ELKB; yet even in the midst of the convulsions of

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<sup>6</sup> Walter H. Conser, Jr., “A Conservative Critique of Church and State: The Case of the Tractarians and Neo-Lutherans,” *Journal of Church and State* 25:2 (Spring 1983), 332.



the National Socialist years, the church was able to carry forth, under considerable duress, its continuing witness and ministry, and to do so without dividing, something the Episcopal Church, reflecting on the experience of Civil War, did not accomplish.

### 3. Consonance with other Anglican ecumenical initiatives

- 3.1. *Called to Common Mission*, our agreement of communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is a singular ecumenical accomplishment of our part of the Anglican Communion. Since that time, of course, we have engaged in dialogue with other churches, notably the Moravian Church, leading toward agreements of full communion.
- 3.2. We have been aware, in our conversation, of the distinction made by canon in the Episcopal Church between *recognizing* and *reconciling* ordained ministries. We have been clear, as noted in 1.4 above, that the *sine qua non* of the higher standard of reconciled ministries is a reconciliation of the ministry of *episkopé*.
- 3.3. “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” makes clear that our two churches “share congruent understandings of *episkopé*,” and notes further that “this does not commit our two churches to a unified concept of the office of bishop” (§34).
- 3.4. In taking this view we are building on the work of other Anglican-Lutheran agreements beyond the Episcopal Church, especially the Porvoo Agreement which established relationships of full communion (and thereby interchangeability of presbyteral and episcopal ministers) between three of the four Anglican jurisdictions in Continental Europe (the Church of England, the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church, and the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain), the other Anglican churches of the British Isles (the Church of Ireland, The Church in Wales, and the Scottish Episcopal Church), and the majority of number of national Lutheran churches in Northern Europe (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain).
- 3.5. These churches approached their work acknowledging from the outset that “[t]he interruption of episcopal succession [in the Lutheran churches] has, nevertheless, always been accompanied by the intention and by measures to secure the apostolic continuity of the Church as a Church of the gospel served by an episcopal ministry” (Porvoo Agreement, §34). We believe this accurately and fully characterizes the witness and expression of *episkopé* in the ELKB as well.
- 3.6. The Porvoo Agreement further identifies the four entwined meanings of the sign of the laying on of hands in language equally pertinent to the Episcopal Church and the ELKB: “[F]irst it bears witness to the Church’s trust in God’s faithfulness to his people and in the promised presence of Christ with his Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to the end of time; secondly, it expresses the Church’s intention to be faithful to God’s initiative and gift, by living in the continuity of the apostolic faith and tradition;

thirdly, the participation of a group of bishops in the laying on of hands signifies their and their churches’ acceptance of the new bishop and so of the catholicity of the churches: fourthly, it transmits ministerial office and its authority in accordance with God’s will and institution. Thus in the act of consecration a bishop receives the sign of divine approval and a permanent commission to lead [their] particular church in the common faith and apostolic life of all the churches” (Porvoo Agreement, ¶48).

- 3.7. Accordingly, the Episcopal delegation to these conversations holds the view that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria is no less characterized by the presence of the sign of the historic episcopate than its sister Lutheran churches in Northern Europe, many of whom, it should be noted, have a lower understanding than the ELKB of the distinct ministry of *episkopé* in the church. On this basis, we see our agreement as fully constant with established patterns of Anglican-Lutheran agreements of communion and ministerial interchangeability present in the context of Europe. We further believe that, on this basis, our agreement requires no departure from either the Constitution or the Canons of the Episcopal Church in order to provide a means of reconciling the ministries of bishop/*Bischof* and priest/*Pfarrer*, for those ordained to these ministries in the ELKB have received this ordination under the sign of the historic *episkopé*.

## 4. Practical Considerations

- 4.1. “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” provides for the establishment of a “Continuation Committee” (at ¶46) to contend with matters arising from the further implementation of this agreement. We believe that this is the correct place in which to locate responsibility for the design of a liturgical celebration of our agreement, guided by the simplicity of the provisions for the celebrations described in the Porvoo Agreement (at ¶59).
- 4.2. Because it is our view that the ELKB does indeed possess the sign of the historic episcopate, we do not feel the agreement itself to be the appropriate or necessary place to spell out liturgical provisions for how our agreement of communion will be inaugurated. Neither do we feel it appropriate to propose a liturgical action of Lutheran and Episcopal bishops engaging in a mutual laying on of hands, which would suggest that one is in need of receiving the historic episcopate from the other. Instead, following the model of Porvoo, we feel two services, one in Munich and one in Paris, at which the agreements were read and signed, prayers of thanksgiving for the past and the future offered by Lutherans for Anglicans and Anglicans for Lutherans, the exchange of peace, and a jointly celebrated Eucharist, together with other signs of our common life, will be appropriate.

## 5. The Question of Urgency

- 5.1. The conversations leading up to the final version of “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” have been ongoing for nearly ten years. The Episcopal delegation has reported, through the Committee on Interreligious and Ecumenical Work, to the 79th General Convention, and was commended in Resolution 2018-C059 to press forward in its work.
- 5.2. We realize that previous agreements of this nature have been received in full by one General Convention to be considered for a Triennium, and then considered for final approval at the subsequent General Convention. We feel, however, that such a practice places an undue burden on the proposed agreement, and that both Houses should take in view four considerations in weighing our resolution to affirm the Report’s finding that the Episcopal Church and the ELKB are churches in communion.
- 5.3. First, this agreement breaks no new ground in the domain of Anglican-Lutheran relationships. It relies on an understanding of “the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church” fully developed in the 1993 Porvoo Agreement.
- 5.4. Second, in “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” we are building incrementally on agreements already achieved and well-considered by the deliberative and legislative processes of our church. Indeed, in our ELKB partners we have found an expression of the Lutheran tradition with an understanding of the historic episcopate easily recognizable within the context of our previous agreements of full communion—in particular, that with the Church of Sweden, which will also be considered at this General Convention.
- 5.5. Third, seen from the perspective of the Episcopal Church in Europe, we are living at a moment of utmost danger to the interests of peace and security and the cause of human dignity. With war again unleashed in Europe, not in ninety years has there been a moment of greater urgency for Christian communities drawing nearer and working together to both proclaim and model God’s loving purposes. Our common witness and shared communion with the ELKB could not possibly come at a more pivotal time for the work Christians are called to do in this broken world.
- 5.6. Finally, in March of 2023 the ELKB will elect its new *Landesbischof*, the successor to Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who with Presiding Bishop Jefferts-Schori inaugurated these conversations. The new *Landesbischof* will be installed the following November. A *Landesbischof* may serve in the ELKB for as many as twelve years; hence, the next bishop is not likely to be elected until 2035. The opportunity to participate in the new bishop’s installation next year would constitute both a crucial sign of our communion and a right beginning of our relationship, and one in which we hope General Convention will enable our church to participate.

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



# Holding Difference Together

## Episcopal Theological and Practical Guidelines for Interreligious Relations

- I. An Episcopal Theology of Interreligious Relations**
  - A. Foundations**
  - B. Distinctive Aspects**
- II. Practical Interreligious Relations Guidelines for Episcopalians**
  - A. Knowing Our History**
  - B. Contextualizing Interreligious Work**
  - C. Continuing the Effort toward Our Mutual Flourishing**
  - D. Building Beloved Community**

Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and, love your neighbors as yourselves.<sup>1</sup> Episcopalians take this twofold mandate with utmost seriousness. It informs our Baptismal Covenant promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people,” and to “respect the dignity of every human being.”<sup>2</sup> Because we have so promised, it is an act of Christian faithfulness to be in openhearted relationship with people whose religions differ from ours. Indeed, most Episcopalians live in the midst of religious diversity, in relationship with people who embrace lifeways different from theirs. As individuals, the range of attitudes Episcopalians hold about this reality is broad.

The Episcopal Church’s current teaching on interreligious relations encourages openheartedness. This requires serious self-examination with respect to our history. It commits us to genuine acts of repentance and lament in places where we have failed to behave towards our neighbors in ways that are consonant with the commandment to love them. Recognition that our interreligious encounters must now also be undertaken in the spirit of humility and repentance is foundational to the theology and practical guidelines set forth here. This set of guidelines seeks to clarify the distinctive aspects and implications of the attitude toward religious diversity projected by The Episcopal Church as a multicultural, multilingual, and multinational ecclesial body headquartered in the USA and present in at least fifteen other countries. Geographic and socio-political realities of The Episcopal Church cause challenges of interreligious encounter to vary significantly from place to place. In this time of reckoning and renaming, this document provides guidance for parishes and other Episcopal communities to develop and maintain interreligious relationships.

## I. An Episcopal Theology of Interreligious Relations<sup>3</sup>

### A. Foundations

Foundational to this document is the *Theological Statement on Interreligious Relations*—which has been, since its adoption by General Convention in 2009, the canonical rationale for The Episcopal Church’s interreligious work. Grounded in a theology of companionship, it provides a framework for such engagement by Episcopalians in our many locations. In turn, the 2009 statement rests on *Interfaith Relations and the Churches: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.* (1999), in the crafting of which The Episcopal Church played a vital role—and which was, in due course, embraced by General Convention. Deeply influential as well have been interreligious relations statements developed by the interfaith office of the Church of England, former Anglican Communion Network of Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON, 1993–2017), and the Lambeth Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion.

### B. Distinctive Aspects

The Episcopal Church’s approach to thinking theologically about interreligious concerns has nine distinctive aspects.

#### 1. **Communio oppositorum** (a communion of opposites)

In its very essence as an expression of the Anglican tradition, a Christian *via media* (at once catholic and reformed), and a communion of opposites, The Episcopal Church brings to interreligious relations a unique charism: our commitment to hold difference together.

#### 2. **Balance between scripture, reason, and tradition**

As Christians in the Anglican tradition, Episcopalians affirm that the Bible is the human record of God’s revelation, and that its authority is mediated by tradition and reason. This approach to scriptural interpretation is founded on the teaching of the sixteenth-century Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, as laid out in his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Hooker taught that Scripture reveals essential truths about God and ourselves that we cannot learn by any other means; and that God expects us to use our minds in order to reason together and thus discover the right way forward. This requires respect for the opinions of other people of goodwill. Following Hooker, The Episcopal Church seeks to be a community living in obedience to the Word of God revealed through Scripture, to which are brought insights derived from tradition and reason when reflecting theologically on interreligious matters. Because Episcopalians understand holy scripture to be at once inspired by God yet the work of human authors, editors, and compilers, we embrace the notion that the Bible contains all things necessary to salvation—but that not everything contained in the Bible *is* necessary to salvation. Episcopalians believe the Holy Spirit guides us in our continually growing understanding of the Scriptures. We also affirm the teaching of the Apostle Paul that God has spoken to the human race in other ways (Romans 1:20).

Christianity’s holy scriptures reveal to us both the invitation and the direction to engage with people of other religions. In Genesis 1:26 we meet the loving God who created all people and all nations. The awesome majesty of creation bids us to acknowledge with humility that the fullness of God’s intention is beyond the scope of our limited understanding; God’s gracious love is not confined to the Christian community alone. Because of our faith in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, we expect to meet God in our neighbor, whom God commands us to love as we love ourselves (Mark 12:29–31). Indeed, Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan makes clear that

our “neighbor” includes those of different religious commitments.

Our dynamic relationship with the Word of God and our experience of faith over time result in varying interpretations of scripture. The revelation of God in Christ calls us, therefore, to participate in our relationship with God and one another in a manner that is at once faithful, loving, lively, and reasonable. As Christians, we look to our own Scripture for insight about God. We also understand that wisdom can be found in the scriptures and teachings of other religions. We appreciate Mahatma Gandhi’s assertion that it is everyone’s duty “to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others’ religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world’s religions is a sacred duty.”<sup>4</sup>

### **3. The Baptismal Covenant as warrant for interreligious work**

Episcopalians are heirs to the notion that praying shapes believing. The corollary is that what is said in liturgy should be observable in a worshipping community’s behavior beyond it.

Throughout the liturgical year, Episcopalians reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant, added to the Book of Common Prayer in the 1979 revision. Catechetical in form, it is an affirmation of belief in the core Christian doctrines enshrined in the Apostles’ Creed, plus hearty commitment to faith-in-action. Through the Baptismal Covenant, Episcopalians promise to strive for peace and justice, to respect the dignity of every human being, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to love their neighbor as themselves.

In recent decades, Episcopal Church interreligious documents have made direct mention of the Baptismal Covenant. By doing so, the Episcopal Church has taught repeatedly that the conduct of positive interfaith relations is an action stemming from core Episcopal-Christian identity. Neighbor-love, hospitality, and reminders of the command not to bear false witness against our neighbor (Ex. 20:16) have been consistently prominent themes.<sup>5</sup> Witness, hospitality, and mutuality are Episcopal interreligious concerns, all of which arise directly from the theme of love of neighbor at the core of the Baptismal Covenant

### **4. Radically incarnational**

Since the late twentieth century, Episcopal theologizing on interreligious relations has been radically incarnational. That is, it has been informed by the notion, found in earlier Christian thought, that, as Urban Holmes puts it, “even if humanity had never sinned, God [still] would have become flesh.”<sup>6</sup> To be a church centered on an incarnational theology is to be a church radically open to the influence and ideas with which our faith comes into dialogue. It emphasizes that the Incarnation encompasses the entirety of human experience. It reminds us that Christ is the transformer, not the projection, of culture. This embodiment of the holy in the human continues in the church as the Body of the Risen Christ, called to be in the world as a self-emptying agent open to dialogue with others. As we Episcopalians strive to grow into the fullness of Christ, we endeavor to leave behind the Colonial Christ of our past. We embrace the Dialogical Christ who opens himself and gives himself for others, opening ourselves to conversation and collaboration with those whose religious commitments and convictions differ from ours.<sup>7</sup>

### **5. The doctrine of creation: humankind created in God’s image**

Episcopal theological reflection on creation emphasizes God’s will for what *is*, more so than offering an explanation of how all things came to be. Hence the Episcopal Church’s Baptismal Covenant affirms that all human beings are made in God’s image and after God’s likeness. The

implication is that diversity—including religious diversity—has potential for good and that difference can be celebrated.

## **6. The role of the Holy Spirit**

Themes of Creation bring us to pneumatology: study of God-the-Holy-Spirit. In this regard, Episcopal interreligious teachings remind us that the Holy Spirit, like the wind, “blows where it chooses” (John 3:8); others speak of God-on-the-move, or ponder “what God is up to” in the world.<sup>8</sup> Such reminders that the activity of the Holy Spirit is unhampered by religious, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries encourage breadth in Episcopal interreligious friendship and collaboration.

## **7. Reconciliation and salvation**

Our expectation that we shall discover new insights through interreligious relationships rests upon our embrace of Jesus as “the Way and the Truth and the Life,” coupled with our commitment to respect for the dignity of every human being. In mutual encounters and shared ascetic, devotional, ethical, and prophetic witness, we dare to hope that God will reveal new and enriching glimpses of a reconciled humanity, as well as new insights into how God works in the world through those who practice other traditions. The radically incarnational teaching of the Episcopal Church conveys our confidence that, in the coming of God in Christ, the transformation of all of creation has already been set in motion—and that God, who has been generous in creation, is no less generous in salvation. God’s gracious love is not limited to the Christian community.<sup>9</sup>

Episcopal interreligious theology makes broad use of the principle of reconciliation—the renewal of relationship with God accomplished for humanity in Jesus Christ; God’s gathering up of all things into a unity that honors difference. The language of salvation in and through Christ Jesus is fundamental to our understanding sin and how it may be overcome, particularly when we understand salvation as the process of reconciliation that allows difference to stand and to be honored.

However, salvation is a peculiarly Christian goal—a goal not necessarily sought by followers of other religions. Acknowledgment of differences among the ultimate goals of various spiritual paths opens up rich opportunities for learning and dialogue. In interreligious engagement, we learn from people who see the world’s problems through lenses other than “sin and salvation.” Wisdom offered by other traditions may enrich us as Christians, just as we may enrich others with our insights.

Responding to the attacks of September 11, 2001, in a sermon later that month to the House of Bishops, then-Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold declared: “God’s compassion, God’s mercy, God’s loving kindness, God’s fierce bonding love is the active principle that effects reconciliation: the gathering up of all things into a unity in which difference is both honored and reconciled in the fullness of God’s ever creative imagination.” Reconciliation grounds Episcopal understanding of salvation and eschatology (the study of the ultimate destiny of humankind).<sup>10</sup>

Eschatologically, we live in the “already but not yet.” Our efforts at reconciliation can be seen as attempts to make real in the here-and-now, the future perfection God has accomplished already through Christ. Episcopalians dare to hope that God is drawing all of creation back to Godself through Christ. Therefore, the Church’s teaching on interreligious relations encourages Episcopalians to offer their gifts for the carrying out of God’s ongoing work of reconciliation toward our mutual flourishing.

## **8. Trinitarian monotheism**

The Episcopal Church’s approach to interreligious relations is unabashedly Trinitarian. We insist that the one and only God is Triune. The very life of God is one of mutuality, interdependence, and reciprocity—a divine dance of intimacy in which unity does not require uniformity. The implication for interreligious relations is this: we manifest the reality of having been made in the image and after the likeness of the Triune God by striving for right-ordered relationship with all of creation—and that includes people whose religious convictions and commitments are different from ours.

Trinitarian imagery may not be most helpful when in direct conversation with someone of another religion; nevertheless Trinitarian theology offers abundant resources for understanding religious diversity as a good that is integral to creation, rather than as cause for concern and division. Diversity is eternal—since the very essence of God-as-Triune encompasses irreducible difference. In Christian understanding, all of humanity is made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, in its irreducible diversity, humanity as a whole models the Trinity.<sup>11</sup>

As the great Buddhist teacher-activist Thich Nhat Hanh often said, “we inter-are.”<sup>12</sup> The theological principle of participation requires that we strive “to live in deep, right-ordered relationship with God and all of creation.”<sup>13</sup> And, it bears repeating, “all of creation” includes our neighbors whose religious convictions and communities differ from ours. Friendship and collaboration are possible in and through (rather than in spite of) irreducible religious differences.

## **9. Our commitment to an ecumenical approach**

The Episcopal Church is committed to an ecumenical approach to interreligious-relations work. We are a founding member of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and a member of the World Council of Churches. We draw upon the thinking of scholars from many streams of Christianity in crafting our own interreligious statements. The Episcopal Church’s radically incarnational and Trinitarian interreligious relations theology emphasizes mutuality, interdependence, and reciprocity—which, in turn, has implications for love of neighbor, for embassy, and for hospitality. It is to our theology in action that we now turn.

# **II. Practical Interreligious Relations Guidelines for Episcopalians**

## **A. Knowing our History**

When undertaking interreligious work at any level (church-wide, diocesan, or parish; global, national, or local), and whatever our geographical context, it is useful to understand The Episcopal Church’s history, both negative and positive, with respect to the peoples, groups, religious traditions, or worldviews with which we wish to engage.

### **1. Episcopal involvement in global and national interreligious work**

The Episcopal Church’s administrative structure has long included an office dedicated to interreligious work. In addition, interfaith efforts may be initiated by the Presiding Bishop as primate and chief pastor of the church or may be handled by a special committee—most recently, the subcommittees of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Engagement in interreligious work through external structures is, as noted above, a hallmark of The Episcopal Church’s approach.

- Episcopalians were participants in the first World Parliament of Religions in 1893, and in every convening since the Parliament’s revival in 1993.



- The Episcopal Church was well-represented at the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference—which is credited with birthing the modern ecumenical movement.
- Since the inception of the National Council of Churches of Christ in 1950, The Episcopal Church has provided robust support for that body’s interfaith office.
- The Episcopal Church collaborates with the World Council of Churches in its ongoing interfaith efforts.
- The Episcopal Church is a founding member of *Shoulder to Shoulder*, a coalition-based campaign that strives to end discrimination and violence against Muslims in the United States.
- The Episcopal Church is also an active member of Religions for Peace-USA.

Therefore, The Episcopal Church encourages collaborative and ecumenical work on interreligious matters at the local and diocesan levels. It is worth noting that the United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded by an Episcopal bishop.

## **2. Previous influential statements on interreligious engagement**

In considering further how best to engage with religious difference in the present, Episcopalians do well to recall groundbreaking resources developed in past decades and still of usefulness today. These include *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965, which helped to inaugurate a new era of interreligious engagement; and The Episcopal Church’s *Theological Statement on Interreligious Relations* (2009). Also worthy of ongoing study are the 1988 Lambeth Conference document *Christ and People of Other Faiths*, which teaches that interreligious dialogue is coherent with discipleship and mission; its Appendix, entitled *Jews, Christians, and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*—the first Anglican Communion interfaith document to provide guidance for positive relations with Muslims; *Generous Love: the Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue—an Anglican theology of inter faith relations*, a sophisticated and useful treatise issued by the Anglican Communion Network of Inter Faith Concerns in 2008; and the *Lambeth Call on Inter Faith* (May 2023).<sup>14</sup>

## **3. Episcopal engagement with Judaism and Jewish people**

It is important for Christians in the Anglican tradition to acknowledge participation in the centuries-long persecution of the Jewish people through forced conversion to Christianity, the preaching of contempt for them, and the interpretation of many Bible passages in ways that lead to the demonization of Judaism and the denigration of it as a living religion. Since the middle of the twentieth century, The Episcopal Church has demonstrated its repentance of that behavior through actions by General Convention promoting dialogue with Jewish people. In 1988, General Convention issued *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations for Use in The Episcopal Church*, thus officially endorsing a course of action for thinking theologically and behaving ethically. Subsequently, many Episcopalians have reframed their preaching and teaching to emphasize their recognition that contemporary Judaism is a living religion that took shape after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the year 70 CE, and that has grown and thrived during the centuries since. *Christian-Jewish Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for The Episcopal Church* (2023) is the most recent teaching on this topic.

Even though, since the end of World War II, Episcopal relationships with our Jewish neighbors have improved significantly, issues arising out of language in our Book of Common

Prayer still linger, particularly in some of the liturgies of Holy Week and Good Friday. Sensitivity to those issues is required of all who preach and teach the scriptural texts of Holy Week or who use them as part of Christian formation.

Lingering also is the question of how The Episcopal Church may best maintain its longstanding commitment to and support of the modern state of Israel, while also supporting the rights of Palestinians to their own state. The ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories continues to present significant social justice issues for Episcopalians who support the Palestinian cause. The Church continues to navigate this contentious issue with a deep commitment to the collaborative and mutually enriching relationships that we have built with Jewish people over many decades. However, neither Episcopalians nor Jewish people are of one mind with respect to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Therefore, any interreligious encounter that engages it requires diplomacy and care.

#### **4. Episcopal engagement with Islam and Muslims**

The Episcopal Church recognizes that, through the centuries, relations between Muslims and Anglican Christians have been complex and often contentious.<sup>15</sup> For guidance in respectful engagement with Muslims, The Episcopal Church has drawn on *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue* (1988), the first interreligious relations treatise from the Lambeth Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion to engage Islam robustly and openheartedly. With this document as a foundation, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church passed resolutions in 1997 and 2003 that formalized a commitment to dialogue with Muslims founded on affirmation of human rights and religious freedom for all people.<sup>16</sup>

In 2007, when 138 distinguished Muslim scholars issued “A Common Word Between Us and You,” a landmark open letter to Christian religious leaders around the world, Rowan Williams, then Archbishop of Canterbury, responded to it on behalf of the Anglican Communion, respectfully and positively, with “A Common Word for the Common Good.” The Episcopal Church was asked to participate in the crafting of that response. It did so by submitting “Renewing Our Pledge” (2008), a didactic document that was also made available to all dioceses. Finally, The Episcopal Church has produced *Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for The Episcopal Church* (2021, revised 2023)—a document paralleling its guidelines for relations with Jewish people.

#### **5. Episcopal engagement with Indigenous traditions**

The Episcopal Church acknowledges that religious diversity includes the practices, beliefs, rituals, and spiritual wisdom of Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the long-overdue need to address fully and honestly, in all countries in which The Episcopal Church resides, the history of our church’s interaction with Indigenous peoples in the many places where Anglican Christians conducted missionary work. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in North America particularly, as a consequence of missionary efforts, Christians in the Anglican tradition took part in the denigration of Indigenous Americans’ religious and cultural traditions including support for laws that made the practice of such traditions illegal. The Episcopal Church participated in the removal of Native American children to boarding schools that often abused them physically, prohibited them from speaking their native languages, forbade their engagement in their indigenous spiritual practices, and forced them to convert to Christianity. A statement in 2021, by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies acknowledges that history, mourns “the intergenerational trauma that cascades from it,” and

calls for “recognition of wrongdoing, genuine lamentation, authentic apology, true repentance, amendment of life and nurture of right relationships.”<sup>17</sup>

The Doctrine of Discovery—the theological notion informing The Episcopal Church’s relationship with Indigenous peoples during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries—was disavowed in 2009 by means of a General Convention resolution.<sup>18</sup> The way had been paved for such a move when, in 1997, General Convention initiated a Decade of Remembrance, Recognition and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples—a process of repentance on the part of the church that was renewed in 2007 and 2017, with the intent to do so every ten years. The launch of this initiative was accompanied by concerted attempts to reconcile with Indigenous peoples with regard to the serious harm done to them by Christians.<sup>19</sup> Disavowal of the Doctrine of Discovery was reasserted in 2012 by General Convention, which also directed dioceses and parishes to study and reflect on the impact of that doctrine in their own locations.

The Episcopal Church now endeavors to interact with Indigenous peoples in a manner that respects the integrity of their religious practices and recognizes that some choose to maintain those practices simultaneously with our Episcopal tradition. We also strive to be sensitive to tensions that sometimes exist between Indigenous persons who have adopted the Christian religion and those who have not.

In this time of racial reckoning, it is crucial for Episcopalians to be aware of the racist and colonial history of our church’s dealings with people who are not White and not Christian. Only when our efforts are based upon a genuine desire to engage our interlocutors as teachers and partners whose wisdom and experience will ultimately benefit all of us, will our interreligious efforts further our quest to create Beloved Community.

## **B. Contextualizing Interreligious Work**

Given its institutional presence in at least sixteen countries, the contexts in which The Episcopal Church is found—thus the potential for positive interreligious engagement—vary greatly. Today’s technology enables us to see the earth from space as an orb on which borders and boundaries are fluid, easily fractured, and unstable. The trials of climate change and global pandemic heighten our awareness that the peoples of the earth will either survive together or perish together. At the same time, our entire world is housed inside the flat screens of computers that provide immediate access to almost anyone or anything at anytime, anywhere on the planet. Crises and conflicts that were once local matters and seemed to be none of our concern are now global. Social strife, political upheaval, and violence fueled predominantly by greed or religious fanaticism are never distant from us. Yet, since The Episcopal Church is headquartered in the United States, what happens socio-politically in that context has church-wide implications. Here are three examples.

### **1. Improving understanding of Islam and Muslims**

The impact of the September 2001 attacks on the USA was immediate and profound; its consequences were multinational and interreligious; its influence on interreligious relations is ongoing in all provinces of The Episcopal Church. In its immediate wake, Episcopal efforts to learn more about Islam and Christian-Muslim relations were many: dialogical initiatives, diocesan and parish workshops, seminary course-offerings. During the more than two decades since, political actions exacerbating anti-Muslim bigotry generally have been hurtful to Episcopalians’ Muslim dialogue partners. Churchwide, the need for education about Islam and opportunities for dialogue with Muslims persists.

## **2. Dismantling Racism**

The COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020–2021 underscored our common humanity to an extent rarely seen in the past, victimizing every race, creed, nationality, religion, and socio-economic level, taking a disproportionate toll on people of color and the poor. Meanwhile, in the United States, a series of highly-publicized killings of African Americans at the hands of law enforcement provoked large protests and civil unrest. It also stimulated fresh determination to expose and combat systemic racism within The Episcopal Church itself and to work toward racial justice interreligiously. As a result, The Episcopal Church’s longstanding work of dismantling racism was reaffirmed and reenergized

The process of repentance for the complicity of The Episcopal Church in American society’s systemic racism is long and complex—as is the work towards creating a church free of racism. Indeed, The Episcopal Church’s work on positive interreligious relations will fall short unless the intersection between interreligious understanding and racism is acknowledged. Commitment to eradicating racism within The Episcopal Church and in our larger society includes acknowledging the Church’s role in promoting racism. For example, many Africans and African Americans were hurt by our church’s participation in White supremacist thinking that supported the institution of slavery itself (which included the forcible baptism of some people as part of their enslavement). Additionally, the Church was complicit in the Japanese internment camps in World War II.

In the United States today, as we engage in interreligious encounter with people of the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh, Jain, Confucian, Afro-Atlantic, and American Indigenous traditions (and many others), we also recognize that the racial discrimination encountered in American culture is intricately entwined with the toxic racial bigotry that our church was complicit in establishing during the eras of slavery and Jim Crow. Structures of White supremacy and White privilege have kept African Americans and other people identified as non-White from enjoying abundance of life. They also impact the lives and experiences of many immigrant communities, both those that are Christian and those of other religious or spiritual traditions. Engagement with immigrant religious communities and interfaith groups in the USA today must be undertaken with the recognition that The Episcopal Church has been part of a system that discriminates against these communities not only because of their religious difference from the American Christian majority, but also because of the legacy of racism, in the form of anti-Blackness. It is not enough merely to engage in interreligious dialogue or encounter with these communities. Episcopalians must also be poised to work with them to overcome the racial bias to which they are subjected.

## **3. White supremacy and Christian Nationalism**

On January 6, 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic still raging, the United States Capitol building was stormed by armed insurrectionists in an attempt to overrule the outcome of a free and fair presidential election. Some insurrectionists carried crosses; others carried flags bearing the words “Jesus 2020.” Some wore t-shirts and hoodies emblazoned with anti-Jewish slogans. In short, the action was a display of Christian Nationalism: a potent combination of political rhetoric and behavior, racism, anti-Jewish bigotry, and a distorted version of Christian theology based largely upon the foundation of White supremacy.

While, through public rhetoric and other gestures, the insurrectionists made clear their belief that their actions were condoned by God and were necessary in order to reclaim the United States as a “Christian” country, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry firmly repudiated them by

endorsing a statement put forth by the organization *Christians Against Christian Nationalism*, of which The Episcopal Church is a member, saying:

As followers of Jesus, his command to love our neighbors means neighbors of every type, of every faith, not just our own. Through our baptism and in our democracy, we are called to a way of love that creates a community in which the dignity of every human being is recognized and respected, and where all can have an equal say in the governing of our civic life. The violence, intimidation and distortion of scripture associated with “Christian nationalism” does not reflect the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and so I stand with fellow leaders in the Christian community and call for a better way.<sup>20</sup>

Given Episcopalians’ frequently renewed Baptismal Covenant promise to “seek and serve Christ in all persons,” a “better way” begins with recognizing that bigotry is fed by systemic discrimination in which religion and race are tightly interwoven.

In September 2020, the House of Bishops Theology Committee issued *White Supremacy, Beloved Community and Learning to Listen*—a statement that makes clear the extent to which Anglo-Saxon forebears instantiated White supremacy and a posture of anti-Blackness in American culture. The work of improving interreligious understanding in the twenty-first century goes hand-in-hand with our efforts toward repudiating White supremacy and overcoming racism—including the stanching of anti-Asian, anti-Latino/Latina, and anti-Indigenous behavior. In recognizing the dignity of all people in our interreligious work, we are demonstrating yet another way to speak against racism, while also building relationships spanning both religious and racial lines.

### **C. Continuing the Effort Toward Mutual Flourishing**

Wherever in the world The Episcopal Church is present, four issues—ongoing anti-Jewish bigotry, anti-Muslim bigotry, systemic racism, and unjust treatment of indigenous peoples—inform and complicate interreligious work. Each country in which The Episcopal Church is institutionally present is home to occurrences and issues that are in urgent need of extra scrutiny. It is imperative that Episcopalians in every province name the unique ways those issues manifest in their contexts; acknowledge other factors that may be even more germane in a particular locale; and learn and tell their own stories of interreligious understanding, collaboration, and resilience.

The Baptismal Covenant promise to strive for justice and peace among all people issues to Episcopalians a warrant for the work of cultivating positive interreligious relations as part of the larger mission of creating Beloved Community wherever in the world we find ourselves. Interreligious friendships enable us to learn about and from our neighbors, to make common cause with them for the greater good, and—by experiencing practices beyond our own Christian tradition—to develop a more vibrant understanding of God. Therefore, Episcopalians are encouraged to engage in interreligious relationship-building, information-sharing, community-service, advocacy, and celebration—activities that nurture and sustain mutual understanding, respect, and trust. When adherents of disparate religions stand together in solidarity, they bear witness collectively to the dignity of every human being. Presence becomes a courageous mode of peacemaking in a violent world. The promise to strive for justice requires Episcopalians to support ecumenical and interreligious initiatives that encourage encounter, dialogue, advocacy, and community service. All are imperative for resolving tensions whose root causes may be social, environmental, economic, or political, but to which religious difference may be an exacerbating factor.

## D. Building Beloved Community

For interreligious problem-solving or cultivation of deeper understanding, The Episcopal Church commends *dialogue*—a potentially transformative, formal, structured, conversation, the method for which is dialectical, reciprocal, empathetic, and courteous. Interreligious dialogue fosters the mutuality so necessary for making common cause with regard to peace, social justice, and religious liberty.

When dioceses, congregations, and other organizations of The Episcopal Church—on their own, in partnership with other Christian Churches, or in consultation with other provinces of the Communion— enter into dialogue with people of other religious traditions, they do best when mindful of advice given by the great scholar Krister Stendahl. He taught that, in seeking to understand another religious tradition:

- Take questions about it to its adherents, not to its detractors;
- Compare the best of our own tradition’s beliefs and practices and behavior of its adherents to the *best* of another’s; resist the urge to compare the best in our tradition to the worst in the other’s;
- Leave room for “holy envy”—the possibility of being captivated by some aspect of a tradition not our own, thus delighting in its beauty or wisdom.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever our context, Episcopalians are likely to have neighbors whose backgrounds, beliefs, and practices differ from ours and from whom much can be learned. Opportunities abound for developing creative relationships with people who embrace other religions, yet are searching, as are Episcopalians, for justice, peace and sustainability. The Episcopal Church’s theological and ecclesial heritage offers resources for participating in this interreligious quest. Interreligious companionship and collaboration is integral to God’s mission. Episcopalians prepare for it by fulfilling the Baptismal Covenant promise to “continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.”

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<sup>1</sup> See Mark 12:29–31; Book of Common Prayer (1979): Catechism, 851.

<sup>2</sup> Book of Common Prayer (1979), 305.

<sup>3</sup> This section draws upon portions of Lucinda Allen Mosher, *Toward Our Mutual Flourishing: The Episcopal Church, Interreligious Relations, and Theologies of Religious Manyness* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> M. K. Gandhi, “Crime of Reading the Bible: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1926” in *Young India 1924–1926* by Mahatma Gandhi (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1927), 1172–74 at 1173.

<sup>5</sup> “Neighbor-love” is foundational to several Episcopal Church interreligious relations documents. *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations* (1988) addresses hatred and persecution of Jews. In *Principles for Interfaith Dialogue* (1994), neighbor-love informs the directive to “approach others with the same kind of respect we would wish to be accorded.” It is developed even more in *Renewing Our Pledge* (2008), which responds to a Muslim call for dialogue, and also in the *Theological Statement on Interreligious Relations* (2009). For analyses of these documents, see Mosher, *Toward Our Mutual Flourishing*. 48–55, 19–22, 79–84, 97–107; for full texts of each document, see Appendix therein.

The relation between the command not to bear false witness and interreligious matters is prominent in The Episcopal Church’s efforts to address anti-Judaism. It is latent in the fact that, in the statements most directly related to Islam and Muslims, we find no hint of the anti-Muslim rhetoric so prominent in certain streams of US and European culture during the first decades of the twenty-first century. See the *Preface to Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations* (1988) and *Renewing Our Pledge* (2008)—the response of the Episcopal Church to the Muslim initiative *A Common Word*.

<sup>6</sup> Urban T. Holmes, *What Is Anglicanism?* (Wilton, Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), 28.

<sup>7</sup> See Paul Knitter, “What about Them? Christians and Non-Christians,” in *Essentials of Christian Theology*, ed. William C. Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 317.

<sup>8</sup> See particularly, the NCCC policy statement *Interfaith Relations and the Churches* (1999), and the Episcopal Church’s mission vision statement *Companions in Transformation* (2003).  
[http://www.tituspresler.com/global\\_mission/companions/CompanionsInTransformation-Text.pdf](http://www.tituspresler.com/global_mission/companions/CompanionsInTransformation-Text.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See the *Theological Statement* (2009), the *NCCC Policy Statement* (1999), and *On Waging Reconciliation* (2001). For analyses of these documents, see Mosher, *Toward Our Mutual Flourishing*, 97–106, 30–37, and 73–79, respectively; see also integrative analysis on p.125 therein.

<sup>10</sup> Reconciliation is a notion foundational to the *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations* (1988). The *NCCC Policy Statement* (1999), which is affirmed by The Episcopal Church, devotes paragraphs 31–35 to it, asserting: “Through Jesus Christ, Christians believe God offers reconciliation to all.”

<sup>11</sup> See Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *Divinity & Diversity: A Christian Affirmation of Religious Pluralism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 69. See also Dwight J. Zscheile, *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity* (New York: Morehouse, 2012), 46.

<sup>12</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1987), 87.

<sup>13</sup> Dwight J. Zscheile, “Beyond Benevolence: Toward a Reframing of Mission in the Episcopal Church,” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 8, no. 1 (2009): 100.

<sup>14</sup> The year 2008 also saw the release of two other significant interreligious relations documents: “A Common Word for the Common Good”—the official reply of Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, to “A Common Word Between Us and You,” a pan-Muslim call for dialogue with Christians promulgated in October 2007; and “Relations with Other World Religions” (Section F of the 2008 Lambeth Conference Indaba Reflections).

<sup>15</sup> See Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, second edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, & Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of ...the Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 769; General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of ...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 477f.

<sup>17</sup> Statement on Indigenous boarding schools by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies, Gay Clark Jennings (July 12, 2021),

<sup>18</sup> General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), 371–72.

<sup>19</sup> General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of ...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997*, (New York: General Convention), 87.

<sup>20</sup> For full text, see [www.christiansagainsthistoricalnationalism.org](http://www.christiansagainsthistoricalnationalism.org).

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the origins of Krister Stendahl’s three rules, see Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* (New York: HarperOne, 2019), 64–66.

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## **Christian-Jewish Relations Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians**

Episcopalians commit to a posture of respect when dealing with other faith communities. How that respect manifests itself will differ not only from tradition to tradition, but within the breadth of those traditions as well. This document provides succinct guidelines for constructive dialogue with Jewish neighbors.<sup>1</sup> Judaism is a vibrant and complex community with many voices, some quite discordant with each other. It is an understatement to note that the Christian tradition (itself also quite complex and discordant) has not always respected the Jewish people as fellow children of God. This set of guidelines is for Episcopalians seeking a basis for building common ground, especially in joint service and ministry, with Jewish people—a resource for Episcopal teaching, preaching, daily scripture-study, individual prayer, corporate worship, and lament for past mistakes.

1. **Openheartedness.** First, without question, openheartedness toward Judaism and the Jewish people accords with the faith we proclaim through The Episcopal Church's Baptismal Covenant.
2. **Obligation.** The Baptismal Covenant promise to strive for justice and peace among all people obliges Episcopalians to treat Judaism and the Jewish people justly.
3. **Acknowledgement.** Because persistent unjust stereotyping of Jews by Christians continues to harm Jewish people in the present day (as it has for centuries), it is imperative to acknowledge that anti-Judaism is expressed in a wide array of present practices of The Episcopal Church: liturgical texts, interpretation of scriptures, preaching, devotional practices, poetry, iconography, hymnody, academic writing, pastoral advice, and educational resources.
4. **Truthful witness.** Given the scriptural mandate to witness truthfully, Episcopalians are obliged, in teaching, preaching, and informal communication, to present biblical and Rabbinic Judaism accurately. We can begin by presenting Jesus as an observant first-century Jew striving to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. Even while affirming that, as we see it, in Christ Jesus God has done a new thing, we can make explicit the substantial theological and scriptural continuities between Judaism and Christianity. We can be mindful of implicit or explicit references to Jews or Judaism in liturgy, in the public reading of Scripture, in hymnody, and in artistic representations that can reinforce prejudices.



5. **Better practices.** It is imperative that Episcopalians strive for practices that note, discontinue, and resist new iterations of stereotyping of Jewish people so they will be treated justly. Here are six recommendations.
- a. **Be mindful of vocabulary.** In our efforts to combat behavior harmful to our Jewish neighbors, it is useful to rethink how harmful behavior is named. To label the problem accurately, we can use “anti-Jewish bigotry” or “antisemitism” (unhyphenated).<sup>2</sup>
  - b. **Stress God’s continuing covenant.** A strong theology accounting for God’s continuing covenant with the Church and the Jewish people alike is the best corrective for unjust portrayal of historical and contemporary Jewish people in Episcopal liturgy, preaching, and teaching.
  - c. **Eschew supersessionism.** A pernicious theological move often called “theological supersessionism” is the root of anti-Judaism (be it overt or unintentional) sometimes expressed in Christian life and thought. Supersessionist theology feeds the stereotyping of Jewish people by making three erroneous assertions: that Judaism is obsolete; that, because of their role in the passion and death of Jesus of Nazareth, God has ended the covenant with the Jewish people; that the Church has replaced the Jewish people in unique relationship with God. The anti-Judaism and supersessionism latent in Episcopal Passion Sunday and Holy Week liturgies raise many concerns. For help in understanding the issues and considering solutions, see essays by Louis Weil, Ruth Meyers, and Susan Auchincloss archived on the website of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of the Episcopal Church (2012–2015 triennium).<sup>3</sup>
  - d. **Avoid teaching of contempt.** Closely linked to supersessionism, the practice known as *teaching of contempt* involves manipulation of Christian doctrine and scripture to denigrate Jewish people and Judaism in a variety of ways: interpretation of passages of the New Testament particularly in John’s gospel to blame Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus; preaching salvation by grace using language in the Pauline epistles that maligns “the Law” and suggests that those who practice their religion through adherence to “the Law” as revealed to the Jewish people at Sinai are somehow misguided or ignorant; suggesting that the Jewish people have missed the mark because they do not believe Jesus to be the Messiah. By means of such logic, Christians have justified and perpetuated Jewish suffering. Not only does such teaching foster negativity, distrust, and hostility toward Jewish people, it has often led to violence. The Baptismal Covenant promise to strive for justice requires Episcopalians to recognize that, given persistent stereotyping and persecution, manifested during its most extreme form in the genocide of the Jews during the Shoah, Jewish people are justifiably fearful.<sup>4</sup> Because we have so promised, we are obliged to eschew the teaching of contempt.
  - e. **Mitigate latent anti-Judaism.** Latent anti-Judaism in our hymnody can be mitigated by making use of revisions that preserve the theological depth and purpose of particular hymns while excising supersessionist themes. The Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad’s reworking of the hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel* is an excellent example.<sup>5</sup>
  - f. **Appreciate; don’t appropriate.** Judaism, a living and continually developing religion with its own integrity, has many beautiful traditions. Episcopalians may be deeply appreciative; yet they should resist any inclination to transpose Jewish ritual and tradition into Christian liturgical contexts. “Christian Seders” offer a case in point. Although

Jesus's last supper may have been a Passover meal of some sort, it assuredly was not a Seder in the modern sense, since the Passover Seder was introduced into Jewish ritual life in late antiquity, after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Attempts by Christians, even if well intended, to make this ritual their own are insensitive. However, when a Jewish person issues an invitation to a Seder, it is entirely appropriate for a Christian to accept that hospitality.

6. **Respect our shared scripture.** We do well to remember that Jesus himself drew upon the collection of writings that are canonical for Judaism to this day. These writings comprise more than half of the Christian Bible—an acknowledgment of common affirmation by Christians and Jews of God as revealed through patriarchs and prophets.
  - a. Just as second-century Christians resisted moves to set these writings aside, so too should we refrain from marginalizing them. It is helpful for Christians to be aware of the Jewish practice of reading the Torah in conversation with the Talmud (a multi-volume collection of Torah commentary, law, and more). Although Christian and Jewish people read them differently, these shared sacred writings provide a common resource for prayer, study, preaching, and dialogue.<sup>6</sup>
  - b. While Episcopal use of the term “Hebrew Bible” may seem to be a gesture of neutrality and inclusivity, it is not without its problems. All Jewish writings now included in the Christian Bible were received by the earliest Christian communities in Greek translation. For Episcopalians, “Scripture” includes several Jewish works that were composed in Greek. Furthermore, Jews and Christians organize their shared sacred writings differently. Therefore, consider context. When referring to this collection as Christian Scripture, call it “Old Testament;” when referring to it as Jewish Scripture explicitly, call it “Tanakh;” when speaking of it as a collection held in common by Christians and Jews, call it “Old Testament/Tanakh.”<sup>7</sup>
  - c. When studying the Bible, Episcopalians can guard against unintentional anti-Judaism by making good use of resources such as *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, or Marilyn Salmon’s *Preaching Without Contempt*.<sup>8</sup>
7. **Embrace theological dialogue.** When thinking theologically, Episcopalians characteristically draw simultaneously upon scripture, tradition, and reason. Christian-Jewish dialogue can enhance this practice, as can listening carefully to a range of Jewish voices.
  - a. It is worth remembering that in “Jewishness” is great variation: the religion “Judaism” has several movements (somewhat analogous to Christian denominations), each with its distinguishing beliefs and practices; some see themselves as members of “the Jewish people,” but have little interest in traditional beliefs or practices; and among those who identify as Jewish, can be found people of every race.
  - b. The Jewish tradition of “midrash,” through which the rabbis and sages of the tradition have wrestled with the Torah and continuously re-interpret it for new contexts and eras, offers a way for Christians and Jewish people to engage in fruitful dialogue—each drawing upon their unique interpretive traditions to discover new ways of understanding

the world through their respective religious lenses. Jewish midrash and Christian contextual theology can find fascinating places of convergence and divergence.

8. **Israeli/Palestinian Conflict:** Attitudes toward the contemporary nation of Israel and responses to its actions are complicated by questions regarding the status of the Palestinian residents within its borders and in territories it occupies. These issues are complex and demand caution, mindful of our Baptismal Covenant promise to strive for justice and peace. The Episcopal Church’s Office of Global Relations has worked on these matters for many decades, thus has resources for use by dioceses and parishes.<sup>9</sup>
  - a. Dialogue between Episcopalians and Jews about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is difficult but important. Participants must educate themselves about this ongoing conflict and recognize that it presents issues that divide Christians and Jews intra-religiously as well as interreligiously.
  - b. When framing critiques of policies of the nation-state of Israel, it is imperative to avoid tropes and stereotypes that have long been a part of Christian anti-Judaism. For example, statements that conflate the Jewish people worldwide with the nation state of Israel or blame all Jews for the actions of the state of Israel; depictions of the State of Israel, either in words or visual images that draw on old stereotypes of Jews as demonic, or greedy, or as controlling the world; making assumptions about any given Jewish person’s attitudes or beliefs about the state of Israel or how that person’s Jewish identity is or is not aligned with support for the state of Israel.
9. **Make common cause:** The kinship between Judaism and Christianity is distinct; our shared sacred texts are the source of common beliefs and values. The Jewish ethic of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and The Episcopal Church’s own statements on ecology and creating Beloved Community provide foundations by which Episcopalians and Jewish people can participate collaboratively in God’s mission: mitigating human need, challenging structural injustice, and caring for creation.<sup>10</sup> By affirming this, Episcopalians bear witness to God’s abundant grace and acknowledge that they may indeed work together with Jewish people in loving service to God and to humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> This document—which is informed by the Church of England Faith and Order Commission’s *God’s Unfailing Word: Theological and Practical Perspectives in Christian-Jewish Relations* (2019) and is a thorough revision of a set of a document memorialized by the Eightieth General Convention (2022)—updates *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations for Use in the Episcopal Church* adopted by the Sixty-Ninth General Convention in 1988. A companion document offers guidance for Episcopal-Muslim relations.

<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of what is at stake, see “Spelling of antisemitism” by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/antisemitism/spelling-antisemitism>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://standingcommissiononliturgyandmusic.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> See *Facing History & Ourselves*, Lesson 6: “The roots and impact of antisemitism,” <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/roots-and-impact-antisemitism>.

<sup>5</sup> For Barbara Lundblad’s version of the hymn, see <https://maryshaima.wordpress.com/2016/12/03/veni-immanuel/>.

<sup>6</sup> Of particular value is Marilyn Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> See “Christian and Jewish Bibles” in Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Bible With and Without Jesus*:

*How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently* (New York:HarperOne, 2020), 7–13.

<sup>8</sup> Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); also, other works by Amy-Jill Levine. See Marilyn Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt*, mentioned in note 6. See also, Sarah Dylan Breuer, *dylan's lectionary blog*: Fifth Sunday in Lent, year C at <https://www.sarahlaughed.net>. Also, Thomas E. Breidenthal, "Neighbor-Christology: Reconstructing Christianity before Supersessionism," in *Cross Currents* (Fall 1999): 320–48. Also, Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> See The Episcopal Church's Global Partnerships website: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/global-partnerships/>.

<sup>10</sup> See The Episcopal Church's *Covenant for the Care of Creation*, available at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/>

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



## **Christian-Muslim Relations: Theological and Practical Guidance for Episcopalians**

Since 1979, General Convention has passed resolutions endorsing substantive dialogue between Episcopalians and Muslims on theological and humanitarian matters. During this same period, The Episcopal Church has encouraged and supported Christian-Muslim dialogues facilitated by the National and World Councils of Churches. Increasingly, Episcopalians are engaging with Muslims at the local level in a variety of settings. This guide provides theologically grounded tips and best practices for those new to such engagements.

1. **The authenticity of openheartedness.** These guidelines rest on the conviction that openheartedness toward (thus positive relationship with) Islam and Muslims accords with our Baptismal Covenant promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to strive for justice and peace among all people.
2. **The matter of names.** “Islam” is itself the Arabic word for “submission.” It is pronounced with the accent on the second syllable. Things mandated, influenced, or inspired by Islam may be termed “Islamic.” An adherent of this religion is a Muslim. (The term “Mohammedan”—while found in some literature—is not an appropriate synonym.) When used as an adjective, “Muslim” indicates something done by (or having to do with) a person who embraces “Islam”—the religion. In some publications, “Muslim” is rendered “Moslem.” In fact, a survey of English-language materials about Islam will reveal that many terms have more than one spelling. Why such variants? Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, uses an alphabet consisting of consonants only. Some have no direct equivalent in the Latin alphabet. The process of conversion of words from Arabic script to Latin letters allows for multiple spelling possibilities.
3. **Islam’s complexity.** Worldwide, one in every five persons identifies as Muslim. Consider, therefore, the following points:
  - a. “The Muslim World” is an oft used but seldom helpful construct. When used by non-Muslims, it implies a place/a group of people “out there” or “over there”—whereas, in almost every diocese of The Episcopal Church, Muslims have been a significant presence

for two generations or more. The binary “the Muslim World versus the West” is rarely accurate. Speaking of “Muslim-majority” countries or regions is often more appropriate.

- b. Through immigration and commerce, Muslims, in all their diversity, have introduced Islam to every locale in which The Episcopal Church is present.
  - c. Muslims, like Christians, are not monolithic in their attitudes, experiences, and priorities. Diversity among Muslims results from factors such as nationality, ethnicity, native language, geographic location, social status, gender, economic status, attitudes toward modernity, sectarian lines, preferred legal tradition, and attitudes toward global politics, among other factors. Broad generalizations about Islam and Muslims are, therefore, likely to be inaccurate.
  - d. While there are many commonalities, there are important distinctions between Sunni and Shi’a Islam. The two differ regarding Islam’s early history and the transfer of authority after the death of the Prophet, certain theological matters, certain worship practices, and the foundations of jurisprudence. Demographically, some 85% of all Muslims are Sunni. Some 10% are Shi’a. Some simply say, “We are Muslims,” and decline sectarian labels. Regarding African American Muslims, most are Sunni, a few are Shi’a, and some belong to movements such as the Nation of Islam.
4. **Basics.** Given the complexity of Islam, essentializing is to be avoided; but Episcopalians engaged in interreligious dialogue or projects need basic information on Islamic history, beliefs, and practices.<sup>1</sup> What follows is a brief primer on basic Islamic beliefs and practices about which Christians often have questions:
- a. **Naming God.** *Allah* is Arabic for “God.” It is the primary name of God for all Muslims. Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews also call God “Allah.” When speaking or writing in a language other than Arabic, many Muslims translate “Allah” to that language’s name for “God” in written and spoken discourse. In Islamic tradition, God has ninety-nine Names (attributes)—the most prominent of which are al-Rahman (the Compassionate) and al-Rahim (the Merciful).
  - b. **Qur’an.** The Qur’an (sometimes spelled “Koran”), is Islam’s holy book. Muslims believe it to be God’s speech, transmitted in Arabic through the Prophet Muhammad over a twenty-two-year period. In length it is similar to the New Testament. It contains 114 suras (chapters). Its first sura, the Fatiha (the Opener), which has seven verses, is the core element of Muslim ritual prayer.<sup>2</sup> The second sura has 286 verses. The remaining suras are progressively shorter (in most cases). Since it is not organized thematically, attempting to read the Qur’an from beginning to end is problematic as a first approach. Consider, instead, following a reading plan offered by a good textbook. For Muslims, translations of the Qur’an are considered “interpretations” rather than the authentic text. Therefore, when exploring it in English (or any other language), it is best to use at least two respected translations and to be careful to acknowledge that you are not working with the authentic text.<sup>3</sup> Be aware that, second in authority to the Qur’an is a large body

of literature known as the Hadith (report; tradition). These compendia of sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad are records of his Sunna (his example).

- c. **Muhammad.** Muhammad (570–632 CE) is recognized by Muslims as a prophet of God. He is also known as a messenger of God, because he was the conduit for a holy book. Since he is fully human, Muslims do not worship him; but they do revere, him. When mentioning him, it is customary to say, “Peace be upon him.”
- d. **Biblical figures in the Qur’an.** The Qur’an speaks of the stories of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, and a number of other biblical personalities—Jesus and Mary among them. Christians may be surprised to learn that Jesus and his mother are major figures in Islam. In fact, “Maryam” (Mary) is the name of the nineteenth sura of the Qur’an. The Qur’an calls Jesus “Messiah” and “Word of God,” but the meaning ascribed to these titles differs from Christian use.
- e. **Five Pillars of Islam.** Sunni Muslims speak of the Five Pillars of Islam—five basic practices that frame their life as Muslims:
  - i. **Shahadah:** The assertion of in God and in Muhammad as God’s messenger.
  - ii. **Salat:** A brief worship ritual performed five times daily at specific times, using a fixed text and a set pattern of prostration and other postures. Muslims may perform *salat* more than five times daily. *Salat* may be performed at home or in a *masjid* (place of prostration)—often called a *mosque*.
  - iii. **Fasting:** Abstention from food, drink, and sex from daybreak to sunset during the thirty days of the holy month of Ramadan.
  - iv. **Hajj:** Pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims are to complete this at least once in their lifetime, provided they are healthy enough to travel and have the financial means to do so.
  - v. **Zakat:** The obligatory annual returning of 2.5% of one’s disposable wealth to the Muslim community for sustenance of the poor, maintenance of places of worship, and several other specific purposes.
- f. **Supplication and remembrance.** In addition to *salat*, Muslims may offer supplication (*dua*) in simple or elaborate forms; they may, as well, worship by chanting one or more of God’s Names—a practice called *dhikr* (pronounced *thikr* or *zikr*), the literal meaning of which is remembrance.
- g. **Holidays.** It is appropriate for Episcopalians to wish Muslim neighbors well on Islamic holidays. Islam employs a non-adjusting lunar calendar. Thus, in relation to the solar calendar, Islam’s months and holidays fall some eleven days earlier each year. A new day (hence a new month) begins at sundown. Depending on their sectarian or cultural identity, some Muslims celebrate holidays that are ignored by other Muslims. However, Muslims the world around observe two principal festivals. *Eid al-Fitr* (pronounced *eed*

*al-fitra*; the Festival of Fast-Breaking) marks the end of the month of Ramadan (a period of obligatory fasting during daylight hours). *Eid al-Adha* (pronounced *eed al-ahd-hah*; the Feast of Sacrifice) begins on the tenth day of the month in which Hajj (pilgrimage) is made to Mecca, about two-and-a-half months after *Eid al-Fitr*, and extends over four days. It is associated with Abraham's willingness to fulfill God's request to sacrifice his son. Since God substituted a ram for Abraham's son, Muslims who have the means are expected to sacrifice rams (or other unblemished male animals—goats, bulls, camels) on this holiday; or, they may purchase, or contribute toward the purchase of, an animal, which is slaughtered professionally. The meat becomes the centerpiece of the holiday meal shared with family and friends; it is also distributed to the poor worldwide, making this holiday a huge event of outreach and address of world-hunger issues.

- h. **Shari'ah.** Literally, *shari'ah* means the “broad path”—particularly, a path that leads to water. Although the word *shari'ah* is usually translated “Islamic law,” this is misleading. Different from European and American legal systems, *shari'ah* is God-given comprehensive guidance, touching on all aspects of life and reflecting Islam's proclamation of God's intimate concern for justice between human beings. Often, when mention is made of *shari'ah* or Islamic Law in non-Muslim sources, it would be more appropriate to have spoken of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). Many (but certainly not all) Sunni Muslims subscribe to one of the four authoritative “schools” of legal reasoning. Shi'a Muslims have their own. Typically, popular secular media speak of *shari'ah* as something negative only. Episcopalians can work with their Muslim neighbors to lift up examples of *shari'ah* as *ihsan*—the doing of the beautiful.
- i. **Halal.** Islamic legal reasoning (which is informed by the Qur'an, the Prophet's example, consensus, and analogy) defines what is *halal* (permissible), what is *haram* (prohibited), and what falls into several categories in between. Many Muslims strive to eat only foods that are halal or neutral. However, there is some diversity of understanding as to what falls into each category. Most would avoid alcohol and all pork products (including gelatin that are pork-based). Some believe that shellfish are also *haram*. Many will eat meat only if the animal has been slaughtered according to specific Islamic practice; some will accept Kosher meat; for others, “not pork” is a sufficient distinction. Awareness of Muslim dietary attitudes and practices can be helpful to Episcopalians engaged in interreligious collaboration. It is always appropriate to inquire about preferences.
- j. **Jihad.** The noun *jihad* means “struggle.” While it does sometimes refer to armed struggle on behalf of the faith, translating *jihad* as “holy war” is misleading. It comes from a linguistic root meaning “to endeavor, to strive, to labor.” Hence, it can name one's own effort to better one's relationship with God. (In this sense it could be translated as “spiritual discipline.”) It is also a popular given-name for Arab Christians and Muslims alike.
- k. **Hijab.** The root meaning of *hijab* refers to guarding one's modesty (which is expected of Muslim men and women alike). Most often, it refers to one's manner of dress. What constitutes “Islamic clothing” varies from place to place within the compass of The



Episcopal Church's reach. Some Muslims in Europe or the Americas dress according to a style that is traditional in the Middle East, northern Africa, or regions of Asia; others dress according to local norms. *Hijab* is often synonymous with "headscarf"—which some Muslim women never wear (except when praying). Among Muslim women who do wear a headscarf at all times when in public, some accompany it with a *niqab* (face covering). Avoid the assumption that Muslim women who wear a head-covering are oppressed in some way; in fact, some who choose to do so feel empowered by it. Whatever their practice in public, Muslim women cover their hair when in a mosque. Christian women who visit a mosque for any purpose should bring and wear a headscarf as a sign of respect to the host community.

5. **Dialogue and Collaboration.** Given the commitments made through our Baptismal Covenant, dialoguing theologically and making common cause with our Muslim neighbors are indeed acts of faithfulness. When engaging in dialogue and collaboration:
  - a. **Know your dialogue partners.** Are they lifelong Muslims or recent converts? Are they native-born or immigrants? If the former, are they African American or some other ethnicity? If the latter, are they first-generation or second? What cultural and political particularities from their homeland might come with them to the conversation? Again, keep in mind that Muslims (as do Christians) differ among themselves on a plethora of issues.
  - b. **Anticipate gender segregation.** When religious matters are on the agenda, Muslim dialogue partners will most likely be men. Gatherings organized by Muslims, especially those held in local mosques, often practice gender segregation in prayer areas and places of socializing, dining, and fellowship. When in dialogue, fellowship, or collaboration with Muslims, it is helpful to know that many of them prefer to avoid handshaking with people of a different gender. Some Muslims may disapprove of The Episcopal Church's stance on LGBTQ understandings or policies. Episcopalians in dialogue with Muslims need to be aware of the reality of that possibility.
  - c. **Be aware of the Islamic clock.** When planning events with members of the Muslim community, it is respectful to be aware of the times of Islamic daily prayer in one's locale and to accommodate them in the event schedule. Episcopalians might simply ask Muslim planning partners how they would prefer to do so.
  - d. **Be aware of the Islamic calendar.** When planning interfaith events, take note of the dates of the two *Eids* and avoid scheduling interfaith events on those days. Take note also of the dates for Ramadan. Most Muslims are particularly busy during that month and their day is very much focused around when the fast can be broken. If an interfaith event is planned during Ramadan, avoid a focus on food during the hours of fasting. Non-Muslims are not obligated to join in this practice. However, they can be considerate of those who are fasting. On every evening of Ramadan, *iftar* (fast-breaking) is a special time—and many Muslims are eager to include neighbors and friends in the feasting that follows. Episcopalians who are invited to an *iftar* might take a small gift of nuts, dried fruits, or sweets.

- e. **Label negative behavior appropriately.** When speaking and writing of blatant, virulent, aggressive, promotion of negativity about Islam and Muslims, consider avoiding the term “Islamophobia”—which, literally, means “fear of Islam.” Referring to “anti-Muslim bigotry” is often far more accurate. Whatever it is called, aggressive anti-Islamic or anti-Muslim rhetoric promotes attitudes and overt behavior contrary to Episcopal Baptismal Covenant promises to strive for justice and peace among all people, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself.

**6. Making common cause.** While our understandings of salvation history differ considerably, Episcopalians and Muslims can participate collaboratively in God’s mission in three traditional ways: mitigating human need, challenging structural injustice, and caring for creation. The Islamic principle of *ihsan* (doing the beautiful; defined by tradition as behaving as though one can see God because, without doubt, one is *seen by* God) offers a basis on which Christians may join with Muslims in loving service to God, ecological stewardship, and concerted effort toward the public good.

**7. Resources for deepening understanding.** This collection of guideposts is a starting-point. Recommendations of print and AV resources about Islam or Christian-Muslim engagement are available from the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. For resources for dialogical close reading of scripture (Bible and Qur’an) and other theological texts, see the archives of the Building Bridges Seminar.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Among the many fine sources for such information, see Amir Hussain, *Oil & Water: Two Faiths, One God* (Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2006), which provides a Muslim scholar’s concise introduction to Islam and Christian-Muslim understanding. For an in-depth introduction to Islam, see Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> *Fatiha* is pronounced with stress on the first and third syllables.

<sup>3</sup> The translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017)—prepared by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and a team of translators—are highly regarded.

<sup>4</sup> The Building Bridges Seminar is an ongoing dialogue of Christian and Muslim scholar-believers, founded by the Archbishop of Canterbury in January 2002, under stewardship of Georgetown University since July 2012. [New URL pending]

## **EPISCOPAL-PRESBYTERIAN AGREEMENT ON LOCAL SHARING OF MINISTRIES**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

*Representing the Episcopal Church:* the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, the Rev. Canon Elise Johnstone, Dr. Michael Booker, Elizabeth Ring, the Rev. Joseph Wolyniak; and Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations staff, Mr. Richard Mammana and the Rev. Margaret Rose.

*Representing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):* Ruling Elder Dr. Anne Bond, the Rev. Dr. Neal Presa, the Rev. Terri Ofori, the Rev. Dr. Christian Boyd, the Rev. Dr. Robert Foltz-Morrison, the Rev. Brooke Pickrell, the Rev. Brian Entz; and staff liaison from the Office of the General Assembly, Ruling Elder Dr. Dianna Wright.

### **PREAMBLE: The Urgency of the Times**

#### *Such a Time as This: Pandemic and Racial Endemic*

The Book of Esther recalls a time of great challenge for people of faith to act. So too, our current time finds our world amid many challenges—not least, experiencing a pandemic with as-yet-unknown overall effects on the Church. The global Christian Church has found itself in a season of reinvention and redefinition.

Individual congregations are challenged to adapt to a changing world, straining links with the past and old ways of doing church. In so doing, we have refocused on the core duties of being Christ in the world. This has created both challenges and opportunities.

Our time stands in particular need of unity. Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and The Episcopal Church acknowledge the historical and present reality of sin, racism, and white supremacy that denies the impartiality of God, the reconciling work of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit poured forth into all persons. We acknowledge our complicity and calling to end all racial discrimination, repenting of and ministering to those injured by it. We cannot remain silent about this divisiveness, nor did Christ: “Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so he said to them, ‘Any country that divides itself into groups which fight each other will not last very long. And any town or family that divides itself into groups which fight each other will fall apart’” (Matthew 12:25, GNT). Reform always comes from the margins, whether the prophetic voice crying in the wilderness or activists on city streets protesting the death of another person of color (as if Black lives do not matter).

Accordingly, there is a present and historical urgency borne in this agreement to move both churches toward that unity in mission. The triune mission of God is the foundation of the Church’s unity and its mission in the world. It is among the last of Jesus’ prayers: “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21, ESV). This document represents the culmination of many decades of dialogues between The Episcopal Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).<sup>1</sup>

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### **<sup>1</sup>END NOTES**

The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have been in ecumenical dialogue since 1886. See William Henry Roberts. *The Correspondences Between the Committee on Church Unity of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Commission on Christian Unity of the General Convention of the*

The Church, guided by God’s wisdom, can embrace this opportunity and examine how ecclesial bodies can work together.

### *Tearing Down Ecclesiastical Barriers*

Old walls had prevented mission and ministry together. In this time of notable change, the participants of the bilateral dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) invited our ecclesial bodies—the General Convention 2022 and General Assembly 2022—to consider this limited exchange agreement on the local sharing of ministries. Both bodies affirmed the initiative and the church-wide study. We received feedback from both communions and the ecumenical dialogue places this proposed agreement before both the General Assembly and the General Convention for consideration and action in 2024.

The old walls preventing work together have been torn down through a vastly changing world and church context. With the foundation of the 2008 Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement, our common full communion partner (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and shared partnership with the Moravian Church—Northern and Southern Provinces,<sup>2</sup> our work together through Churches Uniting in Christ, and our work together in public witness as well as numerous collaborative local ministries, a pathway has been created for continued mission and ministry together, toward the unity that God calls us to.

Thus, the Presbyterian/Episcopal Dialogue requests our respective authorizing bodies to consider the following Agreement; to continue the Dialogue with future deliberations; and that our respective Heads of Communion commit themselves publicly to this effort and to consider a public celebration of our progress to date and our hope for the future.

“Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1, *The St. Helena Psalter*)

## **INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>**

The Church does not live for itself. It is called into being by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to serve the mission of the triune God in the world. “The Church belongs to God. It is the creation of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. It cannot exist by and for itself.”<sup>4</sup> The mission of God is a single all-embracing mission that confronts the Church with a range of complementary tasks. Impelled by the joyful duty of giving praise and thanks to God for all the blessings of creation and redemption, the Church seeks to serve God by making known the Good News of salvation and by meeting human need wherever it finds it. In accordance with God’s purpose to “gather up all

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*Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.* (Philadelphia: General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.), 1896).

<sup>2</sup> The Episcopal Church is in full communion and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a covenant agreement with with the Moravian Church.

<sup>3</sup>Adapted from *For the Sake of the Gospel: Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministries in the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia*, 2001.

<sup>4</sup>*The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper No. 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998), §9.

things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10), the Church is called to embody with anticipation the reconciliation and communion of all people.

The Church knows well that its mission is compromised at every point by its disunity, which continues at many levels despite the great ecumenical achievements of the last century. How can the Church credibly proclaim the unity of humankind when it is too fractured to recognize a common baptism and to gather around one eucharistic table in the one apostolic faith? We have institutionalized divisions in the Church and come to accept them as normal, forgetting that they are a stumbling block and a barrier to faith for many. We overlook the fact that they stand in conflict with the will of Christ and amount to a refusal of the unity which is his gift.

The witness of the Church—its service of the *Missio Dei*—will be greatly enhanced by overcoming historic divisions between the churches.<sup>5</sup> The removal of barriers between our two churches, The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while not providing an instant or complete solution to the problems and challenges confronting the Church, will be a step of great importance, especially when seen together with other comparable steps under consideration by our churches. In many and varied contexts, diverse ecclesial communities have benefited greatly from the sharing of ordained ministries. Our two churches could expand in the joint planting of new worshipping communities and partner in united or federated parishes (referred to as *ecumenical congregations*).<sup>6</sup> The matter is not less urgent, nor are the advantages less significant, in the deepening of our covenant relationship in order to establish new eucharistic communities and mission projects which feed the body, mind, and souls of God’s people.

The proposals in this paper are formulated out of our obedience to the Gospel and the better discharge of our call to mission. Unity is for the sake of God’s mission. Changes in the socioeconomic pattern of life in the U.S. in recent years provide an opportunity to develop the unity between our two churches. When Christians demonstrate in their lives that the barriers which divide the rest of society do not divide the Church, the Gospel is proclaimed. We may be certain that we are called, together, to grow in mission, the mission of the Church, within the mission of the triune God.

## **AFFIRMING THE CURRENT ECUMENICAL AGREEMENT**

This group affirms the current Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008, including the following accords:

1. We acknowledge one another’s churches as churches belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church;
2. We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are duly administered;

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<sup>5</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), p 855: “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

<sup>6</sup> *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. Edited by Jooseop Keum (Geneva: WCC, 2013).

3. We acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as given by God and instruments of grace, and look forward to the time when the reconciliation of our churches makes possible the full interchangeability of ministers;
4. We acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry;
5. We agree that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery;
6. We agree that The Episcopal Church will invite members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to receive Holy Communion in their churches and the Presbyterian Church (USA) will invite members of The Episcopal Church to receive Holy Communion in their churches. We encourage the members of our churches to accept this Eucharistic hospitality and thus express their unity with each other in the one Body of Christ;
7. We agree to continue to dialogue in the areas such as diaconal ministries, historic episcopate, the office of elder, etc. that would lead to full reconciliation of our ministries and interchangeability of our ministers;
8. We encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together;
9. We agree to develop a process to support and implement the above recommendations; and
10. We affirm these proposals mark an important step in moving toward the full, visible unity of the Church. We know that beyond this commitment lies a move from the recognition to the reconciliation of churches and ministries within the wider fellowship of the universal Church.

In summary, we recognize and affirm the validity of our respective churches: providing word and sacrament, ordered ministries, as well as the embodiment and exercise of the ministry of oversight (communally, collegially, and personally). We also recognize that the divergence in equally valid ecclesiastical polities, alongside existing church traditions and customs, limits the interchangeability of ordered ministers and thus full communion at this time. Despite this recognition, this group believes we have prayerfully discerned a way forward for our two churches to continue journeying together in a complementary manner and enriching each other as we participate in the mission of God.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

In our current agreement, our two churches agreed "that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and

approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery.” Furthermore, a conditional was established on this point: “because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the *Book of Common Worship* and the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*.”

Our current agreement also calls the two denominations to “encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide a regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational, and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together,” as well as provide a process to support and implement the above recommendations (guidelines).

Our two churches have agreed to be in continued dialogue concerning the mutual recognition of ordained ministries, as a step towards the unity that is Christ’s will for his Church. Our current agreement enabled The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to formally and publicly participate in the Churches Uniting in Christ recognition of ordered ministry (June 2017). This public proclamation underscores and casts away possible barriers to our current agreement to move forward in missional partnership.

On the basis of converging but not yet wholly compatible understandings of the ordained ministry—with a sufficient agreement in faith and ministry, alongside a continued partnership of our two churches over recent decades—this group proposes that our churches deepen our current relationship.

### **Sharing in ecumenical ministry**

We agree with the World Council of Churches’ 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* in regard to ordered ministry,

there is no single pattern of ministry in the New Testament, though all churches would look to Scripture in seeking to follow the will of the Lord concerning how ordained ministry is to be understood, ordered and exercised. At times, the Spirit has guided the Church to adapt its ministries to contextual needs (cf. Acts 6:1–6). Various forms of ministry have been blessed with the gifts of the Spirit. Early writers, such as Ignatius of Antioch, insisted upon the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon. This pattern of three related ministries can be seen to have roots in the New Testament; eventually it became the generally accepted pattern and is still considered normative by many churches today... Among the several means for maintaining the Church’s apostolicity, such as the scriptural canon, dogma and liturgical order, ordained ministry has played an important role. Succession in ministry is meant to serve the apostolic continuity of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reflect the threefold ordered ministries expressed by Ignatius of Antioch (bishop, presbyter, and deacon), “locally adapted” in our respective polities. Thus, both denominations hold, in the broad ecumenical sense, apostolic

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<sup>7</sup>*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214) (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 26. Cf. Ignatius of Antioch’s Letter to the Magnesians 6 and 13; Letter to the Trallians 7; Letter to the Philadelphians 4; Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8.

succession.<sup>8</sup> Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have recognized the gift of *episkopé*, the ministry of oversight, locally adapted, as expressed in the 2017 Churches Uniting in Christ mutual recognition or ordered ministry. Specifically, the ecumenical dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in round two and round three, recognized that diocesan bishops and presbytery moderators have similarly constituted ecclesial authority and expression of the gift of *episkopé* as it relates to presiding at ordination, as well as the inauguration of a presbyter to a pastoral relationship, or commissioning and blessing a new ministry.

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<sup>8</sup> Presbyterians also hold historic *episkopé* locally adapted. The PC(USA)'s official response to the *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* shared the Reformed tradition's understanding of "Apostolic succession" to include continuity in the apostolic tradition, apostolic faith, the apostolicity of the Church's witness, and the church's ordered ministry (See [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/bem.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/bem.pdf))

In the Reformed tradition, *episkopé* is corporate and not personal, tracing back to the Church of Scotland, predominantly the Presbytery of Glasgow, through presbyteries—and also to Scotland's offices of Superintendent, as well as Bishop, who personally presided at ordinations. However, in the act of ordination, there is a personal form of *episkopé* exercised in the role of the presbytery and session moderators as they preside over the worshipful act (W.M. Hetherington. *History of the Church of Scotland: from the Introduction of Christianity to the Period of the Disruption in 1843*, New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856; Jenny Wormald. *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981, pp. 75-142; John Knox, C.J. Guthrie ed., *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1898, pp. 228, 249).

Until 1688, the polity and terms of *episkopé* varied. Some years there was a bishop, exercising personal *episkopé*, in other years the office of bishop was assumed into the presbytery as a corporate expression of *episkopé*... and then back again. The Church of Scotland in 1688 finally resolved to remove from its Presbyterian polity the functionary role of the Bishop as regional administrator and liturgical overseer as common within the Roman and Anglican tradition. Those formerly consecrated as bishops within the Roman and Church of England rite, or the hybrid Presbyterian-Episcopal rite between 1578 and 1688, and who desired to remain in communion with the Church of Scotland would now truly function as pastors of congregations with a college of presbyters. Thus, the historic *episkopé* was therefore permanently assumed into the communion of the people and embodied personally within the moderators of the ordaining councils, the sessions and presbyteries.

Additional ecumenical documents and bodies to consult are the 2021 St Andrew Declaration between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland, as well as the 2016 St Columba Declaration between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England.

In *The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: PCUSA, 1789), "bishop" and "pastor" are interchangeable, and it is the pastor, as moderator of the session, that oversees as a member of the presbytery and presides at the ordination of elders and deacons (c.f., "The Successor to Peter: A Paper for Discussion from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," Discussion PC(USA) and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Louisville, Kentucky, December 6-7, 2000): endnote 5, "It may be of some interest that prior to the 1983 reunion of the northern and southern branches of Presbyterianism, the Book of Order of the northern branch, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., offered several titles for ministers of Word and Sacrament, among them the title 'bishop.' If one looks, say, at the roll calls in the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia around the middle of the nineteenth century one will read 'The following bishops were in attendance....' The concept was that every installed pastor of a congregation is bishop of a congregationally constituted diocese. He or she is surrounded by presbyters or 'elders' and assisted by 'deacons.'" Here, on a small scale, as a parochial diocese, Presbyterians have the historic threefold ministry expressed by Ignatius.



Guided by the World Council of Churches' 1982 foundational paper, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*, Chapter VI, as well as 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214), presbyteries and dioceses are strongly encouraged to invite presbytery moderators and diocese bishops to participate in each other's celebrations of ministry, not only ordinations but also celebrations of a new ministry, wherein bishops and moderators share an ecumenical blessing. It is also strongly encouraged in their ordination of presbyters, each also includes bishops from other denominations with whom each church shares recognition of mutual ministry (i.e. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America). Finally, we fervently pray that when a presbytery moderator is installed, an Episcopal bishop (or designee) be present, and when an Episcopal bishop is ordained, a Presbyterian moderator (or designee) be present; and both be invited in those moments of celebration to share an ecumenical blessing.

### **Limited orderly exchange of ministers**

Within the current agreement (2008–2009), and without exceeding the discretion of The Episcopal Church bishops and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries, there shall be provision for the following exchange of ordered ministers between our churches:

- the acceptance of Episcopal presbyters (those ordained and referred to as *priests*) in Presbyterian placements and in ecumenical ministries where the Presbyterian Church has the right of appointment;
- the acceptance of Presbyterian presbyters (specifically those ordained and consecrated to the ministry of the word, sacrament, and teaching, referred to as *ministers of word and sacrament* or *teaching elders*) in Episcopal appointments, such as ecumenical ministries and cooperating parishes where The Episcopal Church has the right of appointment.

This agreement does not enable ordained Ruling Elders and Commissioned Pastors (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor deacons of The Episcopal Church or Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), to be considered.

## **THE GUIDELINES FOR LIMITED ORDERLY EXCHANGE OF MINISTERS**

For missional purposes and in consultation between the diocesan bishop and local presbytery, a presbyter may be licensed (permitted) by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority to serve under the following guidelines.

The limited orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry needed by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body and the identification of a presbyter from the sending body who may serve in that ministry setting.

The Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body initiates the process of the limited orderly exchange between the presbyter and the placement or ecumenical ministry to be served. The presbyter does not initiate the exchange process.

The inviting body shall consult with the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the presbyter to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the sending body. The presbyter remains accountable to the sending church for the continuation of ministerial status.

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agree that experience in and knowledge of one's own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition. Therefore, the limited orderly exchange is only open to presbyters who have been ordained for at least three years and are active within the ministry of their denomination.

Presbyters serving in a limited orderly exchange position shall be temporary under this agreement. The service of presbyters should ordinarily be for a two- to four-year period, which may be renewed. Should a presbyter of one church intend to serve permanently in another church, the process of the transfer or reception of ministerial status should be followed according to the rules of the receiving Church.

Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the presbyter remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.

Pension and medical coverage are through the church of ecclesiastical membership.

## **Functions**

When a presbyter is invited by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority, the presbyter is authorized to:

- to exercise pastoral and/or administrative responsibility;
- lead public worship as a presbyter under the direction of a diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- preach the Gospel;
- celebrate and administer the sacraments within the guidelines specified below;
- prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- and present the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church, assisting with the diocese or presbytery's ministry of evangelism partnership.

While a presbyter serves a particular placement or ecumenical setting because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, as stated in the 2008 agreement, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. What this means explicitly is that:

- All presbyters are bound to their denomination's authoritative liturgical mandates and resources regarding the Eucharist when they preside or are the celebrant in their particular placement or ecumenical setting of joint witness;
- All presbyters may use authorized or commended worship resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with whom both churches are in full communion, including the Eucharist liturgies, with the authorization of the inviting Ecclesiastical Authority; and
- All presbyters will be trained, authorized, and mentored in the ecclesiastical polity, customs, and traditions by the inviting Ecclesiastical Authority.

### **Training, Examination, and Oversight**

A presbyter who serves under the terms of this Agreement on Limited Orderly Exchange of Ministers shall receive such preparation and instruction, or formation, as determined by the diocesan bishop or presbytery to be appropriate to the particular placement or ecumenical setting, and the length of time shall be determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority's own rule.

The presbyter shall be examined by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority as to personal faith, motives for seeking to serve, and the areas of instruction determined by diocesan or presbytery.

The presbyter authorized under the terms of this Agreement shall work under the supervision and mentoring of the diocesan bishop or presbytery. A presbyter shall be assigned to the invited presbyter as a mentor and local supervisor.

An authorization may be for no more than four years, and no less than two. Within an appropriate time before the expiration of the invitation, the presbyter shall review the covenant relationship with the diocesan bishop and presbytery. The invitation may be renewed with the consent of all interested parties (i.e., diocesan bishop and presbytery, presbyter, and authorized representative(s) of a particular placement or ecumenical ministry).

The diocesan bishop or presbytery may at any time withdraw this authorization for reasons it deems good and sufficient.

A presbyter who has been authorized and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve. However, they are not authorized to perform the functions specified above until an invitation is renewed in order to serve in a placement or an ecumenical setting by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority.

## PRESBYTERIAN GLOSSARY

\***Apostolic function of *episkopé***: the apostolic function of those who oversee the ministry of the church, as reflected in various New Testament texts, is the function exercised by the apostles in spreading the Gospel and exists so that the Church maintains its witness to Jesus Christ.

\***Apostolic succession**: continuity with the ministry of the early church, especially the disciples of Jesus. Reformed and Roman Catholics believe that there is an apostolic succession, though they locate that succession differently. The Reformed tradition understands apostolic succession to also include continuity with the apostolic tradition, apostolic faith, and the apostolicity of the Church's witness.

\***Apostolic era**: the period of the history of Christianity when the original apostles of Jesus were still alive.

**The Book of Common Worship (BCW)**: a liturgical resource in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consisting of various liturgies and prayers consistent with the *Directory for Worship* section of Book Two of the Constitution, *The Book of Order*. The BCW's most recent edition was published in 2018.

\***Catholicity**: as described in the baptismal catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem, refers not simply to geographic extension but also to the manifold variety of local churches and their participation in the fullness of faith and life that unites them in the one community.

**Church**: the one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**Churches**: fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches.

**church (lowercase "c")**: the local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e., congregation, parish.

**Commissioned Pastor (also known as commissioned ruling elder)**: a ruling elder authorized by a presbytery to limited pastoral service assigned by a presbytery for a limited time. Commissioned pastors may be authorized by the presbytery to moderate session, administer the sacraments, and officiate marriages where permitted by state law.

**Commissioning**: an act of God through the voice of the Church whereby a council of the Church authorizes, blesses, and entrusts to an individual, usually one who is in ordered ministry, to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a particular ministry.

\***Communion(s)**: the community fellowship gathered at the table together. Since we have not yet realized the goal of all churches being in communion with each other—essentially recognize our being one Church as Christ prayed we would be—we are different communions gathering at different tables with only imperfect unity in Christ.

**Constitution of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):** the governing documents that frame the ecclesial life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Constitution consists of two parts: Book One is *The Book of Confessions*, expressing in twelve creeds, catechisms, confessions, and statements of faith what Presbyterians believe; and Book Two is *The Book of Order*, expressing how Presbyterians live out their confessional belief with respect to governance, church discipline, and principles of worship.

**Councils:** duly constituted gatherings of ruling and teaching elders for discernment and decision-making for the spiritual welfare of the church. The councils of the church are the session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. Each council is distinct but mutually related to one another, the action of one council is understood to be an action on behalf of the whole and the whole church's act through that appropriate council, with the larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, governing the smaller. The session consists of all teaching elders serving in a local congregation and active ruling elders. Presbytery, synod, and General Assembly consist of an equal number of teaching and ruling elders. (Adapted from *The Book of Order*, F-3.0203)

**Covenant Partnership:** an ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship whereby each participating communion acknowledges that it is undertaking a serious commitment, one that involves actions as well as words. Covenant partnership cannot be achieved without awareness of existing differences and similarities among the partners; it will demand dedication to walking and working together in ways that may, at times, represent a break with the past. Walking together involves not only the likelihood, but also the certainty of mutual challenge and change; because of this commitment, each body will eventually be different in ways that presently cannot be seen. The partner churches commit themselves to this new relationship with seriousness of intent, and full assurance that the One who calls us to greater visible unity is faithful and worthy of trust. (*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Covenant Agreement with the Moravian Church*, p. 9)

\***Diakonia:** the ministry of service. Many churches ordain deacons; in others deacons are officers of the church but not ordained.

\***Ecclesiology:** the theology of the nature and purpose of the church.

\***Ecumenicity:** the character of being ecumenical—being concerned with the unity of the churches.

\***Episcopacy:** the office of oversight of the church and its ministry. Every church has some way of overseeing the church, keeping it faithful to the Gospel, fostering its unity, and overseeing the work of the ministry and the work of the church in service to the world. In this dialogue, we have focused on episcopacy as a central ecumenical issue. Thus in this document the meanings of episcopacy are somewhat different in each communion.

\***Episkopé:** a Greek word meaning “oversight” from which we get the English word “episcopal,” indicating reference to a bishop or governance by bishops. In ecumenical dialogue, the use of the word *episkopé* has become the standard way to refer to the ministry of oversight, which includes, but is not limited to, the office of bishop. This use of *episkopé* has also become a way to invite those churches that have not retained the episcopal office to recognize that the ministry of that office is nevertheless present in and vital to their churches.

**Executive Presbyter/General Presbyter:** a chief administrative staff member employed and called by a presbytery to help provide pastoral care and guidance, administrative functions, and other such duties as determined by a presbytery in order to effectively support the mission and ministries of congregations, validated ministries, and teaching/ruling elders in that presbytery.

**\*Feast of Eucharist:** the Lord's Supper, the word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving," the feast of the Lord's Supper is a meal of thanksgiving. Also known as Holy Communion to denote that in the feasting of the bread and cup, the assembled community is in communion with the triune God and with the Church universal in every time and in every place.

**Full Communion:** an ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship between churches characterized by the following: recognition of each other as churches in which the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered according to the Word of God; withdrawal of any historic condemnation by one side or the other as inappropriate for the life and faith of our churches today; continuation of recognition of each other's Baptism and authorize and encourage the sharing of the Lord's Supper among their members; recognition of each other's various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament; establishment of appropriate channels of consultation and decision-making within the existing structures of the churches; commitment of themselves to an ongoing process of theological dialogue in order to clarify further the common understanding of the faith and foster its common expression in evangelism, witness, and service; pledge themselves to living together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow. (*A Formula of Agreement Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ on Entering into Full Communion on the Basis of "A Common Calling," p. 1*)

**Holy Orders:** also known as ordered ministry, these designate ordained offices into which women and men are called by God and confirmed by councils of the church to serve the people of God. These offices include bishop/priest, pastor, elder, and deacon.

**Interchangeability:** mutual recognition and mutual exchange of ordained ministers between two communions who have been duly authorized and commissioned by their respective ecclesiastical authority (diocesan bishop or presbytery).

**Installation:** a liturgical service whereby a council of the church officially places an ordinand in a particular ministry. An installed ordinand is ready to be commissioned with specific responsibilities and duties.

**\*Koinonia:** a Greek word meaning community, communion, or fellowship.

**\*Legitimate diversity:** legitimate diversity is diversity that does not violate a legitimate norm. Churches differ in what they consider legitimate diversity to include. "The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling—The Canberra Statement" of the World Council of Churches, 1991 states that, "Diversity is illegitimate when, for instance, it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community."

**Minister of Word and Sacrament (also known as a Teaching Elder):** an ordained office in Presbyterian polity to exercise spiritual leadership in and through the councils of the church by the ministries of preaching and teaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and attending to the health of ecclesial life in a ministry context.

**Moderator:** a constitutional office of the various councils of the church whose origin is from the Church of Scotland, representing the unity of the Church in council. The office of moderator is to preside over the proceedings of the appropriate council, guiding the council to discern the will and mind of Christ, ensuring that such deliberation is done “decently and in good order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). The moderator of a session is usually a teaching elder of a local congregation, or a commissioned pastor authorized by a presbytery, or another presbyter authorized by a presbytery. The moderators of a presbytery, synod, and General Assembly are elected by that respective council. The Moderator/Co-Moderators of the General Assembly is an ambassador of the Assembly, representing the “sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.A.2, pp. 6-7).

**Ordered Ministry:** Christ’s ministry and authority exercised through the ministry of the whole people of God, from whom certain women and men are specially called to particular functions in specific offices. The New Testament describes two primary ordered offices and their ordered ministry: the office of deacon to the ordered ministry of *diakonia* and the office of presbyter to the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament (in the case of teaching elder) and the ordered ministry of shared governance (in the case of ruling elder).

**Ordinands:** individuals who are inquiring or candidates for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and who are under care by a session and a presbytery.

**\*Presbyterian and presbyterian:** presbyterian refers to a form of church organization in which the governance of the church is in the hands of the elders (*presbyteros*, Greek). Presbyterian with a capital *P* is the name of particular churches, which characterize themselves by their presbyterian polity and subscribe to the Reformed theological tradition.

**Presbytery:** a governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of an equal number of teaching elders (Ministers of Word and Sacrament) and ruling elders commissioned by the sessions of local congregations in a designated region.

**\*Recognition:** “Accept[ing] the legitimacy and authenticity of other churches as the Church in the dialogical process towards fuller communion” (Timothy T. N. Lim, *Ecclesial Recognition with Hegelian Philosophy, Social Psychology, and Continental Political Theory* [Boston: Brill, 2017], 5).

**Reformed:** a Protestant theological tradition that is “in continuity with the classical Reformed theologians of the sixteenth century like Calvin and Bullinger, for example, and with the confessions of that tradition” (Jane Dempsey Douglass, “What is Reformed Theology?” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1990): 4).

**Ruling elder:** active members in a local congregation who have been elected by a local congregation, and ordained and installed by that congregation’s session to exercise shared spiritual leadership in the session and councils of the church with teaching elders.

**Sacraments:** “the Word of God enacted and sealed in the life of the Church, the body of Christ. They are gracious acts of God, by which Christ Jesus offers his life to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are also human acts of gratitude, by which we offer our lives to God in love and service. The Sacraments are both physical signs and spiritual gifts, including words and actions, surrounded by prayer, in the context of the Church’s common worship. They employ ordinary things—the basic elements of water, bread, and wine—in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God. The Reformed tradition recognizes the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also called Eucharist or Holy Communion) as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal Church” (*The Book of Order*, W-3.0401).

**Session:** a local governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of the pastoral staff and ruling elders of a local congregation.

**Stated Clerk/Clerk of Session:** a constitutional office of the various councils (called a clerk of session in the case of a session) who preserves and defends the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with the moderator of the appropriate council interpret the actions of that council, and insures the accurate recording of the appropriate council’s deliberations. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is understood to be the head of communion, and together with the Moderator/Co-Moderator of the General Assembly represents the unity of the Church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is the chief ecumenical officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is the chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly, one of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**Synod:** “the intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its region. It shall consist of not fewer than three presbyteries within a specific geographic region” (*The Book of Order*, G-3.0401).

**Teaching elder:** see “Minister of Word and Sacrament”.

**World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC):** a global fellowship founded in 2010 with the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council consisting of 233 member churches in 110 countries representing 100 million Christians from the Reformed, Presbyterian, United, Uniting, Congregational, and Waldensian theological traditions. The WCRC secretariat’s headquarters is in Hanover, Germany, and is governed by a General Council that meets every seven years, and between General Councils is governed by an Executive Committee.

**World Council of Churches (WCC):** a global fellowship founded in 1948 consisting of 350 member communions in 110 countries representing over 500 million Christians worldwide. The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are founding members of the WCC. The WCC secretariat’s headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland and is governed by an Assembly that meets every seven years, and between Assemblies is governed by a Central Committee.

\*From the Glossary section of *The One Body Of Christ: Ministry In Service To The Church and The World*, Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue of the United States, Round Eight: 2012-2017. pp. 4-5.



## EPISCOPAL GLOSSARY

**+Anglican Communion:** churches in communion with the See of Canterbury throughout the world. Member churches exercise jurisdictional independence but share a common heritage concerning Anglican identity and commitment to scripture, tradition, and reason as sources of authority. The Episcopal Church is the embodiment of the Anglican Communion in the USA and several other countries.

**+Anglicanism:** this way of life is the system of doctrine, and approach to polity of Christians in communion with the See of Canterbury (the bishop/diocese that is the ecclesiastical center for England and eventually all of the Anglican Communion). The term derives from the word which, in a variety of forms, refers to the people of the British Isles, and especially the English.

**\*\*Archdeacon:** a clergy person with a defined administrative authority delegated by the diocesan bishop.

**#Bishop:** one of the three orders of ordained ministers in the church, bishops are charged with the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the church. They stand in the historic succession, maintaining continuity with the ministry of the early Church and between Christian communities today. Bishops serve as chief pastors of the church, exercising a ministry of oversight and supervision. They are consecrated bishops for life. Since the bishop's ministry is a ministry of oversight, the term "episcopal" (derived from the Greek *episcopos*, "overseer") is applied to matters pertaining to bishops. An "episcopal" church is a church governed by bishops, and "episcopal" services are led by bishops.

**\*\*Bishop-Assistant:** a bishop, ordinarily a full-time member of the diocesan staff, who is appointed rather than elected and assists in carrying out the episcopal ministry of the diocese.

**\*\*Bishop-Assisting:** in common usage, a bishop who aides the diocese by providing additional episcopal services on a temporary basis. Appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the diocesan bishop, or the Standing Committee if there is no bishop.

**\*\*Bishop Coadjutor:** the elected bishop, with the right of succession upon the resignation of the diocesan bishop, who serves with the diocesan bishop.

**\*\*Bishop, Diocesan:** also known as the Ordinary of a diocese. A diocesan bishop, as distinct from a suffragan, assistant, or coadjutor bishop. The term apparently springs from the understanding of "ordinary jurisdiction" which is held in canon law to be the jurisdiction "permanently and irremovably annexed to" the office of bishop. By canon, a bishop may not resign jurisdiction without the consent of the House of Bishops. A bishop must resign from all jurisdiction at the age of seventy-two.

**\*\*Bishop, Presiding:** Chief Pastor and Primate of the Episcopal Church.

**\*\*Bishop Provisional:** if a diocesan bishop resigns with no bishop coadjutor (who has the right of succession) a diocese may call a bishop provisional who serves as the bishop, with full authority, for an interim period of up to three years, until the consecration of a new diocesan bishop.

**\*\*Bishop Suffragan:** a bishop who does not automatically succeed a diocesan bishop. Elected by the diocese to serve indefinitely at the direction of the diocesan bishop.

+**The Book of Common Prayer:** official book of worship of The Episcopal Church. The BCP provides liturgical forms, prayers, and instructions so that all members and orders of The Episcopal Church may appropriately share in common worship. Anglican liturgical piety has been rooted in the Prayer Book tradition since the publication of the first English Prayer Book in 1549. The current and defining edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* for The Episcopal Church was ratified in 1979.

**\*\*The Book of Occasional Services:** book of optional services and texts prepared by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.

**\*\*Canon:** the word has several different meanings in the church.

1) The canon of scripture; 2) Church law; 3) as an ecclesiastical title, a canon may be a member of the clergy or laity on the staff of a cathedral, diocese or other institution, 4) in liturgy, the fixed portion of the Great Thanksgiving.

**\*\*Canon to the Ordinary:** clergy or lay person who serves as assistant to the diocesan bishop.

**\*\*Canonical Residence:** clergy serving under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of a diocese are canonically resident in that diocese. Clergy may move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction pursuant to canonical procedures.

**Church:** the one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**Churches:** fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches.

**church** (lowercase "c"): the local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e. congregation, parish.

**Churches Uniting in Christ:** a covenant relationship among eleven Christian Communion--mainline American denominations (including both predominantly white and predominantly black churches), and was inaugurated on January 20, 2002 in Memphis, Tennessee on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. It is the successor organization to the Consultation on Church Union.<sup>9</sup>

**\*\*Commission on Ministry (COM):** pursuant to Title III, Canon 1, each diocese is required to establish a COM to assist the bishop in determining the present and future needs for ministry in the diocese.

**Consultation on Church Union (COCU):** was an effort on the part of several ecclesial bodies towards church unity in the United States, that began in 1962 and in 2002, it became Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

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<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches\\_Uniting\\_in\\_Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_Uniting_in_Christ)

**Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church:** the Constitution and Canons is the official set of governing rules for The Episcopal Church's bodies (*General Convention: House of Bishops and House of Deputies*). *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* is a part of the *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*.

**\*\*Curate:** typically refers to an assisting priest in a parish.

**\*\*Cure:** the pastoral and geographical responsibility and charge of a member of the clergy.

**\*\*Deacon:** one of three offices to which people can be ordained in The Episcopal Church, along with priests and bishops. The deacon's vocation lies in serving—especially the weak, the poor, the sick, the lonely—and in interpreting to the church the needs and hopes of the world. The sign of the office of deacon is a stole worn over the left shoulder and fastened under the right arm. In the Eucharist, deacons read the gospel, lead the Prayers of the People, introduce the confession, prepare the altar, assist with the distribution of the bread and wine, perform the ablutions, and dismiss the people.

**\*\*Diocese:** a geographical area that serves as the primary unit of organization in The Episcopal Church. A bishop and a legislative body—a convention or council—oversee each diocese.

**\*\*Diocesan Convention:** annual meeting of lay and clerical representatives from the congregations of a diocese to elect members of diocesan committees and deputies to General Convention, make decisions about diocesan policy, conduct other diocesan business (e.g., budget, program) and from time to time, elect a bishop for the diocese.

**\*\*Diocesan Transition Minister:** the clergy or lay member of the diocesan staff responsible for assisting the bishop, worshipping communities and individuals in transition.

**Ecclesial body:** a religious fellowship whose congregations are unified in their observance to its beliefs and traditions.

**\*\*Ecclesiastical Authority:** the responsible individual or body in a church institution. In a diocese, this authority rests with the diocesan bishop. Should the episcopate be vacant or the bishop be incapacitated, the responsibility falls upon the Standing Committee or other bishop.

**The Episcopal Church:** a Christian ecclesial body made up of 111 dioceses or convocations in the United States and seventeen countries; The Episcopal Church is a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

**\*\*Episcopal Church Center:** the churchwide ministries office of The Episcopal Church housing the office of the Presiding Bishop, his or her staff, and other church-related offices. Located in New York City.

**\*\*Executive Council of the Episcopal Church:** the national body that administers the program and policies adopted by the General Convention.

**Ecumenical congregations:** a congregation comprising of at least two or more ecclesial bodies.

**Episcopal/episcopal:** Episcopal refers to being of The Episcopal Church; episcopal is a term referring to bishop, from the Greek *episkopos*, meaning “overseer.” As above, an “episcopal” church is a church governed by bishops, and “episcopal” services are led by bishops.

**Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008:** the Agreement between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was approved by the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008) and ratified by presbyteries in 2009. The 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church approved the Agreement in 2009. Both churches authorized another round of dialogue to continue to address theological and missional issues.

**\*\*General Convention:** the national legislative body of The Episcopal Church. It consists of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies (four lay persons and four clergy persons from each diocese). Convention meets every three years.

**\*\*House of Bishops:** part of the two-house legislature of General Convention. All diocesan, suffragan, coadjutor, assistant, and most resigned and retired bishops are members of this body, which also meets periodically between General Conventions.

**\*\*The Hymnal 1982:** the collection of hymn texts, tunes, and service music authorized for use in The Episcopal Church. Also widely used: *Lift Every Voice and Sing II (LEVAS)*; and *Wonder, Love and Praise*.

**Institution:** occurring in a service of Celebration of a New Ministry, a bishop shares a letter of institution conferring the responsibilities of a priest in charge of a parish.

**\*\*Office for Transition Ministry:** a church-wide office that maintains a database of Episcopal and other clergy and lay professionals in Communion with The Episcopal Church, and the worshipping communities of The Episcopal Church. OTM has a website that allows clergy and lay leaders to search for worshipping communities that are themselves in search, using each other’s gifts, skills and experiences to identify possible opportunities for ministry together in order to assist the church to live into God’s mission in the world.

**\*\*Pastor** (as used in The Episcopal Church): term for a member of the clergy. It evokes one aspect of the priestly role, which is that of pastoral ministry: caring and protective responsibility for the sick, the grieving, the needy, and those in pain. It is a term especially appropriate for bishops, since they are ordained to “feed and tend the flock of Christ,” who is the Good Shepherd. (It does not normally mean a clergy person in charge of a parish as in the ELCA.) The laity shares in the pastoral role of the clergy, and a growing number of parishes have lay pastoral care teams.

**+Priest or presbyter:** from the Greek *presbyteros*, “elder.” In the NT, “presbyter” indicates a leader of the church. The English word “priest” is derived from “presbyter,” and used as a synonym for presbyter. After the Reformation, some churches began to use the term “presbyter” for the minister who preaches the word and administers the sacraments. The Anglican Church used the term “priest” for this order of ministry. The 1979 BCP, and thus The Episcopal Church, uses both terms. For example, directions for the Ordination of a Priest require that “at least two presbyters must be present.” The Catechism notes that “the ministry of a priest or presbyter” is “to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.”

**\*\*Priest, related terms:**

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- **Priest-in-Charge:** practices vary widely among dioceses. In a parish without a rector, the priest-in-charge generally contracts with the vestry, in consultation with the bishop, to perform many of the functions of a rector.
  - **Rector:** elected by the vestry of a parish in consultation with the bishop and serves as the leader of the parish with respect to its spiritual life and mission. In charge of liturgy, music, education, outreach, and pastoral care, the rector has full use of the parish property to carry out his or her office, hires and supervises lay and clerical staff, and is generally entitled to preside at all vestry and parish meetings.
  - **Vicar:** the title applies to the priest-in-charge of a mission congregation, serving at the pleasure of and representing the bishop.
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**\*\*Primate:** the chief bishop in an Anglican Province is called a primate. The term relates to primacy, which in ecclesiastical terms is the status of being first, or presiding, among other bishops.

**\*\*Province:** 1) an internal division of an autonomous national church of the Anglican Communion. There are nine provinces in The Episcopal Church, including overseas jurisdictions; 2) An autonomous national church member of the Anglican Communion.

**Sacrament:** from the Catechism of the 1979 BCP: an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. In The Episcopal Church there are two great sacraments: Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. There are five sacramental rites: confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent, and unction.

**\*\*Standing Committee:** a body that shares the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese with the bishop in certain defined areas (e.g., clergy discipline, property of parishes, ordination). In the absence of a bishop it sometimes becomes the sole ecclesiastical authority. Its members are elected by the diocesan convention. It also serves as the bishop's council of advice.

**+Vestry:** the vestry is the legal representative of an Episcopal parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property. The number of vestry members and the term of office varies from parish to parish. Vestry members are usually elected at the annual parish meeting. The presiding officer of the vestry is the rector.

**+Warden:** officers of a parish. Two wardens are typically selected to serve with members of the vestry. The wardens are generally ranked "senior" and "junior." The senior warden is usually the primary elected lay leader of the congregation, and serves as a principal liaison between the parish and the rector. The junior warden is often given responsibility for the upkeep of the parish buildings and grounds.

+Glossary definitions used or adapted from "*An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians*," Church Publishing, New York, 2000, Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors.

\*\*Glossary definitions used or adapted from the Episcopal Glossary of "Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Clergy between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces" from 2009/2010.

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Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate:  
The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Endorsed by the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee  
January 11, 2023

**Proposal:** An interpretation of *Called to Common Mission* (2000),<sup>1</sup> hereafter “CCM,” in light of the ELCA’s institution of an ordained diaconate (ELCA Churchwide Assembly action, August 2019):

- 1) Based on CCM ¶15 and ¶21, The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) mutually recognize each other’s order of deacons as authentic.
- 2) Based on CCM ¶14, the ELCA continues to acknowledge the authenticity of deacons in TEC. Based on CCM ¶15, TEC now acknowledges the authenticity of deacons/rostered ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies.
- 3) Based on CCM ¶22, TEC and the ELCA acknowledge that each other’s deacons may validly serve in each other’s liturgies. TEC and the ELCA mutually recognize each other’s deacons as interchangeable for occasional ministry or extended service in counterpart ministries and joint ministry settings, subject to the approval of their respective bishops. We propose that the full communion *Orderly Exchange* guidelines for pastors and priests<sup>2</sup> be amended to include exchangeability of deacons.
- 4) Based on CCM ¶9, TEC and the ELCA renew their pledge to jointly undertake “continuing exploration, renewal, and reform”<sup>3</sup> for the purpose of deepening the opportunities for diaconal word and service in both communions and in our full communion relationship.

**Commentary:**

*Historical Background*

In 2001, TEC and the ELCA acknowledged the authenticity of each other’s episcopal and presbyteral orders through their full communion agreement, *Called to Common Mission*.<sup>4</sup> An impediment remained to full exchangeability for one group: Episcopal deacons and their Lutheran diaconal counterparts as then rostered. The Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee addressed the exchangeability of TEC deacons and the ELCA rosters of Word and Service several times after the adoption of CCM but was unable to reach a solution. Since one group (TEC) was viewed as ordained and the other (ELCA) as consecrated or commissioned lay ministers, the gap was too great to bridge.

The ELCA 2016 Churchwide Assembly changed the church’s polity and ecclesiology by unifying its three rostered ministries of word and service<sup>5</sup> into one roster of deacons, and the ELCA 2019

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<sup>1</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Episcopal Church USA, *Called to Common Mission* (2000), [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Called\\_To\\_Common\\_Mission.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Called_To_Common_Mission.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *The Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests Under Called to Common Mission: Principles and Guidelines*, [http://lutheran-episcopal.org/documents/orderly\\_exchange.pdf](http://lutheran-episcopal.org/documents/orderly_exchange.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CCM ¶9.

<sup>4</sup> CCM ¶14, 15, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry and Diaconal Ministers.

Churchwide Assembly confirmed that the entrance rite for this unified order would be ordination. Many ELCA deacons received from the former rosters of Word and Service were consecrated or commissioned with a laying-on of hands by a bishop; some were not, under former liturgical practices. Recognizing the diaconal character of all the former rosters of Word and Service in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies, the ELCA received them into the ELCA's roster of ordained deacons. The ELCA's ordination rite for deacons now includes a laying-on of hands by a bishop. The ELCA's actions have now brought the ELCA's diaconate into congruence with TEC's diaconate. The theological impediments to full exchangeability of TEC and ELCA deacons have now been removed.

Under our full communion partnership, TEC is now invited to recognize the authenticity of all these ELCA deacons in the future. There is historical precedent in the broader Anglican Communion and in TEC for this reception: both the recommendations of the Lambeth Conference in 1968<sup>6</sup> and the canonical resolutions of the Episcopal Church General Convention in 1970<sup>7</sup> provided for the reception of (consecrated) deaconesses into the order of deacons. Neither implemented additional requirements for deaconesses to be made deacons or distinguished between those consecrated deaconesses who were "grandmothered in" as deacons and those ordained after the new canon's passage.

*Bringing the Diaconate Into Full Communion*

***Building upon the full communion agreement and over 20 years of living into common mission together, this proposal recognizes and celebrates that our two churches now hold a common theology and ecclesiology for recognition and exchangeability of ELCA and TEC deacons.***

TEC and the ELCA now hold a common vision of the diaconate. Both envision their deacons as equipping the *diakonia* (service rooted in the word of God) of the church as a whole; this *diakonia* of all believers<sup>8</sup> is one of the primary goals of CCM. TEC and the ELCA jointly affirmed in CCM that "all members of Christ's church are commissioned for ministry through baptism."<sup>9</sup> Both churches' theology of the diaconate is grounded in the sacrament of baptism. The diaconate is the order to which the church confers responsibility for reminding the people of God that a call to active *diakonia* constitutes a Christian baptismal identity. "The deacon symbolizes the service of Jesus Christ to which we are all called in baptism," declares a paper presented in 2017 to the ELCA Entrance Rite Discernment Group.<sup>10</sup> Deacons and laypeople together serve roles of worship leadership, providing yet another opportunity to highlight the

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<sup>6</sup> *The Lambeth Conference 1968: Resolutions and Reports* (SPCK and Seabury Press, 1968), 39, 105-106.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Otherwise Known as the Episcopal Church, Held in Houston, Texas, From October Eleventh to Twenty-Second, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1970, With Constitution and Canons* (New York: 1970), 249, 270-71, 769-70.

<sup>8</sup> See Craig L. Nesson, "A Lutheran Theology for *Diakonia* in North American Contexts," in Godwin Ampony, et al., *International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2021), 283-4.

<sup>9</sup> CCM ¶16.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Lathrop, "Diaconal Ministry: The Entrance Rite Question, Reflections From a Consideration of Symbolic Meaning and Ritual Practice," [bit.ly/3GDZm5x](https://bit.ly/3GDZm5x)

intersections of the church and the world. Both groups have experienced a maturing of diaconal identity and an increase in diaconal vocations.

The ELCA and TEC have together come to a place where they were called to be over two decades ago, when they entered into full communion. Each church has evolved in its understanding and practice of the diaconate, and now we have come to convergence in this ministry. In Canada the Waterloo Declaration of 2001, which established full communion relations between the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), similarly commits those two churches “to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry.”<sup>11</sup> With the final action in 2022 affirming the “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion” among the ACC, the ELCIC, the ELCA and TEC,<sup>12</sup> these four churches have further committed themselves to “establish policies and procedures to facilitate exchange of ministry” across the continental border of Canada and the U.S., including the possibility of the exchange of deacons.<sup>13</sup>

Under the U.S. full communion agreement, *Called to Common Mission*, we hereby propose that TEC and ELCA approve each other’s deacons to serve liturgically and to serve under call in each other’s parishes and other ministry contexts under the same principles of *Orderly Exchange* that govern pastors/priests:

This orderly exchange of [deacons] is for the sake of participation in the mission of God and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. Exchangeability, as part of common ecumenical commitment to collaborate as members of the one body of Christ, can enhance shared ministry and mission by encouraging more flexible, responsive and effective placement of [deacons]. Thus, orderly exchange encourages those in our churches responsible for ministerial placement to invite the service of [deacons] available in other churches and make use of their gifts; it encourages [deacons] in each church to respond to such invitations or, where appropriate, to express their openness to serve in another church.<sup>14</sup>

“As our churches live in full communion,” states *Called to Common Mission*, “our ordained ministries will still be regulated by the constitutional framework of each church.”<sup>15</sup> Nothing in this proposal would require any change in the two churches’ differing polities around the ordination of priests/pastors. EC may continue the practice of ordination to the transitional

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<sup>11</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, “Called to Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration),” 2001, [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102184/waterloo\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102184/waterloo_declaration.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The Episcopal Church, “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion,” April 1, 2022, [www.episcopalchurch.org/eir/memorandum-of-mutual-recognition-of-relations-of-full-communion/](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eir/memorandum-of-mutual-recognition-of-relations-of-full-communion/)

<sup>13</sup> A process for enabling the transferability of deacons between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has not yet been formally pursued.

<sup>14</sup> This quote is from the 2021 proposed revision of *Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests*.

<sup>15</sup> CCM ¶18.



diaconate prior to ordination to the priesthood, whereas the ELCA may continue its practice of direct ordination of pastors into the office of Word and Sacrament.

*Called to Common Mission* states, “both churches acknowledge that the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with all other ministries, is in need of continuing exploration, renewal, and reform, which they pledge themselves to undertake in consultation with one another.”<sup>16</sup> Exchangeability of calls will deepen the theology and practice of *diakonia* in both churches and may facilitate a deepening dialogue on *diakonia* with other ecumenical partners’ expressions of diaconate as well.

This recognition and declaration of exchangeability will provide the following opportunities:

- a) The preparation of TEC and ELCA deacons will be enhanced by mutual sharing of competencies, educational resources and processes for formation. Well-established educational institutions in both traditions offer excellent programs and certifications specifically designed for diaconal ministry.
- b) The ELCA and TEC will want to coordinate their respective guidelines for call and deployment. Diaconal exchangeability under this agreement will be enhanced by careful attention to:
  - Assessment of equivalencies in areas of specialization, where applicable.
  - Training in the liturgical practices of the hosting church.
  - Addressing divergent policies and practices regarding compensation.
- c) Given that TEC and the ELCA have different liturgical roles for deacons, “a spirit of graciousness and commonality,”<sup>17</sup> pastoral sensitivity and clarity of expectation are encouraged, especially in planning ecumenical events.
- d) The deacon should be rooted in the community of worship in order to live into the fullness of their diaconal identity as those ordained to ensure that the people of God fulfill their own diaconal responsibilities.

Our churches are called to common mission, to work together to reveal our unity in Christ,<sup>18</sup> linking the church and the world. We are part of a global and ecumenical movement of the Spirit that is opening the ears of the church to the desperate cries of the world and pushing us beyond our Sunday-morning gatherings back out into the world in cross-shaped *diakonia*. As an order rooted in mission, a shared diaconate will advance CCM’s witness. Coordinating our expressions of *diakonia* will be a gift to the whole church and will offer a more coherent witness to the world. Collaborative diaconal ministries focused on the world’s needs will serve both churches’ outreach in the post-pandemic evangelism environment.

As our shared understanding of the diaconate continues to evolve, the role of deacons is becoming more clearly focused not only on service among the poor, the weak, the sick and the

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<sup>16</sup> CCM ¶9.

<sup>17</sup> *Guidelines & Worship Resources for the Celebration of Full Communion: Lutheran – Episcopal* (2001), [bit.ly/3ivvDUE](http://bit.ly/3ivvDUE)

<sup>18</sup> The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), Eucharistic Prayer D, p. 375.

lonely but also on justice and advocacy on their behalf; not only on interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world but also on teaching and equipping others for ministry; and not only working under the authority of the bishop but also providing leadership within the councils of church and society alike. This is our common diaconal mission: for the Spirit to use us as participants in and means for God's mission of hope, healing and reconciliation in God's beloved world.

Roster of the Diaconate Implementation Team (2021-2022)

Deacon Mitzi Budde, Chair (ELCA deacon, member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee)

The Rev. Deacon Maylanne Maybee (Anglican Church of Canada deacon, Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission representative)

The Rev. Deacon Lori Mills-Curran (Episcopal deacon, former executive director of the Association for Episcopal Deacons)

Deacon John Weit (ELCA deacon, ELCA executive for worship)

The Rev. William Gafkjen (ELCA bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod; chair of the ELCA Word and Service task force)

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee (Episcopal bishop, Diocese of Milwaukee) (until Oct. 31, 2022)

1                                   **A Gift to the World: Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness**  
2                                   The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church  
3                                   A Proposal for Full Communion  
4                                   Edits to October 2018

5  
6    *Preamble*  
7

8    In the fractured human community there is a great need for the realization of the unity among the  
9    followers of Christ Jesus. This proposal for full communion between The Episcopal Church and  
10   The United Methodist Church is an effort to bring our churches into closer partnership in the  
11   mission and witness to the love of God and thus labor together for the healing of divisions  
12   among Christians and for the well-being of all. The vision of Revelation 22 is of the tree of life  
13   planted on both sides of a river “and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”  
14   (Revelation 22:2) Faithful to Jesus’ prayer that his disciples be one so that the world may believe  
15   (John 17: 20-23), may this proposal be an expression of God’s will for the churches.  
16

17    1.     *Introduction: The Nature of the Communion We Seek*  
18

19    Since 2002, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have been engaged in  
20    bilateral dialogue, setting full communion as the goal. We understand the relationship we seek as  
21    follows:  
22

23                   Full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct  
24                   ecclesiastical bodies in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing  
25                   the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the  
26                   essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of  
27                   each would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and ordained  
28                   ministers may officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically, this includes  
29                   transferability of members, mutual recognition and interchangeability of  
30                   ministries, mutual enrichment by one another’s traditions of hymnody and  
31                   patterns of liturgy, freedom to participate in each other’s ordinations and  
32                   installations of clergy, including bishops, and structures for consultation to  
33                   express, strengthen, and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the  
34                   glory of God and the salvation of the world.  
35

36    We seek to draw closer in mission and ministry, grounded in sufficient agreement in the  
37    essentials of Christian faith and order and assisted by interchangeability of ordained ministries.  
38    This full communion agreement is not proposing a merger of our churches. Yet we seek to live  
39    into the vision given to us by Jesus, who prayed that we may all be one (John 17:21), and strive  
40    for the day when we may be drawn into more visible unity for the sake of mission and ministry,  
41    “so that the world may believe.” We see this relationship of full communion as a step on the  
42    journey, and trust in the Holy Spirit to continue to guide us in more visible expressions of unity.  
43    We are blessed in that neither of our churches, or their predecessor bodies, have officially  
44    condemned one another, nor have they formally called into question the faith, the ministerial  
45    orders, or the sacraments of the other church.  
46

47 2. *Background: Anglican-Methodist Dialogues*

48  
49 The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Church bilateral dialogue began in 2002. In 2006, The  
50 United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church entered into a relationship of Interim  
51 Eucharistic Sharing, a step on the way towards full communion that allows for clergy of the two  
52 churches to share in the celebration of the Lord's Supper under prescribed guidelines.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, it  
53 issued a summary of its theological work, *A Theological Foundation for Full Communion*  
54 *Between The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church*. Both of these documents  
55 have been sent to bishops and deputies to General Convention in The Episcopal Church and to  
56 the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, and should be read in conjunction with  
57 this proposal. They are available online at <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sceir/methodist>.

58  
59 The first round Dialogue Committee noted in *A Theological Foundation for Full Communion*  
60 that it sees no church dividing issues between the two churches.

61  
62 The second round of bilateral dialogue commenced in 2015 to prepare the way for a full  
63 communion proposal to be presented to the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and  
64 the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to assist members in both  
65 churches to understand the closer relationship and its relevance to the lives of persons in local  
66 communities in which it will be lived out.

67  
68 This proposal for full communion is the fruit of over fifty years of formal dialogues between our  
69 two churches. In the 1950s, there were substantive conversations between the (then) Methodist  
70 Church and the (then) Protestant Episcopal Church. However, these bilateral conversations were  
71 set aside in favor of both churches' membership in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU).  
72 For nearly forty years, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church related to one  
73 another by means of our participation in COCU. Following COCU's reconstitution as Churches  
74 Uniting in Christ (CUIC) in 1999, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church each  
75 decided in 2000 to commence the first direct bilateral dialogue with one another in nearly fifty  
76 years.

77  
78 The United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue also benefits from the fact that we are members,  
79 through the Anglican Communion and the World Methodist Council, of an international  
80 dialogue, and are informed by the fruits of those conversations. The first round of an  
81 international dialogue mutually sponsored by the World Methodist Council and the Anglican  
82 Communion produced a theological statement, *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, issued in  
83 1996. This landmark document noted that Anglicans and Methodists shared the "core doctrine"  
84 of the Christian faith, and need "no further doctrinal assurances" from one another.<sup>2</sup> Both church  
85 families inaugurated a second round of conversations in 2007, the Anglican Methodist  
86 International Consultation on Unity and Mission (AMICUM), and have issued a report, *Into All*  
87 *the World, Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches*.

88

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<sup>1</sup> See Resolution A055 from the 2006 General Convention and Resolution 81456-IC-NonDis of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, particularly ¶ 15-17.

89 3. *Relationship with Historically African American Methodist Churches*

90  
91 We are cognizant of the fact that The United Methodist Church is one of several expressions of  
92 Methodism. Our two churches have been in dialogue with historically African American  
93 Methodist churches for nearly forty years. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME),  
94 African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion (AME Zion), and Christian Methodist Episcopal  
95 Church (CME) have been constituent members of COCU and CUIC along with The Episcopal  
96 Church and The United Methodist Church. Through the Pan Methodist Commission, The United  
97 Methodist Church, AME, AME Zion, CME, African Union Methodist Protestant Church  
98 (AUMP), and Union American Methodist Episcopal Church (UAME) worked to formalize a full  
99 communion agreement among these churches in 2012. The United Methodist Church and The  
100 Episcopal Church have consulted with the AME, AME Zion, and CME churches (in 2006, 2008,  
101 and 2009).

102  
103 The United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue laments that church divisions in the US have reflected  
104 racial and socioeconomic divisions. The Dialogue Committees have been adamant that  
105 conversations between Anglicans and Methodists must address racism as a church dividing issue.  
106 In addition to our common forebears John and Charles Wesley, we also have common forebears  
107 in Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, both members of St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church  
108 in Philadelphia. Due to policies of racial exclusion, Richard Allen would go on to found what  
109 would become the African Methodist Episcopal Church, while Absalom Jones would become the  
110 first African American priest ordained in The Episcopal Church. We recognize the lasting sin of  
111 racism in our society and our churches, and affirm the need for ongoing repentance, truth telling,  
112 and work for racial justice and healing.

113  
114 4. *Foundational Principles*

115  
116 We seek the greater unity between our two churches because we believe this is a mandate  
117 grounded in Scripture. Jesus calls us into unity for the sake of mission and ministry, so that the  
118 world may believe:

119  
120 I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who  
121 will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one (John  
122 17:20-21a).

123  
124 Our unity is also grounded in our common baptism:

125  
126 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one  
127 hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and  
128 Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all (Ephesians  
129 4:4-6).

130  
131 The United Methodist Church engages other Christian churches on the basis of its constitutional  
132 affirmation that “The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness  
133 is a hindrance to its mission in that world” (2016 *Book of Discipline*, Constitution, Preamble).  
134 The United Methodist Church understands itself “to be part of Christ’s universal church when by

135 adoration, proclamation, and service we become conformed to Christ. We are initiated and  
136 incorporated into this community of faith by baptism” (2016 *Discipline*, ¶102, page 49).  
137 Therefore, The United Methodist Church “believes that the Lord of the church is calling  
138 Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity  
139 at all levels of church life” (2016 *Discipline*, Constitution, Article VI, ¶6).

140  
141 The United Methodist Church seeks formal full communion relationships with other Christian  
142 churches based on the following: a mutual affirmation of one another’s membership in the one,  
143 holy, catholic and apostolic church “described in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the  
144 church’s historic creeds,” recognition of the authenticity of one another’s sacraments and  
145 Christian ministry, and a recognition of the validity of each other’s offices of ministry (2016  
146 *Discipline*, ¶431.1). These relationships commit us to active sharing in mission and ministry as a  
147 visible witness to Christian unity.

148  
149 For over a century, The Episcopal Church has engaged in dialogue with other churches on the  
150 basis of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, taking agreement on these foundation principles as  
151 the essentials for sharing in mission and ministry with other Christian communions:

152  
153         The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as “containing all things necessary  
154         to salvation,” and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

155  
156         The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient  
157         statement of the Christian faith.

158  
159         The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord  
160         — ministered with unfailing use of Christ’s Words of Institution, and of the elements  
161         ordained by Him.

162  
163         The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the  
164         varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into Unity.

165  
166 It is important to note the term used in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral is “historic  
167 episcopate.” In its ecumenical dialogues, The Episcopal Church has made important  
168 clarifications regarding the historic episcopate, historic succession, and apostolic succession.  
169 This term is referenced in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as “the historic episcopate,” with  
170 the two terms “historic episcopate” and “historic succession” understood synonymously.

171  
172 In addition, a major ecumenical breakthrough has been acknowledging the differences between  
173 “apostolic succession” and “historic episcopate.” We understand “apostolic succession” to be  
174 succession in the apostolic faith—that is, to believe, preach, and teach the faith that the apostles’  
175 held. Some churches have retained the apostolic succession of the faith proclaimed by the  
176 apostles as well as bishops in historic succession; others have not. The United Methodist Church  
177 and The Episcopal Church have affirmed the relationship between episcopacy and apostolic  
178 succession as described in the seminal ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*  
179 (1982):

180  
181 The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of  
182 the Church as a whole...The orderly transmission of the ordained ministry is therefore a  
183 powerful expression of the continuity of the Church throughout history; it also underlines the  
184 calling of the ordained minister as guardian of the faith... Under the particular historical  
185 circumstances of the growing Church in the early centuries, the succession of bishops  
186 became one of the ways, together with the transmission of the Gospel and the life of the  
187 community, in which the apostolic tradition of the Church was expressed. This succession  
188 was understood as serving, symbolizing and guarding the continuity of the apostolic faith and  
189 communion.<sup>4</sup>

190  
191 Both churches affirm the historic episcopate, in the language of the *Baptism, Eucharist and*  
192 *Ministry* statement, as a “sign, but not a guarantee, of the catholicity, unity, and continuity of the  
193 church;” and that the historic episcopate is always in a process of reform in the service of the  
194 Gospel.

195 The United Methodist Church provides episcopacy through an “itinerant general superintendency.”  
196 The Council of Bishops provides oversight to the spiritual and temporal work of the church and  
197 that bishops are elected in regional representative conferences and subject to assignment.

198  
199 We declare that we recognize one another as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic  
200 church in which the Gospel is rightly preached and taught; and that the basic teaching of each  
201 respective church is consonant with the Gospel and is sufficiently compatible.

## 202 Affirmations

203 Both The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church affirm  
204 common doctrines and practices on the basis of our authoritative historic  
205 documents and formularies:

206  
207 Our churches proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

208 Our churches worship one God as the divine Trinity of Father, Son,  
209 and Holy Spirit, and we baptize those who enter the Christian  
210 community in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

211 Our churches affirm the Holy Scriptures as “containing all things  
212 necessary for salvation,” and as the primary rule for the life of the  
213 church.

214 Our churches affirm and use the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds as  
215 sufficient summaries of the Christian faith.

216 Our churches understand and practice the sacrament of holy baptism  
217 as initiation into the life of Christ through the Church.

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<sup>4</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, ¶¶ M35 and M36.

218 Our churches understand and practice the sacrament of the Eucharist  
219 (the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion) as a means of divine grace  
220 that sustains and deepens our faith.

221 Our churches continue to worship in ways that reflect our common  
222 liturgical and sacramental roots in our authorized liturgies.

223 Our churches affirm the role of bishops as leaders of the life, work,  
224 and mission of the church, as symbols of unity, and as guiding and  
225 maintaining the church’s apostolic faith and work.

226 Our churches affirm the gifts and ministries of all persons as  
227 grounded in the grace given in baptism.

228 Our churches have worked in the last half century to restore the  
229 office of deacon as a permanent order for servant ministry in the life  
230 of the church.

231 Our churches affirm the need for prayer and holiness of heart and  
232 life as ways of growth in the Christian faith.

233 Our churches pursue social action and justice as inherent practices  
234 of Christian discipleship.

235 Our churches affirm the unity of the church as the will of Christ for  
236 the sake of mission, service and evangelism.

237 Our churches affirm that the scriptures are to be understood today in  
238 the light of reasoned reflection on our contemporary experience.

239 From *Theological Foundation for Full Communion*, pp. 14-15.

240 5. *The Ministry of Lay Persons*  
241

242 Our churches believe that the ministry of all people is grounded in baptism, where we share in  
243 Christ’s eternal priesthood. We recognize one another’s baptisms into the one, holy, catholic, and  
244 apostolic church. In addition, over the years, we have developed a number of lay ministries.  
245 From its beginning as a movement in the Church of England, Methodism has recognized the  
246 central importance of lay leadership. In The United Methodist Church, every lay person is called  
247 by virtue of baptism to participate in the mission of the Church (2016 *Discipline*, ¶¶126, 129).  
248 The Church affirms that “the ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ’s  
249 outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling,  
250 active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (2016 *Discipline*, ¶127). Lay leaders serve at  
251 congregational, district, and conference levels. Lay persons may be trained and certified as lay  
252 servants, lay speakers, lay missionaries, lay ministers and as Deaconesses and Home Missioners.  
253

254 The Catechism of The Episcopal Church states that “The ministers of the Church are lay persons,  
255 bishops, priests, and deacons” (*Book of Common Prayer*, p.855). Baptism is understood as  
256 foundation for the ministry of all the baptized, as the people pray that the newly baptized  
257 “Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal



258 priesthood” (BCP, p. 308). In the Episcopal Church, persons may be trained and licensed as a  
259 Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist,  
260 and Catechist. The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church acknowledge the  
261 interchangeability of one another’s lay ministries, always according to the standards and polity of  
262 the Book of Discipline and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.

263

264 6. *The Ministry of Deacons*

265

266 The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have witnessed a revival of the office  
267 of deacon. There are persons ordained to a ministry of Word and Service, serving as icons of the  
268 servant ministry of Jesus Christ. As a result of the actions taken by both churches in ¶ 9, we  
269 affirm the mutual interchangeability of deacons, always according to the standards and polity of  
270 each church. We also note that The Episcopal Church has retained the office of deacon for those  
271 persons called to the priesthood, while The United Methodist Church no longer ordains persons  
272 called to be elders as deacons.

273

274 7. *The Ministry of Presbyters/Elders*

275

276 Both of our churches ordain persons to the office of presbyter to exercise a ministry of Word and  
277 Sacrament. In The Episcopal Church, the terms presbyter and priest are most commonly used. In  
278 The United Methodist Church the synonymous term elder is used (though presbyter is used by  
279 some member churches of the World Methodist Council). The Episcopal Church speaks of  
280 clergy “in good standing,” either canonically resident in a diocese or licensed to preside in a  
281 particular diocese. The United Methodist Church speaks of elders “in full connection.” We  
282 affirm the mutual interchangeability of priests/presbyters in good standing and elders in full  
283 connection, always according to the standards and polity of each church.

284

285 8. *The Ministry of Bishops*

286

287 We acknowledge and recognize that both churches have adapted the episcopacy to particular  
288 circumstances of mission, ministry, and witness. Following the American Revolution, The  
289 Episcopal Church adapted the office of bishop to its new missional context: bishops were elected  
290 by representative bodies (Diocesan Conventions) and exercised oversight in conjunction with  
291 clergy and laypersons. After the American Revolution, Methodists also adapted the episcopal  
292 office to the missional needs of their ministerial circumstances and settings. Early Methodism  
293 adapted the office of bishop as an itinerant general superintendency, and the name of the largest  
294 Methodist body incorporated the word: Methodist Episcopal Church, reflecting this choice of  
295 episcopal governance. The United Methodist Church includes among its antecedent  
296 denominations the Methodist Protestant Church resulting from a merger in 1939. The Methodist  
297 Protestant Church incorporated the Methodist episcopacy at that time as it did not have the office  
298 of bishop in its structure. In 1968, The United Methodist Church was created through the merger  
299 of the Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which also had bishops,  
300 at which time the churches’ episcopacies were brought together into a unified whole.

301

302 In The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church, bishops are consecrated by other  
303 bishops and ordain presbyters/elders and deacons. They exercise oversight in a specific

304 geographic area—the diocese or annual conference—and in conjunction with clergy and lay  
305 persons.

306  
307 We affirm the ministry of bishops in The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church to  
308 be adaptations of the episcopate to the needs and concerns of the post-Revolutionary missional  
309 context. We recognize the ministries of our bishops as fully valid and authentic.<sup>5</sup>

310  
311 We lament any ways, whether intentionally or unintentionally, explicitly or implicitly, that  
312 Episcopalians may have considered the ministerial orders of the United Methodist Church or its  
313 predecessor bodies to be lacking God’s grace.

314  
315 It is our hope and prayer that in this full communion proposal we may heal these divisions, right  
316 the sin of separation from the 1780s, and share in these mutual adaptations of the episcopate for  
317 the greater unity of the church in mission and ministry.

318  
319 9. *Actions of Both Churches*

320  
321 *Action concerning elders and deacons in full connection of The United Methodist Church*

322  
323 Having affirmed in this proposal the full authenticity of existing ordained ministries in The  
324 United Methodist Church, having reached sufficient agreement in faith with the same Church,  
325 having declared one another to be members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church  
326 (A055, 2006 General Convention), and having agreed that the threefold ministry of Bishops,  
327 Presbyters, and Deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained  
328 ministry shared corporately within the two Churches in full communion, The Episcopal Church  
329 authorizes service of United Methodist deacons and elders as permitted under Article VIII of the  
330 Constitution, which permits the service of clergy not ordained by bishops authorized to confer  
331 holy orders that are “designated as part of the Covenant or Instrument by which full communion  
332 was established, shall be eligible to officiate under this Article.” By sharing in the historic  
333 episcopate, we will have fulfilled all four elements of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadilateral. The  
334 purpose of this action will be to recognize the authenticity of elders and deacons in The United  
335 Methodist Church and to permit the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all United  
336 Methodist elders in full connection as priests and all United Methodist deacons in full connection  
337 as deacons in the Episcopal Church without any further ordination or re-ordination or  
338 supplemental ordination whatsoever, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved  
339 invitation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Into All the World*, the 2014 report of the international Anglican-Methodist dialogue, includes an extensive discussion of the distinct exercise of *episcopé* in the Anglican and Methodist traditions (¶¶75-127), concluding that “in light of everything that we have learned about each other...there are no church dividing differences between us in faith, in ordered ministry, in the succession of such ministries, and in the value of episcopacy.... To be plain, only one thing remains for churches in our two traditions in order to manifest our unity in Jesus Christ through the interchangeability of ordained ministry, namely for Methodists and Anglicans to come together under the sign of the historic episcopate, for that represents the larger history of transmission of which Methodist Churches are already a part” (¶¶123-124).

<sup>6</sup> Authorized through Article VIII of the Constitution, this recognition is based on acceptance of all points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadilateral, including sharing in the historic episcopate, and is consistent with

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*Action concerning priests and deacons of the Episcopal Church*

Upon adoption of this agreement by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church and the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, all priests and deacons of the Episcopal Church are granted full interchangeability and reciprocity as elders and deacons, respectively, in The United Methodist Church without any further action, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation. There are no restrictions requiring a temporary suspension.

The two churches pledge to draw closer together by mutually honoring their respective adaptations of the episcopate according to the following pattern:

*Actions concerning bishops of both churches.*

To share in our mutual adaptations of the episcopate, to embody our conviction that our ministries of bishops are fully valid and authentic, and to broaden and deepen our ecumenical partnerships, both churches commit to the following actions:

The United Methodist Church pledges that, effective January 1, 2022,<sup>7</sup> consecrations of United Methodist bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full communion partners with The Episcopal Church (the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). One of these three shall be a bishop in the Episcopal Church. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands.

The Episcopal Church pledges that, effective January 1, 2022, ordinations and consecrations of Episcopal bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full communion partners with The United Methodist Church (the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and with at least one United Methodist bishop present. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands.

10. *Joint Commission*

To assist in joint planning for mission, both churches will authorize the establishment of a joint commission, fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches.

This Commission will be charged with planning an appropriate liturgy to celebrate the full communion inaugurated by this agreement. This liturgy will acknowledge the pain of division, call for reconciliation and forgiveness for any sins of the past, and look with hope to celebrate

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broader Anglican practice. Furthermore, in 2014, the Church of Ireland recognized Methodist presbyters (elders) as eligible for service as part of a process of sharing in the historic episcopate adopted by the Methodist Church in Ireland, and the Church of England is proposing recognition of Methodist presbyters (elders) as part of sharing in the historic episcopate with the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

<sup>7</sup> This date assumes an affirmative vote at the 2021 General Convention of The Episcopal Church and 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. It may need to be adjusted to reflect the year of the actual endorsement and acceptance of this proposal by General Convention and General Conference.

378 the common mission and witness to which we commit ourselves.

379

380 Its purpose will also be consultative, to facilitate mutual support and advice as well as common  
381 decision making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face  
382 together in the future. The joint commission will work with the appropriate boards, committees,  
383 commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and  
384 liturgical matters as may arise, always subject to approval by the appropriate decision-making  
385 bodies of the two churches.

386

387 *11. Other Relationships*

388

389 The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church agree to cultivate and maintain active  
390 partnership and consultation with one another in the promotion of unity with other churches and  
391 closer relations with other faith traditions. Ecumenical and interreligious agreements entered into  
392 by one church represented in this agreement with another church or religious group shall not be  
393 understood to impose or imply any formal relationship with the other.

394

395 *12. Conclusion*

396

397 We give thanks for the gift of unity that is given us through the love of Christ Jesus. We rejoice  
398 that this relationship will empower us to more authentically witness to the gospel.

399

400 Charles Wesley, a priest in the Church of England, and co-leader with his brother John in the  
401 Methodist movement in eighteenth-century England, wrote:

402

403       Blest be the dear uniting love  
404       that will not let us part;  
405       our bodies may far off remove,  
406       we still are one in heart.

407

408       We all are one who him receive,  
409       and each with each agree,  
410       in him the One, the Truth we live,  
411       blest point of unity!

412

413       Partakers of the Savior's grace,  
414       the same in mind and heart,  
415       nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,  
416       nor life, nor death can part.