

January 2022. This proposed agreement has been authorized for further consideration across our churches by elected leaders in the Moravian Church in Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada. For additional information about this document, contact

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**Moravian Church
in Canada**



The Anglican Church of Canada

One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians — Called to Walk Together in Full Communion

Introduction

1. In John 17, Jesus, the Good Shepherd of the faith, prays that all those who believe in the Gospel will be completely one. By so praying, he teaches those who follow in his way that it is through the witness of their diversity in unity, and unity in diversity, that the world may come to know God's love more deeply, and to perceive Christ's message of reconciliation and peace more visibly. In recent decades, many churches have begun to see renewed signs of the fulfillment of Jesus' words as they unite in common witness and loving service in response to the joys, hopes, challenges, and needs of local, regional, and global communities.

2. The Moravian, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions are each historic communities of faith in Jesus Christ which have their roots in the ancient common tradition of the apostolic Church. They were also each shaped in many ways by the reforming impulses of 15th and 16th century Europe. At various times in their early histories, they found important points of contact and collaboration. The proto-reformers John Wycliffe and Jan Hus had many similar convictions about the need to root out corruption in the Church and renew its evangelistic witness, and they would mutually impact later reform movements in the British Isles, Bohemian lands, and elsewhere. The work of both figures would influence the thought of a young Martin Luther, who would carry it further. Luther saw the early Moravian Brethren as close colleagues, and there was a considerable exchange of ideas and support between both groups in the 16th and 17th centuries. Under persecution, Moravians would later seek refuge in reformation-era England, and the Church of England of that time undertook several campaigns to provide these exiled Moravian communities with ecclesial and material support as recognized protestant-episcopal siblings in Christ. Other interesting intersections between the three churches would occur in subsequent centuries and up to the present.

3. Today, Moravians, Lutherans, and Anglicans find themselves as neighbours in various parts of their respective global communions. The largest concentrations of the three are in Tanzania, South Africa, parts of Central America, England, and North America. In Canada, the Moravian Church in North America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada have congregations that live and minister alongside of one another in the greater Edmonton area, the greater Calgary area, West Toronto, and the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Local ministry collaborations have developed between these communities to varying extents and degrees, and increasingly so in recent years.

4. These emerging grassroots connections, along with a growing sense of the need for churches to walk faithfully together as disciples into an uncertain future, have raised to our shared ecumenical consciousness a call to seek full communion and deeper ministry partnerships together according to the prayer of our common Savior.

5. We do not hear this call alone. In several places in recent decades, the Lutheran, Moravian, and Anglican traditions have already found ways to enhance and formalise their relationships as a result of several decades of thorough dialogue on key theological issues. The 1995 *Fetter Lane Common Statement* enabled the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain to mutually recognize one another as churches holding the apostolic faith, and to formally covenant together to share in sacramental life and common mission and witness as fully as possible.¹ In 1999, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established a relationship of full communion with the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in North America through the declaration *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*.² These provinces of the Moravian Church also came into a full communion partnership with the US-based Episcopal Church through the affirmation of *Finding Our Delight in the Lord* in 2011.³

6. The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have been in full communion since 2001 through the *Waterloo Declaration*.⁴ Since that time, the two churches have grown closer together and pursued an increased sharing of common life, witness, and ministry at all levels. In 2019, the two *Waterloo* churches were able to take further steps with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the US-based Episcopal Church, expanding their relationships into a cross-border full communion partnership that has since come to be known as *Churches Beyond Borders*.⁵ This cross-continental Anglican-Lutheran relationship continues to enlarge the horizons of ecumenical imagination, including the possibility of Canadian Anglicans and Lutherans deepening connections with the full communion partners of our American Lutheran and Episcopal friends. In Canada, it is the same Northern Province of the Moravian Church in North America which has oversight, through a Canadian District, for the Moravian congregations that live and minister here.

7. Commitment 9 of the *Waterloo Declaration* calls on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada to draw on their full communion relationship as a basis to “continue to work together for the full visible unity of the Church of God.” This ecumenical commitment is consistent with Moravian convictions about the centrality of seeking the unity of the Church as found in the foundational document known as *The Ground of Unity*.⁶ In a spirit of thanksgiving for what God has already accomplished in each of our churches in drawing us towards this vision of unity, and with confidence and hope for what God has prepared for the whole Church, we believe it is time to take another step along the path where our One Shepherd desires to lead us – into a future of communion that becomes ever more full.

8. Therefore, we, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America proceed to state the following acknowledgments, affirmations, declarations, commitments, and vision.

1 “The Fetter Lane Common Statement,” in *Anglican-Moravian Conversations* (Church House Publishing, 1996).

2 “Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion” (1999), accessible at:
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Following_Our_Shepherd_To_Full_Communion.pdf

3 “Finding Our Delight in the Lord” (2011), accessible at:
https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/07/eir_finding_our_delight_official_text.pdf

4 “Called to Common Mission: The Waterloo Declaration,” accessible at:
https://www.anglicanlutheran.ca/wp-content/uploads/waterloo_declaration.pdf

5 “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion,” accessible at:
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Memorandum-of-Mutual-Recognition-JALC-LECC-Rev.-Feb-26-2019.pdf>

6 *The Ground of Unity*, accessible at:
<https://www.moravian.org/bcm/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/05/New-Ground-of-the-Unity-Layout-2020-85x11.pdf>

Acknowledgments

9. Building upon on the foundations of existing covenants and full communion agreements between the Church of England, the Moravian Church in Great Britain, The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Moravian Church in North America, and drawing on the content of these and other international dialogue texts between our three churches, we acknowledge the following:

- a. That in each church the Word of God is preached and looked to as containing all things necessary for our salvation, even as our respective reception of the Gospel always requires renewal and reform.⁷
- b. That our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith as summarized in the Nicene Creed and witnessed to in our subsequent foundation and confessional texts.⁸
- c. That the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord/Holy Communion are carried out in each church in manners that stand in accordance with the institution of the Lord Jesus.⁹
- d. That the whole people of God are called to participate in God's mission.¹⁰
- e. That personal, collegial, and communal oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in our three churches in a variety of forms; and that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in each of our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission, and ministry.¹¹
- f. That one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of divine grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ's commission through his Body the Church; and that these ministries are the gifts of God's Spirit to equip the whole people of God for the work of ministry.¹²

Affirmations

10. In the light of the above acknowledgments, we make the following affirmations:

- a. All three churches affirm one another's baptisms as sacramental signs of the washing away of sins and incorporation into the One Body of Christ.
- b. We affirm one another's celebrations of Holy Communion as the means of remembrance and participation in Christ and a sharing in the grace of his life, death, and resurrection.
- c. We affirm one another's expressions of the ministry of all the baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit, seeing this as the fundamental basis of the Church's witness and mission. We give thanks for the diverse ways that different kinds of lay ministries build up the Body of Christ in each of our respective traditions.

7 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28a, 55a.ii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.1, IV.B.1; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

8 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28b-c, f, g-h, 55a.iii-iv; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.1; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

9 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28d-e, 55a.ii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.2, IV.B.3; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

10 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28i; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, IV.C.3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 14-15.

11 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28j, 34-48, 55a.vi-vii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.3, IV.C.3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 20-29).

12 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28i, 29-31; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, IV.C.1-3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 16-19).

d. The Anglican Church of Canada affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Moravian Church in North America. We recognise its presbyters as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise its bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate on behalf of regional and local churches within their church and for the whole Church of God.

e. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Moravian Church in North America. We recognise its presbyters as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise its bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate on behalf of regional and local churches within their church and for the whole Church of God.

f. The Moravian Church in North America affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. We recognise their priests and pastors as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise their bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate over the jurisdictional areas of the Anglican Church of Canada and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in which they preside and for the whole Church of God.¹³

g. All three churches affirm one another's expressions of diaconal ministry as a sign of the Church's vocation to Christlike servanthood and the role of prophetic witness in the world and to the Church. We thus understand that deacons of each of the churches are ordained for service to their communities as a distinct vocation in ministry.¹⁴

Declaration

11. On the basis of these acknowledgments and affirmations, we joyfully declare the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America to be in full communion, and extend to one another the requisite reciprocity and relationship which this entails.

Commitments

12. As churches in full communion, we now commit ourselves:

a. To welcome members of our churches to receive as appropriate the pastoral and sacramental ministrations of one another's churches with complete hospitality.

¹³ Moravian bishops do not have geographically defined episcopal jurisdictions in the way that Lutheran and Anglican bishops do. In that sense, every Moravian bishop is a bishop for the entirety of the global communion ("the worldwide Moravian Unity"). This means that not every region where there are Moravian congregations would have a bishop who is proximately resident in that area. In practice, however, the Moravian communities in a particular place would typically have a pastoral relationship with a particular bishop or bishops, and would be visited by that bishop or bishops as needs and circumstances in the local context call for.

¹⁴ Diaconal ministry is an area where there is diversity among us. For example, the Anglican and Lutheran churches understand diaconal ministry as a ministry of the Word and service, whereas Moravian deacons are ordained to preside in a ministry of Word and Sacrament. Lutherans ordain pastors directly, and normally ordain deacons to permanent offices of that distinct ministry. Moravians and Anglicans retain the practice of sequential ordination to the diaconate prior to ordination to the presbyterate. Some Anglicans deacons are ordained to permanent offices of that distinct ministry. While these kinds of diversity of understanding and practice entail that a complete transferability of diaconal ministers and ministries between the three churches is not possible at this time, deacons of each church could and should still be invited by appropriate authorities to share those many aspects of their ministries and gifts within the other partner churches according to the full extent that existing provisions in those other churches allow.

- b. To welcome persons ordained in any of our churches to the office of presbyter/priest/pastor to serve, by invitation of the local ordinary and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination.
- c. To work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry, and with collaboration in diakonia to the fullest extent possible in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force.
- d. To invite one another's bishops to attend and participate as appropriate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church, and, as far as practically possible, to invite the members and clergy of one another's churches to attend and participate as appropriate in the ordination services of each church.
- e. To consult with one another regarding developments in our understanding of the ministry of all the baptized.
- f. To encourage as appropriate consultation and collaboration among members of our churches at all levels and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information on theological, pastoral, and mission matters.
- g. To establish a Trilateral Commission, with appropriate Lutheran, Anglican, Moravian and Indigenous membership, to nurture our growth in communion, to coordinate the implementation of this Declaration, and to report to the decision-making bodies of each of our churches.¹⁵
- h. To continue to work together for the full visible unity of the whole Church of God.

Vision

13. In addition to these specific areas of commitment, we also raise the following elements of a future vision of the fruits of full communion.

- a. In consultation and relationship with Indigenous expressions of faith in Jesus and the Gospel, to draw from the strength of our partnership and rededicate our churches to the ongoing responsibility of seeking further healing and reparation in relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples in wider Canadian society, and to the related work of systemic decolonisation in the three churches.
- b. To recognize and respond to the way that the reconciliation of past separations between churches is both interconnected with and a calling to deeper commitment in the wider mending of relationships across other lines of human division, exclusion, and hostility.
- c. To embrace together a common effort to promote transformative discipleship that empowers our members to join courageously and faithfully in God's transforming mission for the life of the world.
- d. To encourage the formulation of local ministry covenants for common work in mission and ministry between trios of Moravian, Lutheran, and Anglican congregations in geographically proximate places.
- e. To endeavor to undertake no new initiative in ministry on our own without first exploring ways that it could be done more faithfully together in at least a tripartite or bipartite partnership.

¹⁵ The existing Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission (JALC) is replaced the Trilateral Commission.

Conclusion

14. We rejoice in our Declaration as an expression of the visible unity of our churches in the one Body of Christ. We are ready to be co-workers with God in whatever tasks of mission serve the Gospel and the Ministry of Reconciliation. We give glory to God for the gift of unity already ours in Christ, and we pray for the fuller realisation of this gift in the entire Church.¹⁶

¹⁶ Although not directly indicated throughout, numerous elements of this declaration explicitly draw upon forms and phrasing from the 2001 *Waterloo Declaration*. This is done intentionally create a family resemblance between both agreements, and to witness to their continuity.