

# **Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee Meeting – May 26 & 27, 2021**

Notes gathered and submitted by Stewart Lucas, edited by Kristen Opalinski

## **Proposed Agenda (see appendix)**

### **Session 1:**

#### **Opening Prayers & Meditation by Bishop Sparks**

*How will we remain focused today so as to receive wisdom from creation?*

**Attendees:** Douglas Sparks, Donald Kreiss, Salmoon Bashir (TEC Intern), Hank Jeannel (TEC Intern), Nancy McGrath Green, Natalie Hall, Manisha Dostert\* (new from ELCA this meeting), Mitzi Budde, Stewart Lucas, Margaret Rose (staff), Richard Mammana (staff), Kathryn Lohre (staff) Kristen Opalinski (staff)

\* Manisha Dostert, Bloomfield Hills, MI – Lutheran pastor serving in Episcopal Church (Christ Church Cranbrook)

#### **Where have we seen hope and challenge to the Ecumenical movement?**

Manisha: Federated Congregations received two different messages from Lutheran and Episcopal bishops during pandemic. Episcopal bishops gave ‘directives,’ while Lutheran bishops did not do so. It was hard to know who to ‘obey’ and how to best follow through. (challenge)

Nancy: Some denominations opened, others did not. Some members went to those who were open, resulting in lost members in some cases. (challenge)

Kathryn: We have seen hope in digital collaboration across denominations. The recent George Floyd vigil for example with six different bishops taking part. (hope)

Mitzi: Weekly prayer and worship groups on Zoom with 12 folks from around the world. Also, a Lutheran – Episcopal conference coming up in Missouri in October with several diocese and Central States Synods plan to take part. (hope)

Kristen: Young adults have been able to gather virtually and have a voice with greater sense of accessibility. (hope)

Margaret: Would like to look at unity more broadly. When we vote it’s not about just hands on heads but looking at our full communion possibilities in larger context. How we live life as followers? (hope and challenge)

Stewart: Excited about Campus Ministries in 25 or more Lutherpalian college contexts. (hope)

Don: It was hard crossing the ecumenical bridge in terms of who wanted just to worship, no matter what the situation, and other denominations that wanted to make sure the least of these are tended to, especially the vulnerable. (challenge)

### **Orderly Exchange of Ministers**

Richard had been working on that with Kathryn Johnson. There is some concern over voting privileges in synod assembly and diocesan convention settings. This need to be reviewed by Sharon Anderson for canonical requirements. Manisha reflected that the diocesan convention needed to be changed to allow her (Lutheran) to vote in diocesan convention and election of new bishop. Kathryn – Secretary (ELCA) is looking into other changes that need to be made to agree with constitutional changes. As we look at 20 years, we need this review and make this document more user friendly. Doug said that in 2018 that Canons were changed to make sure ELCA clergy were included to have voice and vote. It is time for dioceses to get their canons up to date. Wider church canons supersede any of these. Mary Kostel – attorney for PB of TEC to look at this.

Other needs: Templates for Federated/Union agreements, bylaws. We need updates to Called to Common Mission (CCM), with regard to deacons.

**Churches beyond Borders:** Formerly the “four-way”. ELCA, TEC, Anglican Church in Canada (ACoc), ELCA in Canada (ELCIC)

Now renamed with new logo and branding. Work this year has been sharing staff counterparts around slavery and repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. Have moved forward with Memorandum of Mutual Recognition. The memorandum remains to be approved by TEC General Convention 2022 in Baltimore, having been approved by the other three. Kathryn reports that staff has met even more regularly virtually. How do we jumpstart process of reception of clergy and church members and how we live this out ‘on the ground?’ Heads of church have regularly offered shared seasonal and commemoration-centered messages. Will be inviting three additional voices from each to amplify message to eliminate gender-based violence. Canadian partners seem to have much to share around indigenous ministries and historical reflection, while US partners have much to share about challenges of racial reconciliation.

### **Session 2: 12 – 2 pm est**

**Celebrating 20 years:** Mitzi Budde’s post on the ELCA EIR Perspectives blog:

<https://blogs.elca.org/eirr/called-to-common-mission-the-lutheran-episcopal-full-communion-partnership-at-20/>

There is a sense that we don’t want another big pomp and circumstance service, but to instead highlight what is working and figure out ways to support this work going forward. Questions that need focus at this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary junction are:

1. What resources do the people doing this work need?
2. What kind of ecumenical education are we doing with bishops and new clergy?

Challenges to Ecumenical Partnerships – a ‘salon’ for Episcopal College for Bishops June 29, 2021.

Hank and Salmoon are working on a ‘one-pager’ of LECC work for Episcopal Bishop’s resource page.

### **Lamb of God, Ft. Myers, Florida**

A union congregation, formerly known as federated. One parish, one ordained leader. Doug and Don were invited in as the local Lutheran pastor followed an Episcopal priest who left the church around misconduct issues. The Lutheran pastor did appropriate interim work including reviewing financial matters. They discovered a discrepancy between benevolence to the Synod and apportionment / allocation to the Diocese. The Episcopal bishop and others discovered that the bylaws and agreements defined membership in various ways. Attention was not paid to parity among giving to Synod and Diocese. Need better templates to make sure this is addressed in agreements beforehand to prevent conflict. When leadership transitions, it is helpful to have guidelines in place that continue. We have a disparity between how these congregations are treated. We also need major adjustments to parochial reports. There was also anxiety in this situation from the Episcopal bishop around the liturgy and its lack of adherence to the *Book of Common Prayer*. This situation at Lamb of God may end in mediation.

Kathryn: we need boilerplate docs and best practices of what to do when. Issues to make sure you address ahead of time and at certain points along the way.

**1:15-2:00 pm**

### **Discussion of federated and union congregations/ministry and over all path for LECC, moving forward**

The following is a list highlighted by the group for further consideration, conversation, and development. The list has been categorized into three areas of focus: relationships, resources, and finances/property – in no particular order. Please note, some items are listed in more than one focus area, depending on the nature of the item.

#### **Relationships:**

1. Descriptions of 3 kinds of communities: Union, Federated “Other” (like Nancy McGrath’s place in OR)
2. There are those congregations who existed before CCM, those that came together because of it, and those that are exploring. What issues cut across all three?
3. Making sure bishops and leaders understand that allowing use of each of our liturgies was approved in CCM.
4. Pastoral Transitions (who calls, which process, compensation packages)
5. What does CCM say about term calls? Who provides oversight?
6. Confirmation
7. Campus Ministry (potential for combined campus ministry)
8. Exchange of Deacons?

9. Annual episcopal visitation
10. How and who gets to amend founding documents? What must be included in those founding/governing documents and bylaws?
11. How do we keep stakeholders aware of the particularities of Union/Federated/Other congregations?

#### **Resources:**

1. FAQ document
2. Best practices list
3. Worship guidelines/appropriate resources (BCP, ELW, etc.)

#### **Finances/Property:**

1. Property ownership (Need input from church attorneys and chancellors' group [Mary Kostel].
2. Endowment Funds (What happens to money or endowments upon potential dissolution?)
3. Pastoral Transitions (who calls, which process, compensation packages)
4. Benevolence/Apportionment

It was suggested that there be a regular review of ministry upon leadership transitions at congregational or judicatory level or every five years. This would include bylaws, agreements, covenants, and financial matters including contributions to judicatories.

#### **DAY 2 – May 27**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81045089818>

**Session 1: 10 am – 12 pm est**

#### **Congregational Vitality**

Phil Hirsch, Executive Director for Christian Community and Leadership (ELCA),

Reviewed purpose, values and mission of ELCA. Goal: Share the story of Jesus and the ELCA by engaging with 1 million new people as we grow the church together.

Online only community of small groups of young Adults called 'Abide: ELCA Young Adults' has grown to 1,200 people in 5 countries.

Lay Evangelist Training: Imagine thousands of laity starting new faith communities in partnership with clergy. Called Fresh Expressions in Anglican church. House churches, small groups, second campuses of existing churches (adigital campuses) and service in neighborhoods.

ELCA: Lay Planter Training (Basic) partnership with The United Methodist Church.

*Growing Young*: Resource from Fuller Youth Institute. How do we grow younger?

1. Empathy through Listening.
2. Clear about Jesus.

3. Being the Best Neighbors.
4. Want to grow more diverse. Mosaix.info. Because of diversity and worship variety in such congregations, you are going to like 70% of what we do.
5. Innovation: Something New and Useful. Keeping pace with the rapid change in our culture. How do we think differently?
6. Conversation: What do we do with all of the smaller congregations that will never be able to have a full time pastor?

Going to research and ask folks who left why they left and learn from that.

### **Advocacy Updates**

Amy Reumann (ELCA) and Rebecca Linder Blachly (TEC)

Both Presiding Bishops were part of Christians against Christian Nationalism

Webinar: Advocacy tools for loving your neighbor. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7XXNZCdUF4>

Meeting with several different advocacy groups. Circle of Protection and responding to COVID effects on the least of these along with a Global Health Summit. In constant communication between denominations.

The informal ways the staffs work together is just as powerful as the public witness together. Why we do advocacy and what we hope the difference will be that we can make. The two churches are more effective getting legislation passed together than separately.

Margaret: What is the actual strategy? What is the role of offices together?

*We have folks on many parts of the aisles, and many have their own sense of outrage at something. You seem to try not to let the outrage get the best of you.*

*We have seen an influx of young adults stepping up into advocacy roles. They feel strongly about climate crisis and racial justice & reconciliation. We are focusing on continued education around critical issues in addition to calls for investment in the work.*

*They lifted up a series on election, environment, health care, detaching folks from news in order to create space for more thoughtful reflection on the issues from a faith perspective – we have to do the work to get real change in place not just executive orders.*

Kathryn: Where there are major policy or polity differences between our churches - which are either bridgeable, or not?

*The work is not really impeded by differences, common mission tends to emerge as common action and partnership.*

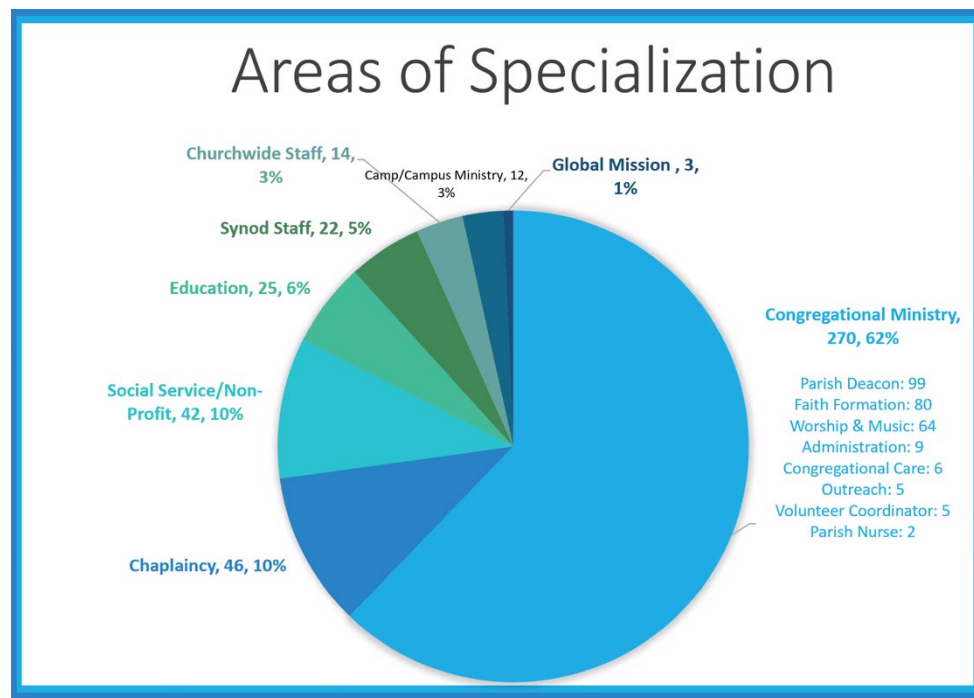
### **Updates from ELCA Worship (re. the ordination of deacons)**

Entry rite for deacons is now ordination for ELCA, as of 2019 churchwide assembly. The rite needed to be crafted and sent through liturgical review process. An interim rite was immediately available. In October 2019 LECC meeting they were midway through review. Ordination and Installation are the only

rites that require authorization by Conference of Bishops then approval by Church Council. The draft is largely unchanged but available here <https://elca.org/resources/worship#MinistryRites>

ELCA:

Before 2016 there were Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry, and Diaconal Ministers. There was a six to eight-year conversation leading to 2016 decision to make all deacons. At that point in 2016 all three orders became Deacons.



There are still questions around inconsistencies in thought around installation of bishops and 'bishops for life.'

We still need more conversation around exchangeability of deacons between our churches. Mitzi stated a perceived hunger among deacons for 'recognition' by each church.

Stewart asked about potential discounts from 1517 Media (Augsburg Fortress/Fortress Press) for churches subscribed to both online resources Sundays and Seasons (Lutheran) and Rite Planning (Episcopal). John Weit will bring this up with his contacts at 1517 Media.

Mitzi asked if there was any conversation around direct ordination in the Episcopal Church. General Convention previously decided that we would not move to direct ordination but remain committed to 6 months between ordination as transitional deacon before ordination to priesthood.

### **Looking ahead: sharing ideas/proposals for the future**

Clarification on the change of nomenclature. Per ELCA 2019 Churchwide Assembly constitutional changes, what were Union Congregations are now Federated Congregations. What were Federated Congregations are now called Union Congregations.

We are unclear if nomenclature needs to be changed for formerly partnered congregations. We will be clear going forward the names. We need communication from the General Secretary to find out which congregations are these. We will communicate with the bishops and synods to mine more information than our current list.

## **LECC-JALC Agenda – May 27, 2021, 1-4 pm EST**

### **JALC**

Lutheran: Larry Kochendorfer, co-chair, Peter Wall, Susan Climo, Kathryn Smith, Kayko Driedger Hesslein, Paul Gehrs,

Anglican: Peter Wall, co-chair; Scott Sharman, staff support; William Harrison, Marilyn Malton, Dorothy Russell-Patterson, Maylanne Maybee

### **LECC**

Lutheran: Kathryn Lohre(staff), Mitzi Budde, Natalie Hall, Donald Kreiss, Kristen Opalinski (staff),

Episcopal: Hank Jeannel, Doug Sparks, Richard Mammana(staff), Margaret Rose (staff), Stewart Lucas, Nancy McGrath Green, Salmoon Bashir

### **Opening prayer, introductions, and question:**

*What's the greatest gift that you have received from the tradition other than your own?*

Everyone shared their thoughts, but all reverted back to deep and abiding relationships with one another made possible by the Holy Spirit through our ecumenical work.

### **Generative discussion**

- Diaconal ministries – sharing and discussion
- Plenary conversation: Where is full communion headed? Additional relationships? What are the gifts and challenges of full communion – beginning with brief updates on what's happening within our various bodies.
- Where are we going from here?

Scott Sharman Where is full communion going? It has a formative quality to it that shapes our hearts, minds, and spirits with each other but also with diversity of all types. Not just the circle we form but circles we are part of more broadly. How does this relationship draw us into wider circles of relationship? What does self-determination for an indigenous Anglican ministry mean for all of us? Transferring experience of this full communion relationship to other ongoing conversations. We are leveraging existing relationships and documents

Margaret Rose: At General Convention July 2022 in Baltimore, the final approval of the full communion partnership, Church Beyond Borders, will come up for a vote. We struggle with parochial report processes to justly count our combined ministries.

Donald Kreiss: CCM has been along so long that the first saints who were passionate about this have transitioned on. Our conference and house of bishops have significantly changed. Now we are finding the need for different skillsets for the work ahead of us.

JALC members wanted an update on United Methodist Church full communion agreement and conversations. <https://www.gracethroughseparation.com>

Other conversations ensued around the diaconate and the future of the church post-pandemic.

**Final words, closing prayer, and adjourn**

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## **Appendix:**

### **LECC May 26-27, 2021 meeting: Proposed Agenda**

*Note: The zoom link for LECC is the same throughout the meeting. It is repeated within the agenda for your convenience. There is a separate link for the LECC-JALC meeting, included below.*

#### **DAY 1 – May 26**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81045089818>

#### **Session 1: 9:30 – 11 am est**

9:30 – 9:45 Welcome and opening devotions

9:45 – 9:50 Review of proposed agendas (LECC & looking ahead to LECC/JALC)

9:50 – 10:15 Check-ins – structured with each person sharing the following:

- Where have you see a sign of ecumenical challenge in the past year?
- Where have you see a sign of ecumenical hope in the past year?

10:45 – 10:45 Updates

- From the co-chairs
- From the staff
  - on the orderly exchange document (Richard)
  - on Churches Beyond Borders (Margaret & Kathryn)

10:45 – 11 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CCM

- Sharing of local celebrations and/or initiatives
- Discussion of any further plans at the national level



**Session 2: 12 – 2 pm est**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81045089818>

12 – 12:15 Continued discussion of any morning items

12:15 – 1 Lamb of God update and case study (co-chairs)

*Break if needed*

1 – 1:45 Discussion of federated and union congregations work

- Collecting examples
- Communication & interpretation around ELCA changed terminology
- Communication among pastors serving these congregations
- Other ideas and action plan

1:45 – 2 Closing thoughts and looking toward tomorrow