



The Convocation of **Episcopal** Churches in Europe

The Episcopal Church in The Anglican Communion

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

23 Avenue George V † 75008 Paris † France

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Paris | April 27, 2022

To our Ecumenical colleagues in the Episcopal Church,

I write to encourage your study of the final version of the document *Sharing the Gifts of Communion*—also known as the “[Augsburg Agreement](#),” for the historic city in which much of the discussion and drafting took place—between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria (ELKB). The ELKB is the expression of the Lutheran tradition in the German state of Bavaria, where three of our congregations call home; we are the only Anglican presence there. While present only in the state of Bavaria, the ELKB is a large church, with some 2.4 million members. All of our congregations worship in churches of the ELKB.

[A resolution now set before the House of Bishops](#)—sponsored by former Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, Bishop William Franklin, and myself—calls on General Convention to accept this final report and affirm its conclusion that the Episcopal Church and the ELKB together fulfill the requirements of churches in full communion, and should take steps to live into this reality.

That seems a dramatic statement. In fact, however, we believe it is really only an incremental step along an already-traveled path of agreements between our church and other Lutheran churches, and between other Anglican churches present in Europe and Lutheran on the continent.

We have begun our work remembering that our own church is an example of “[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 His Church.](#)” It is not for us to claim that our own adaptation has unique or privileged status. Rather, in our ecumenical work it is our task to study how another church has received and expressed in its own way the ministry of the episcopate, and to ask whether we recognize in that story the qualities of apostolicity, continuity, and catholicity that our own ordinal identifies as constituting this office.

Over the ten years since our conversations began, the Episcopal delegation has undertaken a deep study of the history of the ELKB—a history, like ours, sometimes troubled and occasionally heroic. We note that in the ordering of bishops in the ELKB, [the laying on of hands by other bishops both with the ELKB and by the bishops of other Lutheran churches](#) is a central aspect of the “installation” by which pastors of word and sacrament are ordained to the episcopate. We see, too, that through the long history of Germany’s consolidation as a nation, bishops in the ELKB successfully maintained the autonomy and integrity of their church, despite the claims of princes to be the “*summus episcopus*” of the churches of Bavaria.

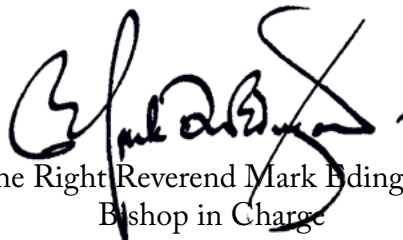
Seeing as we do the clear sign of the historic episcopacy present in an unbroken way throughout the history of the ELKB, we believe it beyond dispute that the conditions we have established in previous agreements of communion, involving the exchange of ordered ministers and of the sacraments of the church, are met by our ELKB partners.

We believe, as well, that by taking this step the Episcopal Church will be taking an important step toward joining a broader Anglican approach toward relationships with Lutheran churches in Europe, most significantly accomplished in the 1996 Porvoo Agreement, which established a relationship of communion between the Lutheran Churches of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, and Sweden, with our Anglican partners in the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church, and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church. We seek, in the agreement we have concluded, to align our church with the Anglican consensus on standards of agreement and communion with Lutheran churches that Porvoo upholds.

We've made all of the relevant documents available [on the Convocation's web site](#), and we encourage you to study them. Please know we are eager to answer any questions or provide any further information you may need.

I close simply by saying that with war continuing to the east of where I write, not in a hundred years has it been a greater matter of urgency that Christian churches in Europe undertake significant steps to walk together and witness together in deeper ways. We believe the Augsburg Agreement is exactly the way in which the Episcopal Church can take this step.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Edington', written in a cursive style.

The Right Reverend Mark Edington
Bishop in Charge

1 *Proposal*

2 **Sharing the Gifts of Communion (Augsburg Agreement)**

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

5

6 **Introduction**

7 1 Since the 1970s, a fruitful partnership has been built up in Bavaria between the
8 Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, part of The Episcopal Church (TEC), and the
9 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern; ELKB),
10 which expresses itself in a consistent history of sharing in worship and prayer, and
11 working together in diaconal projects.

12

13 2 Through this work together, Episcopalians and Lutherans in Bavaria have come to
14 understand more deeply their shared mission and the bonds between their churches.
15 Building on existing agreements between Anglicans/Episcopalians and Lutherans in
16 Germany, North America and Northern Europe, TEC and the ELKB are now ready to move
17 into a relationship of full communion, enabling full interchangeability of ministries and
18 full participation in one another's mission.

19

20 3 This current agreement, made specifically between TEC and the ELKB, has been informed
21 by a number of previous agreements between Anglican and Lutheran churches:

22 • the *Meissen Agreement* (1991), between the Church of England and the
23 Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), achieves mutual recognition of
24 churches and mutual Eucharistic hospitality, but does not achieve full
25 communion or interchangeability of ordained ministries;¹

26 and on the three regional agreements of (full) communion between Anglicans and
27 Lutherans:

28 • the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1992/93), between the European member
29 churches of the Anglican Communion and most of the Nordic and Baltic
30 Lutheran churches;²

31 • *Called to Common Mission* (1999/2000), between TEC and the Evangelical
32 Lutheran Church in America;³

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*.

33 · the *Waterloo Declaration* (2001), between the Anglican Church of Canada
34 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.⁴

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

43 4 In many parts of the world, member churches of the LWF and the Anglican Communion
44 work in close cooperation, with or without an agreement, and the Third Anglican
45 Lutheran International Commission urged churches to develop or adopt agreements that
46 reflect this cooperation.⁵ In this spirit, this agreement is offered as a further example and
47 invitation to other member churches of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran
48 World Federation to consider in their contexts how such a move forward could be
49 accomplished.

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51

52 5 Relationships between TEC and the ELKB have thus developed within the context of a
53 long history of ecumenical dialogue between Lutheran and Anglican/Episcopal churches,
54 which has shaped and enriched the experiences of many Anglicans and Lutherans. In
55 particular, through *Called to Common Mission*, mutual relationships between the ELCA
56 and TEC have become a lived reality. As distinctive churches with their own particular
57 relationships, in making this current agreement, TEC and the ELKB draw on the extensive
58 network of mutual experience of mission and ministry, as well as the experience of
59 working and worshipping together locally. The purpose of the current agreement is to
60 foster and deepen that common work through recognizing a relationship of full
61 communion between TEC and the ELKB.

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63 6 TEC and the ELKB have already taken important steps towards full communion. The 1987
64 *Niagara Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee and
65 *Receiving One Another's Ordained Ministries* of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission
66 on Unity, Faith and Order (received by ACC-16, 2016), define stages of relations between
67 churches. Relationships between the TEC and the ELKB have long-since reached stage 1
68 (recognition of one another as churches) and stage 2 (provisional structures exist which
69 promote mutual growth). The intention in this agreement is to move to stage 3, the
70 exploration of changing particular practices with respect to *episkopé* which will enable
71 the full interchangeability of ministries, and stage 4, the public declaration and
72 celebration of full communion.

73

74 7 In moving into this relationship, TEC and the ELKB understand full communion to be a
75 relation between distinct churches in which each recognizes the other as a catholic and
76 apostolic church holding the essentials of the Christian faith. Within this new relation,
77 churches become interdependent while remaining autonomous. Full communion

⁴ Neither the ELKB nor TEC is a party to the *Waterloo Declaration*, but the purpose of the *Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion* is to link the *Waterloo Declaration* and *Called to Common Mission*.

⁵ *Jerusalem Report*, pp. 53.56 [Appendix 3].

78 includes the establishment of appropriate recognized organs of regular consultation and
79 communication, including episcopal collegiality, to express and strengthen the fellowship
80 and enable common witness, life, and service. Diversity is preserved, but this diversity
81 does not divide and is not static. Neither church seeks to remake the other in its own
82 image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his
83 mission. They are together committed to a visible unity in the church’s mission to
84 proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments.⁶

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86 8 Specifically, TEC and the ELKB understand this to include welcoming one another’s
87 members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations; mutual recognition
88 and interchangeability of ordained ministries; freedom to use one another’s liturgies;
89 mutual invitations to participate liturgically in one another’s ordinations and installations
90 of clergy, including bishops; and the development of suitable structures for consultation
91 to express, strengthen, and enable common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God
92 and the salvation of the world.⁷

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94 9 Such a relationship is based on:
95 • a common confession of the apostolic faith in word and life;
96 • the sharing of one baptism, the celebration of one eucharist and the service of a
97 reconciled, common ministry;
98 • bonds of communion which support the churches at every level to guard and
99 interpret the apostolic faith, to teach authoritatively, to share resources, and to bear
100 effective witness in the world.⁸

101 **Signs of Communion that already exist**

102 10 Lutherans and Anglicans recognize that they already share communion in the Triune God
103 through their acceptance of the common gift of the Holy Scriptures; their affirmation of
104 the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist as constituent for the church; their shared
105 affirmation of the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds; their shared traditions of worship,
106 spirituality and theology; and their distinct but related experiences of the Reformation.

107
108 11 Anglicans and Lutherans both recognize Christ’s church as “the assembly of all believers
109 among whom the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are rightly administered”.⁹
110 Anglicans and Lutherans hold the ordained ministry of Word and sacrament to be a gift
111 of God to the church, and recognize the necessity of structures of pastoral oversight and
112 authority.

113
114 12 Anglicans and Lutherans have never condemned one another as churches. TEC and the
115 ELKB now affirm that they recognize in one another the essentials of the one catholic and
116 apostolic faith, to which their statements of faith witness, including the *Augsburg*
117 *Confession*, *Luther’s Small Catechism*, and *TEC’s Book of Common Prayer (1979)*, and they
118 affirm the substance of the doctrinal consensus articulated by successive international
119 Anglican-Lutheran dialogues.

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.

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13 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

14 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.

15 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

16 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

17 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

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.

163 Bishop may be known as *Landessuperintendent* or *Oberkirchenrat*.¹⁴ TEC and the ELKB
164 also recognize that this ministry of oversight – *episkopé* – is exercised not only through
165 bishops but also through the synods and other leadership structures of the two churches,
166 and that the relationship between bishops and these structures is an important aspect of
167 the ministry of oversight in both churches.¹⁵
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169 18 Together with *Called to Common Mission*, TEC and the ELKB agree that the historic
170 episcopate “can be locally adapted and reformed in the service of the gospel.”¹⁶ Since the
171 sixteenth century, the traditions from which both churches emerged have experienced
172 both continuity and change in their structures of *episkopé*. Different practices of
173 oversight developed in local contexts in response to diverse ecclesiological and political
174 realities and theological understandings. Anglicans maintained episcopal-diocesan
175 structures and continued to use the term “bishop” to describe these ministries after the
176 Reformation. Lutherans in Germany provided *episkopé* by adapting existing structures,
177 and described these ministries using a variety of terms, including “superintendent”, their
178 preferred translation of the New Testament term *episkopos*.
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180 19 The establishment of Anglican parishes on the North American continent spread steadily
181 following the first recorded Anglican celebration of Holy Communion in North America in
182 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia. Prior to the American Revolution, representatives of the
183 Bishop of London known as commissaries provided oversight in some colonies. In the
184 context of American Independence from Great Britain, the first American bishops were
185 elected, and in 1789 The Episcopal Church was constituted as a separate ecclesiastical
186 jurisdiction and as a church independent of state authority. From this time TEC has
187 affirmed the importance of synodical government and bishops have been elected. The
188 structures established in 1789 continue to the present.
189

190 20 General Convention, made up of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (equal
191 numbers of elected clergy and lay people), sets the policy of the Episcopal Church. Its
192 bishops are democratically elected by their respective diocesan conventions or synods
193 and are answerable to the House of Bishops; they are to be servants of the church and
194 not its lords. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is a member of the House of
195 Bishops, who since 1926 has been elected by that House, with confirmation by the House
196 of Deputies. A similar structure is mirrored in the dioceses, which have diocesan
197 conventions (made up of the diocesan clergy and elected lay delegates), that work
198 closely with the bishop. A bishop is elected at the diocesan convention by the clergy and
199 lay delegates, and is consecrated only after confirmation of this election by a majority of
200 TEC’s diocesan bishops and diocesan standing committees representing the whole
201 church. At the consecration, bishops are consecrated through prayer and laying on of
202 hands by at least three bishops, usually including bishops of the ELCA and other full
203 communion partners, with the involvement of representatives of the diocese, both
204 priests and lay persons, especially in presenting the bishop-elect for consecration, and in
205 the liturgy.
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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.

- 207 21 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria was formed in 1808 after the foundation of
208 the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1806. The General Synod was established in 1848, initially
209 sharing responsibility with the ruling (Roman-Catholic) Bavarian monarch who acted as
210 *summus episcopus*, in direct continuity with the role of the late medieval German prince
211 bishops.¹⁷ After the fall of the Bavarian monarchy in 1918, the ELKB (*Landeskirche*) was
212 constituted, with a church president (*Kirchenpräsident*), who since 1933 has been
213 referred to as bishop (*Landesbischof*). The bishop works together with the Synod
214 (*Landessynode*, made up of two-thirds lay people and one third clergy) and its Executive
215 Committee (*Landessynodalausschuss*), and also chairs the Church Governing Board
216 (*Landeskirchenrat*), which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the church.
217 Oversight is exercised through these four church-governing bodies. The *Landessynode*
218 elects the *Landesbischof*. Regional bishops (*Regionalbischöfe*) or *Oberkirchenräte*, who
219 are members of the *Landeskirchenrat*, share the responsibility for oversight in their
220 episcopal areas or areas of responsibility through ordination and visitation.
221
- 222 22 Today, pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria are ordained by the
223 *Landesbischof* or regional bishops. Ordination is a onetime act. Central elements of the
224 liturgy are the prayer for the Holy Spirit, the laying on of hands and the blessing of the
225 ordinand. The ordination rite provides that assistants say a biblical word of blessing and
226 also lay on hands. These assistants are not restricted to the ordained, and may include
227 (for instance) members of the parish council (vestry) or the candidate’s family and
228 friends. The installation of a bishop is understood as the installation of an already
229 ordained pastor into a new office now with episcopal functions. The *Landesbischof* is
230 installed by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany; the
231 regional bishops are installed by the *Landesbischof*. It is good practice – but not strictly
232 necessary – that at such installations bishops or ministers exercising *episkopé* in sister
233 churches within the Lutheran World Federation or other denominations are present and
234 assist in the laying on of hands.
235
- 236 23 In both TEC and the ELKB, these ministries of *episkopé* are therefore exercised personally,
237 collegially and communally.¹⁸ Bishops share the exercise of *episkopé* with the synodical
238 structures of the church. Ministers exercising *episkopé* constitute “a supra-
239 congregational form of ordained ministry for the sake of spiritual discernment and
240 leadership.”¹⁹ In both churches, clergy are ordained only by ministers who exercise
241 *episkopé*: the diocesan bishop or *Landesbischof*, suffragan or regional bishops.
242
- 243 24 Together with the LWF’s Lund Statement, *Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the*
244 *Church*, TEC and the ELKB affirm that these forms of *episkopé* are intended to preserve
245 the apostolic nature of the church and to interpret it for today. Through these structures
246 of *episkopé*, the church “exercises responsibility for its doctrine and practices through
247 open, critical deliberation and transparent ecclesial processes.”²⁰
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- 249 25 TEC and the ELKB affirm also with the *Lund Statement* that a bishop does not exercise
250 his/her ministry in isolation: “together with teachers of theology, pastors in
251 congregations, persons called to a ministry of education and committed lay persons,

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.

252 episcopal ministers [i.e. ministers exercising *episkopé* – ed.] are especially called to judge
253 doctrine in the life of the church, and to reject teaching that is contradictory to the
254 gospel. The responsibility of governing bodies in the church (parish councils and church
255 synods) is also to take formal decisions to ensure that the institutional, practical life of
256 the church is in good keeping with the message of the gospel and witnesses to it.”²¹

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258 26 In the words of the Anglican Bishops’ *Appeal to All Christian People* (1920), TEC and the
259 ELKB affirm that both churches have maintained and been served by an ordained
260 ministry truly faithful to the gospel, and that the ordained ministries of both churches
261 have always been, and continue to be, “manifestly blessed and owned by the Holy Spirit
262 as effective means of grace”.²²

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264 27 The four articles of the Anglican *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1888) remain the
265 foundation for Anglican/Episcopal ecumenical relations. Anglicans and Lutherans have
266 long agreed on its first three articles which affirm the foundational nature of Holy
267 Scripture, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, and the Apostles’ and Nicene
268 Creeds. The *Quadrilateral* sets out as the fourth basis for church unity: “the historic
269 episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of
270 the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of [God’s] Church.”²³ TEC and the
271 ELKB affirm that in both churches, *episkopé* is exercised in a form that is congruent with
272 this article.

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274 28 With the *Meissen Agreement*, TEC and the ELKB “acknowledge that personal and collegial
275 oversight (*episkopé*) is embodied and exercised in [their] churches in a variety of forms,
276 episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church’s unity and continuity in
277 apostolic life, mission and ministry.”²⁴ However, the ELKB and TEC can go further than
278 the *Meissen Agreement*: on the basis of the congruence in their understanding and
279 practice of *episkopé* and synodical government TEC and the ELKB are able to enter into a
280 relationship of full communion, with interchangeability of ordained ministries.

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282 **Continuity in the Gospel: Historic and evangelical succession**

283 29 For both TEC and the ELKB, continuity in the proclamation of the gospel is of primary
284 importance in establishing the apostolic character of the Church. This is preserved
285 through “succession” However, the focus of the term “succession” is different in the
286 traditions of the two churches.

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288 30 Within TEC succession is understood as the orderly succession of bishops ordained by
289 their predecessors as integral to the preservation of apostolic continuity in the
290 proclamation of the gospel. This represents an episcopal tradition which can be traced to
291 the ancient church, in which bishops already in this succession maintain the integrity of
292 the faith by ordaining newly elected bishops with prayer and the laying on of hands.²⁵
293 TEC, like all the churches of the Anglican Communion, asserts that its bishops stand in
294 historic succession understood in this way, through the consecration of new bishops

²¹ *Lund Statement*. §52.

²² Lambeth Conference 1920, Resolution 9.vii.

²³ Lambeth Conference 1888, Resolution 11.d.

²⁴ *Meissen Agreement* §VI 17 A.4.

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

295 through prayer and laying on of hands by at least three existing bishops. Acknowledging
296 this background, Anglicans have still recognized in their previous agreements of (full)
297 communion that the apostolic faith is preserved, not exclusively through the succession
298 of bishops, but by the whole church, that is, also through the ministry of priests and
299 deacons and of the whole people of God.
300

301 31 The ELKB understands succession in terms of the continuity of this apostolic faith, rooted
302 in the proclamation of the gospel and supported by the ordained ministry. As expressed
303 in the Augsburg Confession (art. 7), the Reformation emphasized the church as
304 evangelical, established through the continuous preaching of the gospel and the
305 celebration of the sacraments. This is the basis of the apostolic succession. The Augsburg
306 Confession (art. 14) teaches that “no one should publicly teach in the Church or
307 administer the Sacraments unless properly called.” Commenting on this, Article 14 of the
308 *Apology* (1531) affirms the Lutheran commitment to “willingly retain ecclesiastical and
309 canonical order”. Luther and other Reformers worked to ensure that structures were put
310 in place to maintain the true preaching of the gospel and celebration of the sacraments.
311 These structures have always included forms of oversight such as superintendents and
312 visitations. Through and since the Reformation, this continuity in local structures has
313 therefore been associated with a conscious conviction that apostolic teaching and faith
314 must be not only rediscovered but also preserved. Those involved in oversight are
315 installed through prayer and the laying on of hands.
316

317 32 Both TEC and the ELKB therefore recognize, as affirmed by *Called to Common Mission*,
318 that in the context of the ordained ministry and the ministry of the whole people of God
319 both churches “value and maintain a ministry of *episkopé* as one of the ways ... in which
320 the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in
321 fidelity to the gospel through the ages.”²⁶
322

323 33 In moving forward together, TEC and the ELKB commit to share an episcopal succession
324 that is both evangelical (true to the gospel) and historic (true to tradition), including
325 regularly a bishop of the other church to participate with at least two other ministers
326 exercising *episkopé* in the laying on of hands at the ordinations/installations of their own
327 bishops as a sign of the unity and apostolic continuity of the whole church.²⁷ TEC and the
328 ELKB believe that the fullness of the apostolic tradition preserved in each church will
329 deepen as a result of the relationship of full communion, through the shared ministry of
330 bishops and presbyters and of the whole people of God.
331

332 34 TEC and the ELKB share congruent understandings of *episkopé*, but this does not commit
333 the two churches to a unified concept of the office of bishop. TEC and the ELKB
334 acknowledge that there is a diversity of how the office of bishops is lived out in each
335 church. TEC and the ELKB affirm that the fact that the liturgy of introducing bishops into
336 office can be understood as installation or as ordination, or that tenure in office may
337 vary, or that the status of bishops when they leave office may differ does not hinder us
338 entering into full communion.
339

²⁶ *Called to Common Mission*, §12.

²⁷ *Called to Common Mission*, §12.

- 340 35 In order to demonstrate more clearly the shared nature of the *episkopé* exercised by
341 bishops, both churches commit to ensuring that at the ordination/installation of bishops,
342 the whole church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants
343 in the ordination/installation and to working to include in their installation/ordination
344 rites an affirmation that the bishop will exercise *episkopé* in conjunction with the
345 synodical government of the church.
346
- 347 36 Each church remains free to explore its particular interpretation of the ministry of
348 bishops in evangelical and historic succession. This should be done in consultation with
349 one another. Each church maintains and can enter into relationships with other
350 churches, including relationships of (full) communion, which do not oblige the other
351 church to engage in that relationship. That is, this declaration of full communion does not
352 imply automatic communion of the one church with the communion partners of the
353 other church, although each church is encouraged to seek communion with the churches
354 with which the other is in communion.
355
- 356 37 Recognizing one another as churches that truly preach the gospel and duly administer
357 the holy sacraments,²⁸ TEC and the ELKB receive with thanksgiving the gift of unity which
358 is already given in Christ. Christians have repeatedly echoed the scriptural confession
359 that the unity of the church is both Christ's own work and his call to all Christians. It is the
360 task of the churches, and of all Christians, as well as Christ's gift. Every Christian – and
361 every church – must “make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of
362 peace” (Ephesians 4:3), praying that they may rely upon, and willingly receive from one
363 another, the gifts given by Christ through his Spirit “for building up the body of Christ” in
364 love (Ephesians 4:16).
365
- 366 38 As TEC and the ELKB, we do not know to what new, recovered, or continuing tasks of
367 mission this relationship of full communion will lead our churches, but we give thanks to
368 God for leading us to this point, and entrust ourselves to that leading in the future,
369 confident that our full communion will be a witness to the gift and goal already present
370 in Christ, “so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

371

372 **Actions and Commitments**

- 373 39 We, The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, declare
374 ourselves to be in full communion. Together,
375 a. We commit ourselves to continue and deepen our common life in mission and service,
376 to pray for and with one another and to share resources as appropriate in Bavaria,
377 recognizing that TEC is a very small minority there. We encourage regular collaboration
378 and consultation among members of our churches at all levels as appropriate.
379 b. We commit ourselves to offer sacramental and pastoral ministry to members of one
380 another's churches.
381 c. We commit ourselves to receive those who formally leave one church to move to the
382 other with the same status (for example baptized, communicant, confirmed) that they
383 held in their previous church.

²⁸ CA VII; 39 Articles Art. XIX.

- 384 40 The declaration of full communion between our two churches implies the immediate
385 recognition of currently serving bishops and pastors/priests of the one church by the
386 other.²⁹ TEC fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and pastors currently
387 existing within the ELKB, acknowledging its pastors as ordained ministers in the Church of
388 God and its bishops and regional bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal
389 *episkopé*. Likewise, the ELKB fully recognizes the ordained ministry of bishops and priests
390 currently existing within TEC, acknowledging its priests as ordained ministers in the
391 Church of God and its bishops as bishops exercising a ministry of personal *episkopé*.
392 41 With full communion, interchangeability of ministries is given. We therefore commit
393 ourselves to welcome persons ordained in either of our churches to the office of
394 priest/pastor to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which are in
395 force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination. We affirm that
396 bishops may be invited to carry out in the other church, as appropriate, those ministries
397 which they exercise in their own, such as confirmation.
- 398 42 We commit ourselves, as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church, to invite
399 a. one another's bishops regularly to participate in the laying on of hands at the
400 installation/ordination of bishops, with the expectation that a bishop from the other
401 church will be present at the ordination of the bishop of the Convocation and the
402 installation of the *Landesbischof*;
403 b. one another's pastors and priests to participate in the laying on of hands at the
404 ordination of pastors or priests in one another's churches;
405 c. one another's lay people, including both those who share in the exercise of *episkopé*
406 and members of local congregations, to participate in our churches'
407 ordinations/installations in ways which celebrate the ministry of the whole people of
408 God.
- 409 Such mutual invitations are understood as a call for the deepening of the lived
410 experience of our communion.
- 411 43 We commit ourselves also to continue our practice of inviting representatives of other
412 churches, representing the worldwide church, to participate at the
413 installation/ordination of bishops.
- 414 44 We commit ourselves to ensure that at the ordination/installation of bishops, the whole
415 church be visibly present through the involvement of lay people as assistants in the
416 ordination/installation and to work to include in our installation/ordination rites an
417 affirmation that the bishop will exercise *episkopé* in conjunction with the synodical
418 government of the church.
- 419 45 We commit ourselves to invite a representative of TEC to attend the synod of the ELKB
420 and a representative of the ELKB to attend the Convention of the Convocation of the
421 Episcopal Churches in Europe, and to keep one another informed about developments in
422 our two churches.
- 423 46 We commit ourselves to establishing a small continuation committee which for at least
424 seven years will undertake regular (at least annual) consultation regarding our
425 relationship, will initiate further work as needed, and can be consulted should any
426 questions or difficulties arise.
- 427 47 Each church agrees that the other church will continue its full communion relationship
428 with all the churches with whom it is already in communion. We encourage one another

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.

429 to seek communion with these churches as well, but recognize that our declaration of full
430 communion does not imply automatic communion of the one church with the
431 communion partners of the other church.

432 48 We commit ourselves to work together to proclaim Christ’s gospel through word and
433 deed, and to further the unity of the whole of Christ’s church, recognizing that entering a
434 relationship of full communion will bring new opportunities and levels of shared
435 evangelism, witness, and service.

436

437

As of 22.02.2022

Commentary on “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” (the “Augsburg Agreement”)

*An Explanatory Memorandum on the historical development of the ministry of episkopé
in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria*

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Since 2013, following the initiative of the then-Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, The Episcopal Church has been engaged in a dialogue with the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, or ELKB), with a view to exploring the possibility of a relationship of full communion between our churches.
- 1.2. This dialogue has explored theological, practical, and ministry aspects of our relationship as churches called to respond to God’s initiative in mission. It takes as its foundation the gift of our shared presence in the ancient land of Bavaria for more than a hundred years. The Episcopal Church is the only Anglican presence in Bavaria; all of our communities worship in spaces of the ELKB.
- 1.3. In our conversations together, the Episcopal delegation has given careful attention to a study of the history of Bavarian Lutheran Church, and its development into its present-day form. This post-Reformation history is more than twice as long as our own, and has witnessed the response of the church through a number of passages without parallel in our own story: the shattering of church unity during the Reformation; the confrontation with the Reformed tradition; the long trauma of the Thirty Years’ War, which claimed the lives of nearly a third of all people living in Western Europe, and nearly half in some parts of Germany; the dominance of state power over questions of church organization and practice; the catastrophe of National Socialism, and the painful division of Germany for forty-five years.
- 1.4. As Episcopalians and Anglicans, we begin in ecumenical dialogue understanding that “[h]istorically, Anglican ecclesiology has said interchangeability of ministries requires reconciliation of episcopal ministries.”¹ This means that the line dividing churches with whom we are in *relationship* from churches with which we are in *communion* ultimately devolves to the question of whether we recognize in another church the sign of the historic episcopate that we feel we have received as the gift of our own inheritance in faith. Our view on precisely what that sign signifies has changed over time, the fruit of both our deepening encounters with other churches and our own growing awareness of

¹ Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Faith, Unity, and Order, “Receiving One Another’s Ordained Ministries,” study document received by ACC-16, April 2016.

the contingent nature of our origins as a church that shaped its own “local adaptation” of the ministry of *episkopé* under conditions of exigency.

- 1.5. Having prayerfully reflected on the study of this history, the Episcopal delegation has come to the settled view that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria is indeed characterized by the continuous presence of the historic episcopate throughout its history, locally adapted—as the fourth provision of the Lambeth Quadrilateral describes—“to the varying needs of the nations and peoples” who are the today the faithful people of the ELKB. Accordingly, affirming the conclusion of “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” that the Episcopal Church and the ELKB are churches in communion does not necessitate a suspension of the ordinal of this church.
- 1.6. To say this, however, is additionally to put forward an answer to a question of definition: What is the “historic episcopate”? What are the episcopal ministries that must be reconciled for the interchangeability of ministries to be not only possible, but in some sense required? If, in the words of the “Appeal to All Christian People” issued at the close of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, the episcopate is “one means” of providing “a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body,” then is the sign we seek that of the presence of the historic episcopate a sign of those qualities, or instead that of a particular form of their expression?
- 1.7. As we have studied together as Anglicans and Lutherans recent ecumenical agreements leading to the interchangeability of ministers, we note a shift away from a test grounded on specific forms of episcopal ministry and toward a focus on exactly these qualities in the expression of the ministry of *episkopé*—*apostolicity*, in the sense of proclamation and witness; *continuity*, as a lived awareness of the church’s obligation to obediently receive and faithfully transmit the teaching and witness of the church, and discern and form the vocation of a new generation of ordained ministers; *oversight*, or the assurance of order and ecclesial discipline in the church; and *ecumenicism*, the personification of the church’s catholicity and the expression of its longing for, and labors toward, the unity of all Christians in response to Christ’s own call.
- 1.8. Accordingly, we offer for the consideration of the wider Episcopal Church the view that the question of whether a reconciliation in episcopal ministries is possible—that is, whether the “sign of the historic episcopate,” the necessary condition of the interchangeability of ministries, is present—should be based on *an examination of the qualities intrinsic to that ministry*. Said differently, we feel we stand squarely on present Anglican ecumenical practice by saying that our work has sought to discern whether the sign of historic *episkopé*—as contrasted to the narrower construction of the “historic episcopate” as the succession of bishops—has been continuously present in another church. We are deeply persuaded that in the case of the ELKB, this is certainly true.

2. The historic expression of *episkopé* in the ELKB

- 2.1. While this brief memorandum cannot possibly encompass the long and complex history of the emergence of the ELKB from the crucible of both Reformation and religious war, it is vitally important for those considering this proposal of communion from an American perspective to bear in mind that while our story begins in separation from both the Church and crown of England, the Lutheran Church in Bavaria has contended throughout its history—a history longer than that of Anglicanism itself—with the complexities of entanglement with state power.
- 2.2. Even in late medieval and early modern Germany, long before the rupture of unity at the Reformation, the German aristocracy—a rising class of local and regional nobility beneath, but not entirely subservient to, the Holy Roman Emperor—held sway in the church. The emergence of this class was in a sense a consequence of the Investiture Controversy, the eleventh- and twelfth-century contest between the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor over who had power to appoint bishops and abbots. In feudal Germany, this newly emergent class of local nobility, whose status did not merely rest on being representatives and agents of the emperor, “entered wholeheartedly into an alliance with the Gregorian church...”² By 1500, the majority of German bishops were required to be members of this class, and German bishops were territorial princes as well as—and often effectively prior to—their spiritual responsibilities.
- 2.3. The parallel emergence of Luther’s Reformation and the first stirrings of the nation-state in Early Modern Europe are well known. The protection of Martin Luther by Frederick III, Elector of Saxony,³ personalizes what was in fact an important historical reality—the alignment of state power and church development. Luther felt—as did the earliest Anglicans—that he was correcting and continuing the Christian faith; “Luther never intended to found a new Church, rather he wished to restore the original Church, which had been perverted by the Roman papacy.”⁴
- 2.4. Yet Luther distinguished between the spiritual and secular aspects of that task, believing that the former could be entrusted to the unyielding power of the Gospel when correctly proclaimed, and the latter to those with the capacity to assure order in a time of instability and crisis. “In ecclesiastical affairs the princes or magistrates were not to act as secular rulers, but as the most eminent members of the congregation. In this [Luther] followed a conception that had been developed in the Middle Ages, namely that in the

² Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 142.

³ An “elector” was one of the handful of princes given the right to vote in the election of the Holy Roman Emperor. Three of them were bishops—the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne; and four were lay princes (the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg).

⁴ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 185.

case of a breakdown of order in the Church the secular authorities had the right to act as temporary bishops for the restoration of normal conditions.”⁵

- 2.5. As a general observation, this points to a development in the history of the Lutheran Church in Bavaria and elsewhere in Germany that runs somewhat opposite of that in the history of Anglicanism. In the Anglican branch of the Reformation, the medieval bishops who had been in the pejorative phrase, “prince bishops” lost much of that political power, although they remained members of the English House of Lords. In Germany, by contrast, owing to the different circumstances in which Luther’s reform emerged, the reverse was true—the bishops who had been princes were replaced by princes who became bishops, at least to the extent of determining the way in which the Christian faith would be expressed in the lands they controlled, and (under the terms of the Peace of Westphalia) also guaranteeing that those of minority Christian beliefs had the right to worship as their conscience dictated.
- 2.6. In Bavaria’s case, this ultimately meant that all through the tumultuous process of Germany’s consolidation as a nation from dozens of separate principalities—through the 1806 dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the Revolutions of 1848, the unification of the German Empire in 1871, and the final collapse of the Bavarian monarchy as a consequence of Germany’s defeat in World War I—the sovereign of Bavaria held principal responsibility for assuring the tranquility of the church. Indeed, with the creation of the Bavarian Monarchy in 1805, the king of Bavaria—generally himself a Roman Catholic—also held the role of *summus episcopus* for the Lutheran churches there. This title was, over its long history, less a means of control than a responsibility of protection and facilitation; it had an organizational function (the Church Office of the Bavarian Lutheran Church was part of the Bavarian government), but it also expressed in a different way the constitutive quality of oversight by the episcopate, assuring that contending expressions of the Christian faith could coexist peacefully and worship without fear of reprisal or recrimination.
- 2.7. Throughout this long history, the doctrinal guidance and prophetic witness of the ELKB belonged not to the king but to its own leaders. If administrative oversight of the church was provided by a hybrid apparatus combining elements of church and state—the pastors were, after all, paid by the state, and the Peace of Westphalia established the principle that to the sovereign fell the duty of defending the free exercise of religion—the ecclesial oversight of the teaching of the faith, the conduct of ministries of service and witness, the raising up of new ministers, and the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel, were all the responsibility of the church itself, and of those who were, in ways appropriate to Bavaria’s culture and context, identified and lifted up as leaders in that church under a variety of titles.
- 2.8. That the Lutheran tradition resisted the specific title “bishop” (*bischof*) for this ministry has less to do with a rejection of the need for apostolicity, continuity, oversight, and ecumenism in

⁵ Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: The Reformation*, 186-7.

the leadership of the church, and far more to do with a deep historic and cultural need to differentiate their church from the tradition Luther intended to both continue and reform. The conscious choice to render the scriptural witness ἐπίσκοπος in different ways—*Oberkonsistorialpräsident* (Senior President of the Consistory), *Kirchenpräsident* (Church President), or (since 1933) *Landesbischof* (Bishop of the Region [of Bavaria])—translated by our Bavarian colleagues in our joint work by the simple term “superintendent”—should not be read as in some way expressing a rejection of either the ministry or the sign of episkopé. Rather, in the local circumstances, language, and culture of the church it serves, these have been the ways in which the ELKB has named the continuing presence of the apostolic witness in their church.

- 2.9. It is also important for Episcopalians—who have never been, since our emergence as an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion, an established church with state entanglements—to note the history of movements within the Bavarian Lutheran Church, roughly paralleling the Oxford Movement in England, to sever all ties with state authority. The nineteenth-century “neo-Lutherans,” who emerged in the years following the revolutions of 1848, wrote to defend the deposit of Lutheran doctrine and standards against state-driven demands for church union (between Lutheran and Reformed traditions); to emphasize the normative authority of the witness of scripture; and to reassert the understanding of the church as a divine, not a civil, institution. As Walter Conser has observed, there were broad similarities between the neo-Lutherans and the Tractarians in their resistance to the incursion of state power on the church’s responsibilities and privileges. A leading thinker in this movement, Wilhelm Löhe, was a pastor and theologian of the Bavarian church. Importantly, this moment also revealed important differences between Anglicans and Lutherans on the source of the authority of episkopé in the church: “Where the Oxford movement had located authority in apostolic succession and then gone on to ground the church’s commission on that basis, the neo-Lutherans located this authority in the biblical word and founded the church on that base.”⁶
- 2.10. Can we see in this choice of a locus for the authority of the church’s teaching and witness a recognizable sign of historic episkopé in the ELKB? **The Episcopal delegation believes that the fruits of the continuous presence of this ministry in the ELKB could not be more plainly shown than through a consideration of its survival as an *intakte Kirche* (“intact church”) through the trauma of National Socialism and the years of World War II.** The *intakten Kirchen* were the few regional churches in Germany who did not capitulate, in the plebiscites forced on the German churches by the Nazi government on July 23, 1933, by electing into their leadership a majority of so-called *Deutschen Christen*, representatives of the Nazi-controlled “German Christian” faction. The ELKB did not. That did not mean, of course, that there were not Nazi supporters within the ELKB; yet even in the midst of the convulsions of the National Socialist years, the church was able to carry forth, under considerable duress, its continuing witness and ministry, and to do so without dividing, something the Episcopal Church, reflecting on the experience of Civil War, did not accomplish.

⁶ Walter H. Conser, Jr., “A Conservative Critique of Church and State: The Case of the Tractarians and Neo-Lutherans,” *Journal of Church and State* 25:2 (Spring 1983), 332.

3. Consonance with other Anglican ecumenical initiatives

- 3.1. *Called to Common Mission*, our agreement of communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is a singular ecumenical accomplishment of our part of the Anglican Communion. Since that time, of course, we have engaged in dialogue with other churches, notably the Moravian Church, leading toward agreements of full communion.
- 3.2. We have been aware, in our conversation, of the distinction made by canon in the Episcopal Church between *recognizing* and *reconciling* ordained ministries. We have been clear, as noted in 1.4 above, that the *sine qua non* of the higher standard of reconciled ministries is a reconciliation of the ministry of *episkopé*.
- 3.3. “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” makes clear that our two churches “share congruent understandings of *episkopé*,” and notes further that “this does not commit our two churches to a unified concept of the office of bishop” (§34).
- 3.4. In taking this view we are building on the work of other Anglican-Lutheran agreements beyond the Episcopal Church, especially the Porvoo Agreement which established relationships of full communion (and thereby interchangeability of presbyteral and episcopal ministers) between three of the four Anglican jurisdictions in Continental Europe (the Church of England, the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church, and the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain), the other Anglican churches of the British Isles (the Church of Ireland, The Church in Wales, and the Scottish Episcopal Church), and the majority of number of national Lutheran churches in Northern Europe (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain).
- 3.5. These churches approached their work acknowledging from the outset that “[t]he interruption of episcopal succession [in the Lutheran churches] has, nevertheless, always been accompanied by the intention and by measures to secure the apostolic continuity of the Church as a Church of the gospel served by an episcopal ministry” (Porvoo Agreement, §34). We believe this accurately and fully characterizes the witness and expression of *episkopé* in the ELKB as well.
- 3.6. The Porvoo Agreement further identifies the four entwined meanings of the sign of the laying on of hands in language equally pertinent to the Episcopal Church and the ELKB: “[F]irst it bears witness to the Church’s trust in God’s faithfulness to his people and in the promised presence of Christ with his Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to the end of time; secondly, it expresses the Church’s intention to be faithful to God’s initiative and gift, by living in the continuity of the apostolic faith and tradition; thirdly, the participation of a group of bishops in the laying on of hands signifies their and their churches’ acceptance of the new bishop and so of the catholicity of the churches: fourthly, it transmits ministerial office and its authority in accordance with God’s will and institution. Thus in the act of consecration a bishop receives the sign of divine approval and a permanent commission to lead [their] particular church in the common faith and apostolic life of all the churches” (Porvoo Agreement, §48).

- 3.7. Accordingly, the Episcopal delegation to these conversations holds the view that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria is no less characterized by the presence of the sign of the historic episcopate than its sister Lutheran churches in Northern Europe, many of whom, it should be noted, have a lower understanding than the ELKB of the distinct ministry of *episkopé* in the church. On this basis, we see our agreement as fully constant with established patterns of Anglican-Lutheran agreements of communion and ministerial interchangeability present in the context of Europe. We further believe that, on this basis, our agreement requires no departure from either the Constitution or the Canons of the Episcopal Church in order to provide a means of reconciling the ministries of bishop/*Bischof* and priest/*Pfarrer*, for those ordained to these ministries in the ELKB have received this ordination under the sign of the historic *episkopé*.

4. Practical Considerations

- 4.1. “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” provides for the establishment of a “Continuation Committee” (at ¶46) to contend with matters arising from the further implementation of this agreement. We believe that this is the correct place in which to locate responsibility for the design of a liturgical celebration of our agreement, guided by the simplicity of the provisions for the celebrations described in the Porvoo Agreement (at ¶59).
- 4.2. Because it is our view that the ELKB does indeed possess the sign of the historic episcopate, we do not feel the agreement itself to be the appropriate or necessary place to spell out liturgical provisions for how our agreement of communion will be inaugurated. Neither do we feel it appropriate to propose a liturgical action of Lutheran and Episcopal bishops engaging in a mutual laying on of hands, which would suggest that one is in need of receiving the historic episcopate from the other. Instead, following the model of Porvoo, we feel two services, one in Munich and one in Paris, at which the agreements were read and signed, prayers of thanksgiving for the past and the future offered by Lutherans for Anglicans and Anglicans for Lutherans, the exchange of peace, and a jointly celebrated Eucharist, together with other signs of our common life, will be appropriate.

5. The Question of Urgency

- 5.1. The conversations leading up to the final version of “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” have been ongoing for nearly ten years. The Episcopal delegation has reported, through the Committee on Interreligious and Ecumenical Work, to the 79th General Convention, and was commended in Resolution 2018-C059 to press forward in its work.
- 5.2. We realize that previous agreements of this nature have been received in full by one General Convention to be considered for a Triennium, and then considered for final approval at the subsequent General Convention. We feel, however, that such a practice places an undue burden on the proposed agreement, and that both Houses should take in view four

considerations in weighing our resolution to affirm the Report’s finding that the Episcopal Church and the ELKB are churches in communion.

- 5.3. First, this agreement breaks no new ground in the domain of Anglican-Lutheran relationships. It relies on an understanding of “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 His Church” fully developed in the 1993 Porvoo Agreement.
- 5.4. Second, in “Sharing the Gifts of Communion” we are building incrementally on agreements already achieved and well-considered by the deliberative and legislative processes of our church. Indeed, in our ELKB partners we have found an expression of the Lutheran tradition with an understanding of the historic episcopate easily recognizable within the context of our previous agreements of full communion—in particular, that with the Church of Sweden, which will also be considered at this General Convention.
- 5.5. Third, seen from the perspective of the Episcopal Church in Europe, we are living at a moment of utmost danger to the interests of peace and security and the cause of human dignity. With war again unleashed in Europe, not in ninety years has there been a moment of greater urgency for Christian communities drawing nearer and working together to both proclaim and model God’s loving purposes. Our common witness and shared communion with the ELKB could not possibly come at a more pivotal time for the work Christians are called to do in this broken world.
- 5.6. Finally, in March of 2023 the ELKB will elect its new *Landesbischof*, the successor to Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who with Presiding Bishop Jefferts-Schori inaugurated these conversations. The new *Landesbischof* will be installed the following November. A *Landesbischof* may serve in the ELKB for as many as twelve years; hence, the next bishop is not likely to be elected until 2035. The opportunity to participate in the new bishop’s installation next year would constitute both a crucial sign of our communion and a right beginning of our relationship, and one in which we hope General Convention will enable our church to participate.



B001 Accepting the agreement "Sharing the Gifts of Communion" between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria

Original

Documents

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church receive and commend *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* as set forth following as the basis for a relationship of full communion to be established between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria);

And be it further

Resolved, that the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church accept the affirmation of *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* that our churches are in full communion with each other;

And be it further

Resolved, that the Presiding Bishop appoint four members to the Continuation Committee called for in *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* to represent The Episcopal Church in the ongoing work of furthering our relationship;

And be it further

Resolved, that Title 1, Canon 20, Section 1 be amended by adding a new subsection as follows:

<Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (***) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.>**

d. The Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (via the acceptance of *Sharing the Gifts of Communion* of 2022)

<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>

d. *The Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (via the acceptance of Sharing the Gifts of Communion of 2022)*

Current Status

Pending Committee Action

Committee

[19 - Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations](#)

Proposed by

The Rt. Rev. Mark Edington

Endorsed by

The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin and The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori