

# Reception of Full Communion

## Suggestions for Local UMC and ELCA Congregations

This list is organized around the liturgical calendar. Many of these activities are already being incorporated into the worship and programs of local congregations but are listed here to stimulate thinking about how clergy and congregations can be intentional about making our UMC-ELCA Full Communion agreement visible “for the sake of the world.” It is not intended to be definitive and will need to be adapted to local preferences and resources. Besides, looking for opportunities to be present at each other’s baptisms, Holy Communion and ordinations, here are some suggestions for fellowship events, combined studies, mission, and ecumenical and interreligious ministries.

### ADVENT 2010

- Just before Advent, publish a community news bulletin with dates and invitations to various programs of the two local churches, cantatas, nativity stories, special services and, especially events held together. Pass out in bulletins and make available to the larger community.
- Just to get to know each other, a UMC or ELCA local congregation invite the other to a Christmas Open House on one of the Sunday’s to explore unique holiday customs and serve traditional refreshments. Next year the other local congregation is the host.
- Host together and “Alternative Christmas” evening to make something and to highlight other needs around the world, such as The Heifer International Project.
- Invite each other to sponsor one of the local holiday missions to provide food, gifts, or meals. Let the community see the two congregations working together, for example in homeless ministries, soup kitchens, nursing home and hospital visits, gifts to service men and women.
- Schedule Christmas Eve Services so that members from both could go to each other’s service if that were more convenient.

### CHRISTMAS

- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Sunday Service: strategize to schedule these in such a way to provide opportunities to attend each other’s services. Include the other in the Prayers of the People and in Thanksgiving Prayers.

- Continue whatever community mission project was started in Advent. Perhaps modify it to fit a more long-term ministry.
- Host a community Watch Night Service on New Year's Eve using Wesley's and Luther's materials.

#### PENTECOST and ORDINARY TIME

- Look for opportunities to lift up the worldwide missions of both churches.
- Look for opportunities to work together with other denominations for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Continue to implement, review and revise, if necessary, the community mission.
- Begin a bible study using either Enter the Bible (ELCA) or Discipleship (UMC) resources.
- Organize a local UM/ELCA clergy weekly lectionary study.
- Initiate a study of The Founders: John and Charles Wesley/Martin Luther and Katherine Bora.
- Offer a tour to Germany one year to study Lutheran history and founders. The next year offer a trip to England to study the Methodist Movement and the Wesleys.
- Organize visits by lay people to each other's Sunday School and Sunday Worship. Have a designated study where two families from a UMC congregations and two families from an ELCA congregations visit the other's church and meet afterward with church staff for lunch to de-brief their visits.

#### LENT

- Explore the possibility of hosting a Shrove Tuesday Evening and Ash Wednesday Service with combined congregations.
- Hold a weekly Lenten Service together. One model would be for one downtown congregation to be the host for a short service and quick lunch for the community, with the other congregation providing the pastor and worship service. The next year the roles are reversed.
- Yom HaShoah (Day of Holocaust Remembrance) often happens during or just before Lent, explore hosting an ecumenical community commemoration together from the standpoint of repentance for historic Christian complicity in this and other genocides. Support the Jewish service of this and schedule it so it does not conflict.

## EASTER

- If the local UMC and ELCA have Sunrise Services, explore combining them.
- Host something together for the children, such as an Easter Egg Hunt.
- Invite representatives of the other congregation to be present at any baptism.
- Host a combined service to renew baptismal vows and explore what it means to be baptized into the body of Christ.

## ORDINARY TIME

- Host a combined Hymn Sing highlighting both the Wesley's and Luther's hymnology. Combine it with an Ice Cream Social.
- Plan a vacation bible school together. Alternate using each other's materials each year. Invite the community.
- Offer a tour to Israel/Palestine to study together the origins of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as current issues.
- Sponsor a joint district/synod youth event early in the school year.
- Adopt a mission to help school children with clothes, winter coats, and school supplies.
- Work with other local congregations to host a community Thanksgiving Service.