

Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee Meeting
Mt Carmel Spiritual Centre, 6 - 8 February 2013

Note: LECC and JALC sessions on the dates indicated were sometimes joint and other times concomitant. These minutes reflect only LECC meeting sessions.

Thursday 7 February

A joint observance Morning Prayer with JALC & LECC began the working day at 8:45 a.m. Following Morning Prayer (*ELW*), the LECC meeting was convened by Co-Chair Mitzi Budde at 9:30 a.m. in the Teresa of Avila room. A brief period of personal update & introduction ensued.

Present: Lowell Almen (ELCA), Mitzi Budde (ELCA), Kay Beach (TEC), Jill Clark (ELCA), Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA), Sherman Hicks (ELCA), Don Kreiss (ELCA), Don McCoid (ELCA-Staff), Bill Petersen (TEC-Staff), Jon Perez (TEC), Nedi Rivera (TEC), Margaret Rose (TEC-Staff).

Absent: Co-Chair Alan Scarfe (TEC), away at a companion diocese visit to South Sudan.

Previously distributed minutes of the May 2012 meeting were unanimously approved; Bill Petersen volunteered to continue as secretary for this meeting as well. The agenda, also previously distributed by email, was adopted without alteration. Due to Bishop Scarfe's absence, the entire meeting was chaired by Dr Budde.

State of the Church Reports. The Chair called for these reports respectively from TEC and ECLA staff persons with additional *ad libitum* comments by the membership.

TEC

Margaret Rose mentioned common ELCA-TEC cooperation at the national staff level noting that conversation with and consultation between the two churches is "now in our DNA" and offered examples of ecumenical and interfaith projects in aid of mutual understanding.

Nedi Rivera referred to the recent General Convention's call for restructuring of the national church organization (General Convention Committee on Restructuring), noting the pertinent questions of how this would affect full-communion partners. Several questions of clarification were addressed.

The General Convention decision to authorize same sex blessings carries with it the expectation of ecumenical and full-communion partner feedback.

In regard to a resolution about Open Communion, General Convention reaffirmed the traditional teaching that Baptism precedes participation in Holy Communion. It was noted, however, that

practically speaking an open table exists explicitly or tacitly in many congregations, in college communities, and in “emerging church” expressions.

Finally, a General Convention resolution to move the church center from NYC was noted, but it is in fact not a viable financial option in the near future.

ELCA

Don McCoid reminded the group that 2013 is a Churchwide Assembly year. There do not appear to be a great many controversial issues forthcoming. PB Mark Hanson has expressed willingness to serve another term, if re-elected. Additionally, an unusually large number of synods (25) will be electing or re-electing bishops this year.

The recent Lutheran Church Missouri Synod president’s censuring of a Newtown, CT, pastor for participating at a memorial service/vigil was discussed. Jill Clark offered some examples that ameliorated this “hard line.”

The Ethiopian (Lutheran) Church has very recently severed ties with ELCA and also the Church of Sweden over matters of human sexuality. Meanwhile, the North American Lutheran Church is seeking entrance into LWF. All this raises questions and complications about LWF membership.

There was some discussion of federal and military chaplains. Lowell Almen brought older history of many Lutheran denominations to bear on this matter, while Don McCoid indicated that LCMS has severed cooperative work with the LCA; thus, the future in this area is one of ELCA-TEC cooperation. Mitzi Budde reminded the group of previous engagement of LECC with chaplains and a current interesting development at Mark Center in Alexandria, VA to establish a regular joint Lutheran-Episcopal Eucharist at this new facility serving over 6,000 military personnel.

Don McCoid reported on the two-year discussion between ELCA and the three Reformed churches (United Church of Christ, Presbyterian Church USA, and the Reformed Church in America) on Scripture and moral discernment. The final report addresses the principles of (1) Jesus as Lord, (2) how Scripture informs moral decision and (3) importance of living in moral community. This study has borne fruit; previously, the Reformed Church in America (RCA) censured ELCA in regard to sexuality decisions, but now there has been a move to recognize that while there are serious differences, there can be continued discussion.

In his role as chair of the national dialogue between the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Lowell Almen commented on the beginning of a new round of dialogue, which will address similar issues. Discussion has centered around the nature of faithful teaching and moral decision-making. Don McCoid commented that there is a more open attitude in the Pontifical Council for Promotion of Christian Unity that may be expressed as “let us seal work that has been done ‘on the way’ and move forward without always going over the same ground.” These conversations have been working to address how to commemorate 2017 (500th anniversary of the Lutheran reformation) jointly. A joint LWF-PCPCU letter is being prepared.

The Chair called for a short break at 10:30 a.m.

Task Group 1. Chair introduced the matter of our LECC Task Group 1 to work on response to TEC's General Convention (2012) Resolution A036: (Alan Scarfe, Kay Beach, Lowell Almen).

Margaret Rose spoke to the background of A036 concerning ELCA-TEC issues: (1) preamble to the resolution noted "unsettled" issues between TEC & ELCA. The actual resolution gives thanks, notes the 10th anniversary celebrations of full communion, gives thanks for the work of LECC, and encourages LECC to address areas of ecclesiological problems, namely, lay presidency at the Eucharist and also questions around the diaconate. It calls upon LECC to address these issues and report back to 78th General Convention (2015). In the lively discussion which ensued this recapitulation, the issues were addressed and examples were cited around the table of pastoral efforts and liturgical aberrations (on both sides).

The following resources for the task group were noted: a) the M. Busse and S. Watson Epting paper prepared for LECC, "The Diaconate and Call [*sic*] to Common Mission: Continuing Exploration of the diaconate as Full Communion Partners" (October 2003); b) Richard Leggett's "To Serve not to be Served: Diaconal Ministry in the Canadian Anglican & Lutheran Churches" (2006); and c) the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission's "Jerusalem Report" (2012). Additional resources will be produced by the current ELCA Word & Service Task Force, which is studying the three lay rosters of the ELCA and considering common rostering of diaconal ministers, deaconesses, and Associates in Ministry. The Task Force will be producing updates in 2013 and 2014 and is scheduled to present a final proposal by 2015 for vote at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

The Chair raised a question concerning whether we need two task groups to work on the two questions, or only one task group to deal with the two issues (albeit somewhat interrelated) of lay presidency and diaconate? Also to be considered are the practical aspects of the ministry situation and the theological-ecclesiological questions. Consensus favored only one task group.

It was determined that Don Kreiss as an ELCA bishop and Nedi Rivera as a TEC bishop will also join in the work of this task force. *So the Task Group will now include Alan Scarfe, Kay Beach, Lowell Almen, Don Kreiss, and Nedi Rivera.*

Lowell volunteered to work on a background paper relating to both issues for the task group's work. He will also follow-up with Alan Scarfe on scheduling a meeting of the task group, so that the response can be completed and brought to LECC in 2014 and a final version submitted for the TEC's 2015 General Convention. The Commission discussed whether a face-to-face meeting would be needed; consensus was that the task group will pursue its work via email and conference call.

Frequency of Meetings. A question was raised about frequency of meeting with JALC and whether we need to schedule a meeting for the task groups' work. Do we have enough money to make our LECC meeting longer by a day so we can really have time to deal with our agenda?

The chair reminded us about our decision last time to rotate among partners. Margaret Rose indicated that an ELCA-TEC-Moravian group meeting is unlikely.

The session was adjourned at noon for lunch and an afternoon joint meeting with JALC.

Reconvening. The Chair reconvened the meeting with prayer at 6:30 p.m., again in the Teresa of Avila room. Margaret Rose left the meeting at 8 p.m. for her evening flight home.

Due to an imminent winter storm with airlines reporting many cancellations for Saturday and Sunday, the agenda was adjusted by consensus so that our work could be finished this evening. Some will be able to remain for tomorrow's concluding joint session with JALC, others will leave early.

Next Meeting Dates. After consultation of individual calendars, the next meeting dates were determined. We may have monies to meet twice in the present fiscal year so that we can maintain our practice of meeting every 9 months. **Don McCoid and Margaret Rose will determine whether there is adequate funding.** If so, the Committee will meet *Dec 4-6, 2013 [Plan A]*. If funding does not allow for a meeting in the present fiscal year, the Committee will meet *February 5-7, 2014, Wednesday through Friday [Plan B]*. Either way, the meeting will be at the ELCA Center in Chicago. Plan A is preferred.

The agenda next turned to initial reports of the formation and progress of the other task forces established at our last meeting.

Task Group 2 (Jon Perez, Sherman Hicks, Nedi Rivera): to develop an online resource for expression of joint ministries. The whole group viewed what has been done at Jon's parish web site www.epiphanymarina.org. Jon wants to develop a website independent of Epiphany that covers Lutheran-Episcopal joint ministries. The present listing is now comes free as a service of Epiphany. The costs of a new development were discussed (see handout from Jon). LECC does not have the resources to take on this expense and consensus was to continue with the Epiphany website for the immediate future. **Jill Clark will help develop this and be in conversation with Jon.** Result: Jon is to explore registry service. They will ask ELCA and TEC to provide links on the respective web sites. LECC does not have the resources to take on this expense. Great thanks were expressed, especially to Jon, for what task force has done to this point. **LECC members were encouraged to send updates and information to Jon for the website.**

Task Group 4: (Jill Clark, Jon Perez, Mitzi Budde) Communications. Epiphany Devotions: Don McCoid reported that, where used in the four churches (ELCA, TEC, ELCIC, and ACC), our Epiphany Sunday bulletin inserts have been well-received. The good work by JALC-LECC membership was noted and thanks given. It was noted that there is a need to do this for three cycles of the lectionary so that it gets into use. In the US and Canada the networks of ecumenical officers can be helpful. **Both Mitzi and Bill will bring this to the annual National Workshop on Christian Unity (Columbus, April 2013).** Mitzi also has written an article for the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, "Are We There Yet? The Task and Function of Full Communion Coordinating Committees" which will be published in early 2013.

Jill Clark is to work on the LECC Face Book page. She asked for people to send items of ELCA-TEC cooperation to her (jillclark@valpo.edu). Don Kreiss will send Jill something for the LECC Face Book page in March; likewise, Nedi Rivera for April, and Don McCoid for May.

Task Group 3: (Alan Scarfe, Don Kreiss) coordination of First Call/Fresh Start (new clergy training). Alan & Don have not been able to do anything together on this focus, but Don has started some work toward it in his own Synod across ELCA and TEC landscape locally. All bishops of both churches in the lower Michigan peninsula and some UMC bishops as well are “on board.” Don Kreiss is joining Task Group 1 on LECC’s response to the General Convention resolution, so the work of this task group may be deferred until Task Group 1’s work is completed. Elizabeth Eaton will join Don and Alan on the First Call/Fresh Start task group.

Mitzi checked with the LECC group asking, “do we have what we need for work of task groups to go forward?” General assent in the positive was given.

Four Chaplains. Jon recapitulated for the group of the project officially to commemorate the self-sacrificing chaplains of the *USS Dorchester* (WW II) persons in our respective church calendars on February 3. Don McCoid will be in touch with worship staff at Higgins Road so that the commemoration can be put in ELCA’s liturgical resource *Sundays and Seasons*. TEC will have a final resolution for the next General Convention through the Standing Commission on Liturgy & Music. Bill Petersen noted that the commemoration is already published as a proposed commemoration in *Holy Women Holy Men* and is on TEC’s liturgical calendars. Adoption is expected to go forward with approbation.

Jon moved that we invite JALC to raise the commemoration up for consideration by ELCIC and ACC in Canada; the motion was seconded by Nedi Rivera, and without further discussion passed unanimously. Mitzi Budde will follow-up with the JALC co-chairs on this matter.

Membership. The Chair reminded the group that LECC is short a lay person and a priest on the TEC side. Hope was expressed for the appointment of younger persons in fulfillment of these vacancies. Margaret Rose has noted both the fact and the *desideratum* and will work on the appointments. Mitzi Budde’s term concludes in 2014 and then someone else needs to become ELCA co-chair. Alan’s term as co-chair is over at 2015. For orderly transition we need such persons appointed by our next meeting. Final housekeeping details of reimbursements were covered by Margaret Rose and Don McCoid.

Evaluation. The Chair called for a few minutes of general discussion evaluating the meeting. Among constructive comments about good conversation it was noted that this meeting was more efficient than Chicago. Additionally, it was noted that efficiency could be further enhanced when written work is done ahead and printed material distributed before the meeting. In the joint JALC-LECC meeting sessions, it was difficult for some to hear around the big table. The common worship was good. Finally, general and genuine thanks were expressed by all toward Chair Mitzi Budde for excellent and gracious leadership.

The Chair will send out reminders to the task groups to work on their assignments two (2) months ahead of the next meeting and requesting reports to be submitted two (2) weeks ahead of our next meeting. She also thanked the group for completing the agenda on a compressed schedule.

It was announced that we will gather with JALC members in the large chapel for Holden Evening Prayer at 8:45 p.m.

Without objection the meeting was adjourned *sine die* at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William H. Petersen