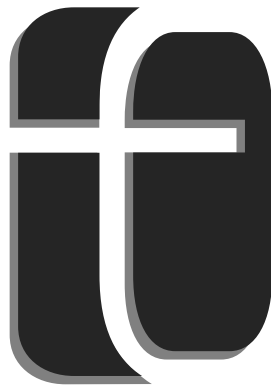


HANDBOOK FOR ECUMENISM



*office of
ecumenical
and interfaith
relations*

That they all may be one. John 17:21

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**For the bishops, diocesan ecumenical officers
and others representing the Episcopal Church
in relations with Churches of other traditions.**

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SECTION E. FULL COMMUNION PARTNERS

The Episcopal Church sees the relationship of full communion as a step on the way to the more visible unity of the churches. *Called to Common Mission*, which inaugurated full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, defines full communion as follows:

Full communion on these terms has been established between Provinces of the Anglican Communion and these Churches (more detailed descriptions follow this list).

The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht(With the Anglican Communion, 1931; Episcopal Church, 1934; clarified, 1940; specifically noted inclusion of Polish National Catholic Church, 1946; likewise ratified and clarified by Polish National Catholic Church, 1946. Polish National Catholic Church terminated full communion in 1978; Episcopal Church did not.)

These churches are: Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht (The Old Catholic Churches of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, Netherlands [Utrecht and Haarlem], and Switzerland). An International Anglican - Old Catholic International Coordinating Commission meets biennially. The Episcopal Church also sends a representative to the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference. The text of the Bonn Agreement, which established full communion with the Old Catholic Churches, can be found in Appendix B.

Philippine Independent Church (1961)

The Philippine Independent Church was established in 1902 as a protest movement against the Roman Catholic Church, and as an alternative expression of the Christianity of the Filipino people. In 1961 The Episcopal Church provided the historic succession to the PIC, who in turn conditionally consecrated all clergy in the PIC. With increasing immigration of Filipinos into the United States, many PIC congregations have been established, which have been organized into a missionary diocese. In 2006 the concordat of full communion between the two churches was updated and signed by both Presiding Bishops, pledging more cooperation between the two churches. The text of this full communion agreement may be found in Appendix B.

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, India (1979)

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar traces its roots back 2,000 years to the introduction of Christianity into India. In 1979 The Episcopal Church entered into full communion through recognition of the historic succession of the Mar Thoma Church. Recent years have seen the establishment of congregations in the United States and an increased presence of the Mar Thoma Church. The text of this full communion agreement may be found in Appendix B.

Churches Resulting from the Merger of Anglican Churches with other Churches:

Full Communion has been established between Provinces of the Anglican Communion and these Churches resulting from the union of Anglican dioceses with Christians of other traditions:

- Church of Bangladesh
- Church of North India
- Church of Pakistan
- Church of South India

Representatives of these united churches participate in the Primates' Meeting, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2001)

Beginnings of the Dialogue

The Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations (1970-1972), sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Consultative Council, produced "The Pullach Report" recommending mutual recognition by Anglican and Lutheran Churches.

In the United States, the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue (1969-1972), sponsored by the Lutheran Council in the USA (American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) and the Episcopal Church produced Lutheran - Episcopal Dialogue: A Progress Report which sought mutual recognition and intercommunion. No action was taken by the Lutheran or Episcopal Churches. Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue II (1976-1980), with the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches added, produced a joint statement on Authority and Scripture (the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod dissenting), and a joint statement on Apostolicity which showed convergence rather than consensus. These statements were published with materials from earlier dialogues in Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue: Report and Recommendations. The dialogue also published Traditions Transplanted: the Story of Anglican and Lutheran Churches in America by William H. Petersen and Robert Goesser, available from Forward Movement Publications.

Interim Eucharistic Sharing, 1982-2001

The SCER asked dioceses to study the report and recommendations and respond. In 1982 representatives from the ecumenical commissions of three of the Lutheran Churches and the Episcopal Church met to refine the recommendations and to frame a common resolution in light of responses in their churches. The four national conventions, meeting in separate cities in September of 1982, overwhelmingly approved the Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement, which established a new and historic relationship between the Episcopal Church and these Lutheran Churches. Interim Eucharistic Sharing is a significant step on the path towards greater unity. In this relationship, churches recognize one another as members of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church; encourage greater cooperation; agree to study the documents of the dialogue; and to focus on any remaining issues that need to be resolved before full communion can be reached. Interim Eucharistic Sharing also allows for joint celebrations of the Eucharist under certain conditions. For a copy of the resolution which established Interim Eucharistic Sharing, see Appendix C.

The Concordat of Agreement, 1997

Following three series of Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue (1969 – 1991) and the Lutheran-Episcopal Agreement of 1982, intensive study of *Implications of the Gospel* and *Toward Full Communion and Concordat of Agreement* began throughout the Episcopal Church. A proposed full communion proposal, *The Concordat of Agreement*, was transmitted to Provinces of the Anglican Communion for advisory responses. (See *Report to the 72nd General Convention*, Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, 1997.)

The 72nd General Convention voted to accept *The Concordat of Agreement* and to approve on first reading two constitutional changes necessary to implement full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). However, at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 1997, *The Concordat of Agreement* fell a half-dozen votes short of the two-thirds required for passage. Instead the assembly adopted a resolution committing the ELCA to further dialogue with The Episcopal Church and requested that a revised full communion document be presented to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

Called to Common Mission, 1999

Following the Churchwide Assembly, the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA prepared a set of options describing possible ways to continue the conversation on full communion with The Episcopal Church. He shared these options with the Conference of Bishops at its October 1997 meeting and the Church Council at its November 1997 meeting. The Church Council asked the Presiding Bishop to appoint a drafting team to come up with a revision of the *Concordat*. The following members were appointed: for the ELCA, the Rev. Dr. Martin E. Marty, chair; the Rev. Dr. Todd W. Nichol; and Dr. Michael J. Root; and for The Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting (co-chair); the Rev. Dr. William A. Norgren; and the Rev. Canon Dr. J. Robert Wright. Ten Lutherans and five Episcopalians were appointed to serve on the Lutheran advisory panel. The Rev. Canon David W. Perry of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and staff of ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs supported the drafting team and the advisory panel. In April 1998, the text of the revised document, "*Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement*," was provided to the Church Council as information. Essays by the drafting team also were presented as part of the Church Council's in-depth study and discussion of the proposal.

Responses from synodical assemblies, seminary faculties, and numerous individuals and congregations were gathered by staff of the Department for Ecumenical Affairs and distributed to the members of the advisory panel and drafting team. The ELCA Church Council, at the November 1998 meeting, adopted a resolution related to the process for transmittal and discussion of the revised document, *Called to Common Mission*, and drafted a resolution recommending its

adoption by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council at its April 10-12, 1999 meeting voted to receive and transmit to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly as information a resolution of understanding and expectation adopted by The Conference of Bishops at its March 3-9, 1999 meeting concerning *Called to Common Mission*.

The Churchwide Assembly, meeting August 16-22, 1999 in Denver, Colorado, gave extended consideration to *Called to Common Mission*. Several amendments were adopted following consultation with the Episcopal Church resource people, one of which was accompanied by a careful explanation of its rationale. In paragraph 20, the word "regularly" was inserted in the phrase stipulating that a bishop "shall *regularly* preside and participate in the laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of all clergy." The rationale is minuted as follows: "The use of 'regularly' establishes the ELCA's intent to adhere to the same standard of ordination by a bishop as practiced by The Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. 'Regularly' does not imply the possibility of planned exception but allows for pastoral discretion in emergencies."

The Churchwide Assembly accepted *Called to Common Mission* as amended by a more than two-thirds majority vote (716-317). Further, the assembly voted (802-152) to approve the needed and appropriate amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions, contingent on approval of *Called to Common Mission* by both churches. Most important of these included changes to the Constitution and Bylaws, whereby a bishop solely exercises the power to ordain approved candidates, and that the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, or one appointed, provide for the installation of synodical bishops.

In addition, changes were made in the Rite of Installation Of a Bishop in *Occasional Services – A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. This included the requirement that three bishops already in the historic succession join in the laying on of hands; including a prayer with laying on of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit; and that laying on of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit is not repeated for a bishop who had already been so installed. The specific changes can be found in Appendix C.

Episcopal Church Actions

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations studied the proposed revision at its October 1999 meeting. The Commission commended *Called to Common Mission* to the 2000 General Convention, noting that it agreed substantially with the *Concordat of Agreement* which had already passed. The Commission also proposed two constitutional amendments for a second reading, allowing for ELCA clergy to serve in The Episcopal Church. These resolutions may be seen in full in Appendix C.

Educational materials regarding *Called to Common Mission* have been widely distributed throughout the Episcopal Church, including *A Commentary on Called to Common Mission* and *Questions Addressed*. (Available through the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations). The full text of *Called to Common Mission* may be found in Appendix C.

The *Orderly Exchange of Pastors*, detailing the procedures for interchangeability of ministers, was issued January 1, 2001. These procedures are available online at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1521_23951_ENG_HTM.htm or through the Office of Ministry Development of the Episcopal Church.

Lutheran Resolution on "Ordination in Unusual Circumstances."

At its 2001 Churchwide Assembly the ELCA by a two-thirds majority approved a by-law to its constitution that allows its bishops to delegate to other clergy their authority to ordain. The vote was 683 in favor and 330 opposed, a margin of only eight votes. The by-law says that: "for pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synodical bishop may provide for the ordination by another pastor of the ELCA of an approved candidate" but also says that "prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council."

The SCER issued an official response to the ELCA by-law at its October, 2001, meeting, the text of which may be found in Appendix C. The SCER expressed concern about how the bylaw might be implemented, but also affirmed the full communion relationship with the ELCA, noting that all ELCA bishops had been installed according to *Called to Common Mission* and that the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, the basis on which The Episcopal Church seeks full communion, does not mention the presbyterate. Such persons ordained by the bylaw exception, or non-episcopally ordained persons admitted to the roster of the ELCA, are not eligible for service in The Episcopal Church.

Other Anglican-Lutheran Dialogues

In addition to the full communion relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there are a number of dialogues between Lutheran and Anglican Churches worldwide.

The two world communions have articulated global policy. The 1997 Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Hong Kong noted with thanksgiving the Anglican – Lutheran agreements already in place, encouraged ever deepening relationships, renewed its commitment to the goal of full communion, and urged member churches to take appropriate steps towards the realization of that goal. In a similar vein, the 1998 Lambeth Conference rejoiced at Porvoo and Meissen; expressed positive hopes for *Called to Common Mission* in the U.S.A., for the Waterloo proposals in Canada, and for the Reuilly proposals between France and Britain and Ireland; made special mention of Africa and Australia; and regarding other regions of the world, it “encouraged further steps towards agreement in faith, eucharistic sharing and common mission on the way to the goal of full visible unity.” The world communions jointly set up an International Working Group.

In Europe, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Church of England publicly celebrated the **Meissen Agreement** in 1991 following its synodical acceptance in both countries. Meissen mainly recorded points of agreement, but noted remaining differences that needed to be resolved. In Germany the Church of England was dealing not with a single church, but with federal structures comprising various Regional Churches (Landeskirchen) – some Lutheran, some Reformed, some United. Clearly seen as an interim stage on a longer journey with the explicit commitment to press on further, Meissen’s limitation was that it did not resolve the differences between episcopal and non-episcopal ministries, and therefore fell short of achieving the full interchangeability of ministers. Practical working out has included partnerships between equivalent units, exchanges of students, clergy, and church members, and continuing theological conversations. A continuation body known as the Meissen Commission oversees developments.

Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the British and Irish Anglican churches took the further step to full communion on the basis of the **Porvoo Common Statement**. The Anglican churches of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and the Lutheran churches of Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden have adopted Porvoo, while the Lutheran churches of Denmark and Latvia have not signed so far. Publicly celebrated in 1996, Porvoo established a communion of some forty million Christians in ten countries of northern Europe. It should be remembered that the dialogues started much earlier, with Sweden in 1909, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia in the 1930’s, and after World War II embraced Denmark, Iceland, and Norway. By the 1950’s various interim agreements were already in place.

In fact, all five Nordic Lutheran churches had known only an episcopal form of church leadership for about a thousand years, and at the Reformation had consciously preserved their ancient episcopal sees, though continuity of episcopal succession was broken in some (not all) of the churches (for details see *Together in Mission and Ministry*, London, Church House Publishing, 1993). Porvoo understands apostolicity as primarily a characteristic of the whole church and the apostolic ministry within it as being to serve the church’s mission. The time had come when all of the churches could affirm together the value and use of the sign of historic episcopal succession. The churches did not impose pre-conditions on each other, but spoke rather of freedom to do what would serve the cause of the Gospel and promote greater unity in mission.

In practice, the Porvoo communion is maintained and developed by a cycle of intercession used in public worship, mutual participation in consecrating bishops, a small Contact Group, four yearly gatherings of church leaders, and occasional meetings of primates, but most of all by the growing network of contacts and exchanges between the partner churches.

In Africa there is little interest in historical differences that originated in Europe, but there are many positive signs in Tanzania, Southern Africa, and Central Africa. There is cooperation over such issues as a common hymnal or liturgy, joint theological education, and the pastoral care of refugees. There is widespread inter-consecration of bishops, often on an unregulated basis, and little difficulty about episcopacy as such. An interim committee has begun developing a pan-African agenda, and this is the level at which any formal agreement would probably be drafted.

In North America the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada entered into full communion in July, 2001 on the basis of the **Waterloo Declaration**. Because of extensive relations between people in Canada and the U.S., the two Anglican churches were consulted about *Waterloo* and *Called to Common Mission*.

In addition the Lutherans and Anglicans in Australia are also exploring ecumenical partnerships. These two churches are currently drafting guidelines for an interim eucharistic sharing agreement.