

TASK FORCE TO COORDINATE ECUMENICAL & INTERRELIGIOUS WORK

Membership

The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin, <i>Chair</i>	Western New York, II	2024
The Rev. Canon Dr. C. Denise Yarbrough, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Rochester, II	2024
The Rev. Canon Sharon Alexander	West Tennessee, IV	2021
The Ven. Dr. Walter Baer	Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, II	2024
The Rev. Canon Valerie Balling	New Jersey, II	2021
Ms. Kate Bellam	Connecticut, I	2024
The Rev. Jaime Briceño	Chicago, V	2024
The Rt. Rev. Scott Hayashi	Utah, VIII	2024
Dr. Lucinda Mosher	Florida, IV	2024
The Rev. David Simmons	Milwaukee, V	2024
The Rt. Rev. Eugene Sutton	Maryland, III	2024
The Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson	Nebraska, VI	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Ohio, V	

Changes in Membership

The Rev. Luz Cabrera (2019-2020), replaced by The Rev. Valerie Balling (2020-present)

Acknowledgements

Margaret Rose; Chuck Robertson, Richard Mammana (TEC), Hank Jeannel (TEC EIR intern); Kyle Tau (UMC);

Mandate

2018-D055 Coordination of Ecumenical and Interreligious Work

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 79th General Convention, pursuant to Joint Rule IX.22, create a task force with membership appointed by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies to report annually to the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons (SCSGCC) its work in addressing matters of ecumenical and interreligious significance, including but not limited to: respond to ecumenical and interreligious issues that may arise between meetings of General Convention; have primary responsibility for developing responses to ecumenical and interreligious documents; assist the Presiding Bishop, appropriate DFMS staff, and the Executive Council with formulating and implementing ecumenical and interreligious policy; and provide such other assistance and counsel to the SCSGCC with respect to matters that come before the SCSGCC that have ecumenical or interreligious significance, in collaboration with the Deputy for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force shall begin on January 1, 2019, and end at the end of the 81st General Convention, unless its mandate is extended by that Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the task force shall provide an interim report to the 80th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the membership of this task force include up to three Bishops appointed by the Presiding Bishop for six-year terms; up to three Priests and/or Deacons and up to three lay persons appointed by the President of the House of Deputies for six-year terms; and up to three members of the SCSGCC appointed by the SCSGCC.

Summary of Work

Resolution D055 of the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (TEC) in 2018 established a Task Force of the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons (SCSGCC) with the mandate to coordinate and respond to ecumenical and interreligious issues that may arise between meetings of General Convention; have primary responsibility for developing responses to ecumenical and interreligious documents; assist the Presiding Bishop, appropriate DFMS staff, and the Executive Council with formulating and implementing ecumenical and interreligious policy; and provide such other assistance and counsel to the SCSGCC with respect to matters that come before the SCSGCC that have ecumenical or interreligious significance, in

collaboration with the Deputy for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations and Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers.

Throughout the triennium, the Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical & Interfaith Work (TFCEIW) met as an interim body electronically and by sub-committee to further the work to achieve its mandate. The membership of this task force is directed to include up to three Bishops appointed by the Presiding Bishop for six-year terms; up to three Priests and/or Deacons and up to three lay persons appointed by the President of the House of Deputies for six-year terms; and up to three members of the SCSGCC appointed by the SCSGCC.

This task force is working to create communication and consistency across the various ecumenical and interfaith efforts of TEC, especially in reference to policies and “like” documents and agreements. It is embracing the philosophy articulated by the Rev. Margaret Rose that denominational ecumenical work is about “engaging the other; knowing ourselves,” and aiming to bridge the gaps in work across faith groups without filling them in at the loss of Episcopal identity.

TASK FORCE STRUCTURE AND AREAS OF FOCUS

Following initial discussion on the work that is and should be happening under this umbrella, four sub-committees were developed to address the mandate: Governance; Theology; Anglican Communion, Europe; Bi-Lateral Discussions. Additional ecumenical and interfaith projects are being acted upon by individuals or TEC staff members.

Governance (David Simmons, chair):

The primary aim of this sub-committee is the determination of resolutions that need to be proposed at the 80th General Convention. Aspects of this include reviewing past resolutions, writing continuing resolutions for ongoing work, and working with the other sub-committees to identify and craft new legislative proposals and resolutions. The final compilation of resolutions being proposed are found later in this Blue Book application.

Theology (Denise Yarbrough, chair):

The work of this sub-committee is centered in the confluence of interreligious work and issues of intersectionality, anti-Semitism work (perhaps with consultation from the Anti-Defamation League), and various statement updates. Following the review of current overarching TEC documents in this area, the sub-committee noted that the TEC documents on Jewish-Christian Guidelines and on interfaith relations have not been reviewed in many years. As such, this sub-committee is in the process of reassessing and drafting updated statements to be offered to TEC for study and potential future legislative resolutions by the 81st General Convention.

United Methodist Church (UMC) and Other Full Communion Discussions (Scott Hayashi, Chair):

The primary focus of this subcommittee is the UMC-TEC work. A successful joint gathering in Utah was held that might serve as a model for other areas. Originally, this sub-committee and Task Force

intended to bring legislation around this proposal to General Convention in 2020; however, the pandemic prevented the UMC from gathering as expected in 2020 to determine their future. Thus, TEC is also holding on presenting or confirming formal legislation with UMC at this time.

In addition, ARCUSA, LECC, MECC, PCUSA, ELCA, and the four way agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and TEC, are under the umbrella of this subcommittee and will lead to legislative proposals.

Anglican Communion, Europe, and related (Eugene Sutton and Walter Baer, co-chairs):

This sub-committee is charged with the review of relationships and assembly of potential legislation to be considered at General Convention relating to partnerships in Europe. The memorandum of understanding with the Church of Sweden, the dialogue with the Evangelical Church of Bavaria, and the work of the Committee of Anglican Bishops in Europe are central to the charge of this subcommittee. Additionally, the Lambeth Conference originally scheduled for 2020 directed some of the work of this group. Specific information and proposals from these discussions follow.

Resolutions Referred to the Task Force on Ecumenical Relations in Europe

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.

Resolution 2018-Do85 Communion Relationship with Church of Sweden

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention acknowledge and affirm the existing full communion relationship between The Episcopal Church and the (Evangelical Lutheran) Church of Sweden, in furtherance of the 78th General Convention's Resolution B004, which received and commended the "Report on the Grounds for Future Relations Between the Church of Sweden and The Episcopal Church," and called on the Presiding Bishop to explore ways for the relationship with the Church of Sweden to be deepened, and which full communion relationship was formally celebrated during a Eucharist service at Uppsala Cathedral, Sweden in November 2015, a service led by former Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, at the invitation of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, and the Church of Sweden Archbishop Antje Jackelén; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention request the Presiding Bishop to prepare, in concert with the Church of Sweden, a memorandum of understanding setting forth the terms and procedures of the full communion between The Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden.

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 Landesbischof Dr. Bedford-Strohm and Presiding Bishop the Most Rev. Dr. 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 Chair of the **German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation**,
The Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) co-chair of the **Meissen Commission**, and
The **Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the ELCA**.

CURRENT AND FORMER 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*

The Rt. Rev. Pierre W. Whalon (2013-2019)

The Rev. Steven Smith (2013-2019)

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**, the dialogue committee has moved forward in this triennium to develop 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” is being proposed to the 80th General Convention. The Task Force commends this document for study and possible implementation. Background papers on this dialogue and additions or changes to this proposed agreement, can be downloaded at the Episcopal Church website at: www.episcopalchurch.org/ecumenism.

THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN

In this triennium, the Episcopal Church and the Church of Sweden have continued to live into their full communion relationship, as set forth in Resolutions 2015-A070 and 2018-DO85. Our common work in this triennium was notably in the area of Climate Change (together with the ELCA), and our ongoing commitment to engage the issue of refugee and asylum work. At the ordination and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Mark Edington as Bishop in Charge of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, the Archbishop of Uppsala, the Most Rev. Antje Jackelen, was represented by the Rev. Per Gyllenör. Church of Sweden congregations and Episcopal congregations are found together in several European cities including, Paris, Brussels, Rome, Frankfurt and Munich. In recent years, the closest cooperation has existed in Brussels and in Frankfurt.

Work on a memorandum of understanding setting forth the terms and procedures of the full communion between the two churches continues. Due to staffing changes in the ecumenical office of the Church of Sweden and the pandemic, the memorandum cannot be reported out at this time. That work will continue through the next year / triennium.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Education: It is thought that the depth and breadth of the work done in this area, especially at a denominational level, is unknown by many. There are instances when people are voting without clarity, for example a lack of understanding of the UMC Book of Discipline and the potential ramifications it could have on a formal partnership with TEC. As a result, this Task Force is pursuing and developing ways to offer education and history to members of the House of Bishops and members of the House of Deputies. This is also intended to strengthen ecumenical and interfaith work that is done at the diocesan and local level.

Tool kit for parishes: One outgrowth of the education commitment being considered is the establishment of an online “tool kit” for local ecumenical and interfaith engagement. Consolidating best practices, reference points, and more, will provide a real service to TEC at all levels in a rapidly evolving and global world.

History and Role of the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral: Part of the discussion this triennium has been around the Chicago/Lambeth Quadrilateral, the current rubric for some formalized denominational partnerships at the denominational level. The document has a sound grounding in history and theology; the discussion has revolved around questions of whether or not it is still adequately complete or if other factors need to be at play when considering ventures such as the Call to Common Mission (2001 with ELCA) and the UMC relationship, as well as how we understand the Anglican Communion.

PARTNERS IN WORK

By its definition, this Task Force does not stand alone. To accomplish the mandate of General Convention, the TFCEIW is connected to other parts of TEC engaged in interfaith or ecumenical efforts. The closest relationship is with the TEC Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith 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 Office of Global Partnerships throughout the triennium, the Episcopal Church work at the United Nations, the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Officers (EDEIO) group, and the various task forces, committees, and dialogue groups who are engaged in specific relationships, such as the TEC-PCUSA dialogue.

GOALS FOR THE TFCEIW FOR THE NEXT TRIENNium

- Propose an updated Jewish-Christian Guidelines statement
- Propose an updated statement on interfaith relations
- Develop and propose a formal statement on the Episcopal Theology of Ecumenism that takes into account the history, practices, and reasons for this engagement
- Create an online resource for local ecumenical and interfaith work
- Further the work of the ecumenical dialogue groups
- Clarify and update current memorandums of understanding and other important, related documents
- Review Title IV applications to clergy from churches in full communion
- Increase the visibility of the work of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Proposed resolutions

A091 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria-Episcopal Dialogue

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive and commend *Sharing the Gifts of Communion*, available in the report to the 80th General Convention of the Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work, as the basis for a relationship of full communion to be established between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelische Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria); and be it further

Resolved, that this document be shared widely within the church for discussion and comment, with a view of accepting it as the basis for establishing a relationship of full communion between the two churches when appropriate.

EXPLANATION

The document *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* is available as a supporting document to this resolution. It is also available within the report to the 80th General Convention of the Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work (otherwise known as their "blue book" report). Blue Book reports to the 80th General Convention are available on the blue book page of the General Convention website at <https://www.generalconvention.org/bluebook2021>.

A092 Churches Beyond Borders

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church accept the Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion dated September 26, 2018 by and among The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (which can be found on the Ecumenical and Inter-religious page of The Episcopal Church's website at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/ecumenical-interreligious/> and which shall be added to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships page of the Archives upon acceptance of the Memorandum by the General Convention <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sceir>) the basis for a relationship of full communion to be established among the four churches upon the acceptance of the Memorandum by each of the four churches; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention recognizes the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have previously accepted the Memorandum through actions of their respective governing bodies; and be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church request that the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, convey this action to the Presiding Bishops and Primates of the other churches that are a party to the Memorandum; and be it further

Resolved, that the acceptance of the Memorandum shall not affect or alter the current relationship of full communion between The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada recognized by Canon I.20.1(a) or the current relationship of full communion between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognized by Canon I.20.2; and be it further

Resolved, that the ecumenical officers of The Episcopal Church, working with the Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work, establish policies and procedures to facilitate exchange of ministry between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada as set forth in the Memorandum; and be it further

Resolved, that Canon I.20.1 be amended by adding a new subsection, as follows:

(d) The Episcopal Church has a relationship of full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada under the terms of the Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion dated September 26, 2018 by and among The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, which was accepted by the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church as Resolution 2021-A__.

EXPLANATION

More information can be found at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/ecumenical-interreligious/ecumenical-dialogue-partners/>

A093 The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Church Dialogue

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That this 80th General Convention commends the current version of “A Gift to the World, Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness,” which was prepared and distributed by The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Dialogue; and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention encourages all Episcopalians to utilize the many resources available to understand the substance of this dialogue and its goal of full communion. Resources can be found on the websites of The Episcopal Church (episcopalchurch.org), the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical

and Interreligious Officers (edeio.org), and 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.”

A094 Affirm Ongoing Work and Dialogue with Ecumenical Partners

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, 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).

EXPLANATION

More information about this work can be found at:

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/ecumenical-interreligious/ecumenical-dialogue-partners/>

Supplemental Materials

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Sharing the Gifts of Communion

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

Introduction

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

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

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

- the *Meissen Agreement* (1991), between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), achieves mutual recognition of churches and mutual Eucharistic hospitality, but does not achieve full communion or interchangeability of ordained ministries;^[1] and on the three regional agreements of (full) communion between Anglicans and Lutherans:
- the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1992/93), between the European member churches of the Anglican Communion and most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches;^[2]
- *Called to Common Mission* (1999/2000), between TEC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;^[3]
- the *Waterloo Declaration* (2001), between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.^[4]

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

In many parts of the world, member churches of the LWF and the Anglican Communion work in close cooperation, with or without an agreement, and the Third Anglican Lutheran International Commission urged churches to develop or adopt agreements that reflect this cooperation.^[5] In

this spirit, this agreement is offered as a further example and invitation to other member churches of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation to consider in their contexts how such a move forward could be accomplished.

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

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

In moving into this relationship, TEC and the ELKB understand full communion to be a relation between distinct churches in which each recognizes the other as a catholic and apostolic church holding the essentials of the Christian faith. Within this new relation, churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. Full communion includes the establishment of appropriate recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life, and service. Diversity is preserved, but this diversity does not divide and is not static. Neither church seeks to remake the other in its own image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his mission. They are together committed to a visible unity in the church's mission to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments.^[6]

Specifically, TEC and the ELKB understand this to include welcoming one another's members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations; mutual recognition and interchangeability of ordained ministries; freedom to use one another's liturgies; mutual invitations to participate liturgically in one another's ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops; and the development of suitable structures for consultation to express, strengthen, and enable common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.^[7]

Such a relationship is based on:

- a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and life;
- the sharing of one baptism, the celebration of one eucharist and the service of a reconciled, common ministry;
- bonds of communion which support the churches at every level to guard and interpret the apostolic faith, to teach authoritatively, to share resources, and to bear effective witness in the world.^[8]

Signs of Communion that already exist

Lutherans and Anglicans recognize that they already share communion in the Triune God through their acceptance of the common gift of the Holy Scriptures; their affirmation of the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist as constituent for the church; their shared affirmation of the Apostles' and Nicene creeds; their shared traditions of worship, spirituality and theology; and their distinct but related experiences of the Reformation.

Anglicans and Lutherans both recognize Christ's church as "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is taught purely, and the sacraments are rightly administered".^[9] Anglicans and Lutherans hold the ordained ministry of Word and sacrament to be a gift of God to the church, and recognize the necessity of structures of pastoral oversight and authority.

Anglicans and Lutherans have never condemned one another as churches. TEC and the ELKB now affirm that they recognize in one another the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith, to which their statements of faith witness, including the *Augsburg Confession*, Luther's *Small Catechism*, and TEC's *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), and they affirm the substance of the doctrinal consensus articulated by successive international Anglican-Lutheran dialogues.

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

Ministry and oversight

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

Together with the *Porvoo Common Statement*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that “the primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole. The succession is an expression of the permanence and, therefore, of the continuity of Christ’s own mission in which the Church participates.”^[10]

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

Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB also affirm that “personal, collegial, and communal oversight is embodied and exercised in both [...] churches in a diversity of forms, in fidelity to the teaching and mission of the apostles.”^[12] Together with the LWF’s 2007 Statement *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that in both churches, “Bishops are called to a special role of oversight in the church, but the wider community also is called to participate in oversight and to judge the way in which episcopal ministry is being carried out.”^[13] They acknowledge also that in some other churches of the LWF, and also some other churches of the EKD, those who exercise such “special role of oversight” are not referred to as bishop, but rather, for instance, as Church President or Präses, similarly a Regional Bishop may be known as *Landessuperintendent* or *Oberkirchenrat*.^[14] TEC and the ELKB also recognize that this ministry of oversight – *episkopé* – is exercised not only through bishops but also through the synods and other leadership structures of the two churches, and that the relationship between bishops and these structures is an important aspect of the ministry of oversight in both churches.^[15]

Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB agree that the historic episcopate “can be locally adapted and reformed in the service of the gospel.”^[16] Since the sixteenth century, the traditions from which both churches emerged have experienced both continuity and change in their structures of *episkopé*. Different practices of oversight developed in local contexts in response to diverse ecclesiological and political realities and theological understandings. Anglicans maintained episcopal-diocesan structures and continued to use the term “bishop” to describe these ministries after the Reformation. Lutherans in Germany provided *episkopé* by adapting existing structures, and described these ministries using a variety of terms, including “superintendent”, the preferred translation of the New Testament term *episkopos*.

The establishment of Anglican parishes on the North American continent spread steadily following the first recorded Anglican celebration of Holy Communion in North America in 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia. Prior to the American Revolution, representatives of the Bishop of London

known as commissaries provided oversight in some colonies. In the context of American Independence from Great Britain, the first American bishops were elected, and in 1789 The Episcopal Church was constituted as a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction and as a church independent of state authority. From this time TEC has affirmed the importance of synodical government and bishops have been elected. The structures established in 1789 continue to the present.

General Convention, made up of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (equal numbers of elected clergy and lay people), sets the policy of the Episcopal Church. Its bishops are democratically elected by their respective diocesan conventions or synods and are answerable to the House of Bishops; they are to be servants of the church and not its lords. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is a member of the House of Bishops, who since 1928 has been elected by that House, with confirmation by the House of Deputies. A similar structure is mirrored in the dioceses, which have diocesan conventions (made up of the diocesan clergy and elected lay delegates), that work closely with the bishop. A bishop is elected at the diocesan convention by the clergy and lay delegates and is consecrated only after confirmation of this election by a majority of TEC's diocesan bishops and diocesan standing committees representing the whole church. At the consecration, bishops are consecrated through prayer and laying on of hands by at least three bishops, usually including bishops of the ELCA and other full communion partners, with the involvement of representatives of the diocese, both priests and lay persons, especially in presenting the bishop-elect for consecration, and in the liturgy.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria was formed in 1808 after the foundation of the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. The General Synod was established in 1848, initially sharing responsibility with the ruling (Roman-Catholic) Bavarian monarch who acted as "*summus episcopus*", in direct continuity with the role of the late medieval German prince bishops.^[17] After the fall of the Bavarian monarchy in 1918, the ELKB (*Landeskirche*) was constituted, with a church president (*Kirchenpräsident*), who since 1933 has been referred to as bishop (*Landesbischof*). The bishop works together with the Synod (*Landessynode*, made up of two-thirds lay people and one third clergy) and its Executive Committee (*Landessynodalausschuss*), and also chairs the Church Governing Board (*Landeskirchenrat*), which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the church. Oversight is exercised through these four church-governing bodies. The *Landessynode* elects the *Landesbischof*. Regional bishops (*Regionalbischöfe*) or *Oberkirchenräte*, who are members of the *Landeskirchenrat*, share the responsibility for oversight in their episcopal areas or areas of responsibility through ordination and visitation.

Today, pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria are ordained by the *Landesbischof* or regional bishops. Ordination is a onetime act. Central elements of the liturgy are the prayer for the Holy Spirit, the laying on of hands and the blessing of the ordinand. The ordination rite provides that assistants say a biblical word of blessing and also lay on hands. These assistants are not restricted to the ordained and may include (for instance) members of the parish council (vestry) or the candidate's family and friends. The installation of a bishop is understood as the installation of an already ordained pastor into a new office now with

episcopal functions. The *Landesbischof* is installed by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany; the regional bishops are installed by the *Landesbischof*. It is good practice – but not strictly necessary – that at such installations bishops or ministers exercising *episkopé* in sister churches within the Lutheran World Federation or other denominations are present and assist in the laying on of hands.

In both TEC and the ELKB, these ministries of *episkopé* are therefore exercised personally, collegially and communally.^[18] Bishops share the exercise of *episkopé* with the synodical structures of the church. Ministers exercising *episkopé* constitute “a supra-congregational form of ordained ministry for the sake of spiritual discernment and leadership.”^[19] In both churches, clergy are ordained only by ministers who exercise *episkopé*: the diocesan bishop or *Landesbischof*, suffragan or regional bishops.

Together with the LWF’s Lund Statement, *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that these forms of *episkopé* are intended to preserve the apostolic nature of the church and to interpret it for today. Through these structures of *episkopé*, the church “exercises responsibility for its doctrine and practices through open, critical deliberation and transparent ecclesial processes.”^[20]

TEC and the ELKB affirm also with the *Lund Statement* that a bishop not do so does his/her in isolation: “together with teachers of theology, pastors in congregations, persons called to a ministry of education and committed lay persons, episcopal ministers [i.e. ministers exercising *episkopé* – ed.] are especially called to judge doctrine in the life of the church, and to reject teaching that is contradictory to the gospel. The responsibility of governing bodies in the church (parish councils and church synods) is also to take formal decisions to ensure that the institutional, practical life of the church is in good keeping with the message of the gospel and witnesses to it.”^[21]

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

The four articles of the Anglican *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1888) remain the foundation for Anglican/Episcopal ecumenical relations. Anglicans and Lutherans have long agreed on its first three articles which affirm the foundational nature of Holy Scripture, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds. The Quadrilateral sets out as the fourth basis for church unity: “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 [God’s] Church.”^[23] TEC and the ELKB affirm that in both churches, *episkopé* is exercised in a form that is congruent with this article.

With the *Meissen Agreement*, TEC and the ELKB “acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (*episkopé*) is embodied and exercised in [their] 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.”^[24] However, the ELKB and TEC can go further than the Meissen

Agreement: on the basis of the congruence in their understanding and practice of *episkopé* and synodical government TEC and the ELKB are able to enter into a relationship of full communion, with interchangeability of ordained ministries.

Continuity in the Gospel: Historic and evangelical succession

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

Within TEC succession is understood as the orderly succession of bishops ordained by their predecessors as integral to the preservation of apostolic continuity in the proclamation of the gospel. This represents an episcopal tradition which can be traced to the ancient church, in which bishops already in this succession maintain the integrity of the faith by ordaining newly elected bishops with prayer and the laying on of hands.^[25] TEC, like all the churches of the Anglican Communion, asserts that its bishops stand in historic succession understood in this way, through the consecration of new bishops through prayer and laying on of hands by at least three existing bishops. Acknowledging this background, Anglicans have still recognized in their previous agreements of (full) communion that the apostolic faith is preserved, not exclusively through the succession of bishops, but by the whole church, that is, also through the ministry of priests and deacons and of the whole people of God.

The ELKB understands succession in terms of the continuity of this apostolic faith, rooted in the proclamation of the gospel and supported by the ordained ministry. As expressed in the Augsburg Confession (art. 7), the Reformation emphasized the church as evangelical, established through the continuous preaching of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments. This is the basis of the apostolic succession. The Augsburg Confession (art. 14) teaches that “no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless properly called.” Commenting on this, Article 14 of the *Apology* (1531) affirms the Lutheran commitment to “willingly retain ecclesiastical and canonical order”. Luther and other Reformers worked to ensure that structures were put in place to maintain the true preaching of the gospel and celebration of the sacraments. These structures have always included forms of oversight such as superintendents and visitations. Through and since the Reformation, this continuity in local structures has therefore been associated with a conscious conviction that apostolic teaching and faith must be not only rediscovered but also preserved. Those involved in oversight are installed through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Both TEC and the ELKB therefore recognize, as affirmed by *Called to Common Mission*, that in the context of the ordained ministry and the ministry of the whole people of God both churches “value and maintain a ministry of *episkopé* as one of the ways ... in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the gospel through the ages.”^[26]

In moving forward together, TEC and the ELKB commit to share an episcopal succession that is both evangelical (true to the gospel) and historic (true to tradition), including regularly a bishop of the other church to participate with at least two other ministers exercising *episkopé* in the laying on of hands at the ordinations/installations of their own bishops as a sign of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church.^[27] TEC and the ELKB believe that the fullness of the apostolic tradition preserved in each church will deepen as a result of the relationship of full communion, through the shared ministry of bishops and presbyters and of the whole people of God.

TEC and the ELKB share congruent understandings of *episkopé*, but this does not commit the two churches to a unified concept of the office of bishop. TEC and the ELKB acknowledge that there is a diversity of how the office of bishops is lived out in each church. TEC and the ELKB affirm that the fact that the liturgy of introducing bishops into office can be understood as installation or as ordination, or that tenure in office may vary, or that the status of bishops when they leave office may differ does not hinder us entering into full communion.

In order to demonstrate more clearly the shared nature of the *episkopé* exercised by bishops, both churches commit to ensuring that at the ordination/installation of bishops, the whole church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants in the ordination/installation and to working to include in their installation/ordination rites an affirmation that the bishop will exercise *episkopé* in conjunction with the synodical government of the church.

Each church remains free to explore its particular interpretation of the ministry of bishops in evangelical and historic succession. This should be done in consultation with one another. Each church maintains and can enter into relationships with other churches, including relationships of (full) communion, which do not oblige the other church to engage in that relationship. That is, this declaration of full communion does not imply automatic communion of the one church with the communion partners of the other church, although each church is encouraged to seek communion with the churches with which the other is in communion.

Recognizing one another as churches that truly preach the gospel and duly administer the holy sacraments,^[28] TEC and the ELKB receive with thanksgiving the gift of unity which is already given in Christ. Christians have repeatedly echoed the scriptural confession that the unity of the church is both Christ's own work and his call to all Christians. It is the task of the churches, and of all Christians, as well as Christ's gift. Every Christian – and every church – must “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3), praying that they may rely upon, and willingly receive from one another, the gifts given by Christ through his Spirit “for building up the body of Christ” in love (Ephesians 4:16).

As TEC and the ELKB, we do not know to what new, recovered, or continuing tasks of mission this relationship of full communion will lead our churches, but we give thanks to God for leading us to this point, and entrust ourselves to that leading in the future, confident that our full communion will be a witness to the gift and goal already present in Christ, “so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Actions and Commitments

We, The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, declare ourselves to be in full communion. Together,

- a. We commit ourselves to continue and deepen our common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another and to share resources as appropriate in Bavaria, recognizing that TEC is a very small minority there. We encourage regular collaboration and consultation among members of our churches at all levels as appropriate.
- b. We commit ourselves to offer sacramental and pastoral ministry to members of one another's churches.
- c. We commit ourselves to receive those who formally leave one church to move to the other with the same status (for example baptized, communicant, confirmed) that they held in their previous church.

The declaration of full communion between our two churches implies the immediate recognition of currently serving ministers of the one church by the other. TEC fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and pastors currently existing within the ELKB, acknowledging its pastors as ordained ministers in the Church of God and its bishops and regional bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal *episkopé*. Likewise, the ELKB fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and priests currently existing within TEC, acknowledging its priests as ordained ministers in the Church of God and its bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal *episkopé*.^[29]

With full communion, interchangeability of ministries is given. We therefore commit ourselves to welcome persons ordained in either of our churches to the office of priest/pastor to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which are in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination. We affirm that bishops may be invited to carry out in the other church, as appropriate, those ministries which they exercise in their own, such as confirmation.

We commit ourselves, as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church, to invite one another's bishops regularly to participate in the laying on of hands at the installation/ordination of bishops, with the expectation that a bishop from the other church will be present at the ordination of the bishop of the Convocation and the installation of the *Landesbischof*,

one another's pastors and priests to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of pastors or priests in one another's churches;

one another's lay people, including both those who share in the exercise of *episkopé* and members of local congregations, to participate in our churches' ordinations/installations in ways which celebrate the ministry of the whole people of God.

Such mutual invitations are understood as a call for the deepening of the lived experience of our communion.

We commit ourselves also to continue our practice of inviting representatives of other churches, representing the worldwide church, to participate at the installation/ordination of bishops.

We commit ourselves to ensure that at the ordination/installation of bishops, the whole church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants in the ordination/installation and to work to include in our installation/ordination rites an affirmation that the bishop will exercise episkopé in conjunction with the synodical government of the church.

We commit ourselves to invite a representative of TEC to attend the synod of the ELKB and a representative of the ELKB to attend the Convention of the Convocation of the Episcopal Churches in Europe, and to keep one another informed about developments in our two churches.

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

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

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

Revised November 9, 2020

End Notes

- [1] The ELKB is a party to the Meissen Agreement through the EKD.
- [2] 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.
- [3] TEC is one of the signatory churches of *Called to Common Mission*.
- [4] Neither the ELKB nor TEC is a party to the *Waterloo Declaration*, but the *Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion* will link the *Waterloo Declaration* and *Called to Common Mission*.
- [5] *Jerusalem Report*, pp. 53.56 [Appendix 3].
- [6] This paragraph adapted from *Called to Common Mission*, §2.
- [7] This paragraph is adapted from the *Waterloo Declaration*, §7, and the *Porvoo Common Statement*, §58(b).
- [8] These points are based on the headings of the *Meissen Agreement*, §8.
- [9] 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.
- [10] *Porvoo Common Statement*, §39.
- [11] *Called to Common Mission*, §7.
- [12] *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.
- [13] *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church* (The Lund Statement), § 50.
- [14] The *Lund Statement* summarizes these roles as “episcopal ministers”; to avoid confusion, this present statement refers to “ministers exercising *episkopé*”.
- [15] *Called to Common Mission*, §7.
- [16] *Called to Common Mission*, §24.
- [17] This concept of church government was known as the *Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment*.
- [18] See *Baptism – Eucharist – Ministry*, §26.

[19] *Lund Statement*, §4.

[20] *Lund Statement*, §52.

[21] *Lund Statement*. §52.

[22] Lambeth Conference 1920, Resolution 9.vii.

[23] Lambeth Conference 188, Resolution 11.d.

[24] *Meissen Agreement* §VI 17 A iii.

[25] This definition is found in *Called to Common Mission*, §11.

[26] *Called to Common Mission*, §12.

[27] *Called to Common Mission*, §12.

[28] CA VII; 39 Articles Art. XIX.

[29] 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.