

Report of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission

The Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission (JALC) is pleased to report to both executive councils of our churches and, through them, to the National Convention and The General Synod.

As this triennium winds to a close, Commissioners are well thankful for the time that we have spent together, for the work and deep learning involved, and for the friendship and supportive collegiality which we have enjoyed. We are also deeply reflective about the many challenges and gifts that were experienced by our churches during the pandemic time which has coincided with so much of our mandate.

We are also deeply grateful for twenty-two years of our formal full-communion relationship and we remember with such gratitude the vision and foresight of those who have gone before and the many, many members of our churches whose faith and determination, along with their dedication to the spirit of ecumenism, bright about, with God's help, this important embodiment of the vision of Jesus that 'we all may be one'.

The Commission exists to monitor and encourage this relationship between our churches, at all levels, and both to plant and nourish seeds of cooperation and collegial ministry in and through our churches to the world. As we have met together to do our work during this triennium, we have continued to be impressed and moved by the many ways in which our churches live and work together, in a variety of ways, across this vast country.

Twelve Commissioners, representing all orders of lay and ordained ministry, from across the country coast to coast to coast met six times, learning quickly how to adapt, to zoom meetings, and accomplished much.

Among the highlights of the triennium are:

Worship resources for the 20th Anniversary of Full Communion: Entitled "Common Ground, Holy Ground, Common Good," these resources are available for use in local settings and online gatherings via the following link to a shared web space: <https://anglicanlutheran.ca/waterloo/>

Surveys on Experiences of Full Communion: In 2020, JALC conducted two surveys on the experience of full communion at congregational and regional levels – one for Dioceses and Synods and one for Waterloo Ministries (i.e.,

shared local ministry arrangements between Lutherans and Anglicans). These surveys produced substantial feedback indicated numerous ways that ministry and witness has been enhanced through full communion partnership, especially in congregational settings. They also served to identify some areas for continued growth and learning, particularly in connection with navigating matters of polity and governance as well as worship and liturgical practices.

Two successful networking events with Waterloo Ministry congregations and communities: The Waterloo Ministries gatherings provided space and connections to share the joys, challenges, and hurts of building shared ministries. Holding the events on Zoom allowed participants to attend from their home spaces, which may have provided the safety they needed to share with authenticity and fullness. Plans are underway for another gathering in the spring.

Work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry: A highlight of JALC's first gathering by Zoom in May 2020 was the panel of deacons from Anglican, Lutheran, and other traditions who shared stories of their ministry and their deep sense of call to diaconal ministry. Areas of focus included Christian education, service among those at risk, care for the frail elderly, community ministry, spiritual direction, word and service. We learned that while there were important differences in polity, formation, compensation, and deployment, there was also a significant commonality of vocation. Themes that emerged from their stories were fluidity and flexibility in ministry, emphasis on equipping the baptized, service among those on the margin, ministry that is justice oriented, collaborative, and transformational. One take away is that mutual understanding of the diaconate begins at the level of stories of vocation and ministry rather than discussions at the level of requirements, standards, and polity. Anglican and Lutheran deacons held a virtual conference in July 2021. <https://anglicanjournal.com/deacons-meet-in-threshold-time-at-firstvirtualconference/>

Closer working relationship with Moravians in Canada: COGS, NCC and elected leaders in the Moravian Church in Canada have authorized a proposed agreement for further consideration across our three churches. JALC welcomed Rev. James Lavoy, a Moravian pastor from Edmonton, as an observer to the Commission. The agreement requires endorsement by national governing bodies; the pandemic has delayed the timing of this endorsement.

Fostering Lutheran-Anglican shared development in the seminary context: Working with Heads of Anglican and Lutheran colleges, JALC has encouraged shared liturgical use and training. Also, we have invited the seminaries to foster

shared and cross-formation, so that graduates are able to serve both denominations.

Two meetings with our American counterparts on the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee: We are pleased to report a close working relationship among Heads of Churches and national staff of the The Episcopal Church (TEC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Shared work among the four churches is now called “Churches Beyond Borders.” This triennium had a primary focus on addressing racism and the intersecting the legacies of the Doctrine of Discovery and slavery; a conversation that will continue. TEC and ELCA each have a full communion relationship with the Moravian Church in North America, and these agreements informed work with Moravians in Canada.

Encouraging joint judicatory gatherings: As has been their semi-regular pattern, COGS and NCC met together in March 2020. JALC also celebrates and encourages developments to see more frequent opportunities for meetings between the ELCIC Synod Bishops and the ACC Provincial Metropolitans.

Encouraging continued working relationship between the national staff members of both of our churches: At the invitation of the National Bishop and the Primate, occasional meetings between different groupings of national staff from both churches have continued throughout this triennium, in an online form. The development of collaborative work plans between ACC and ELCIC staff counterparts has especially been encouraged, leading to effective collaboration. JALC continues to monitor and encourage further opportunities for intentional staff partnership between our two churches.

Looking Forward

We recommend the continuation of the work of the Commission into the next triennium, with focus on the following:

- Further work on *diakonia*, and particularly on the ‘diaconal church’.
- Working alongside Indigenous siblings as the self-determining Indigenous church grows and flourishes.
- Continued encouragement of full-communion education as part of regular seminary/training for ministry curricula.
- Deepening of communication with and understanding of the Moravian Church and the ways in which we can live out a ‘new’ full communion

relationship. This includes appropriate Moravian representation on the Commission.

- Continued networking opportunities for local Waterloo ministries.
- We invite COGS and NCC consider appointing at least one person under thirty years from each church to the next iteration of the commission. The need for young adult/youth perspectives came up in various discussions.

JALC Members 2019 – 2023

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