



SINCE YOU ASKED: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON 'CALLED TO COMMON MISSION'

Department for Ecumenical Affairs
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

For more information on "Called to Common Mission," see the Web site: www.elca.org/ea

What is "Called to Common Mission?"

"Called to Common Mission" is the name of the agreement adopted by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the 2000 General Convention of The Episcopal Church to establish a relationship of full communion between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church.

The agreement opened the way for cooperative mission efforts where appropriate. Mutual recognition of ordained ministers of each church body allows for their service in settings of cooperative ministry.

Did the ELCA and The Episcopal Church adopt the same agreement?

Yes. Exactly the same text of "Called to Common Mission" was approved by both the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the 2000 General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

The introductory resolutions were different, in keeping with the legislative process of each church body. The result of those resolutions was the same—approval of the agreed text of "Called to Common Mission."

What does “full communion” mean?

“Full communion” means a mutual recognition that the partner churches hold “the essentials of the Christian faith” within the catholic and apostolic tradition. In such a relationship, according to “Called to Common Mission,” neither church “seeks to remake the other in its own image, but each is open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his mission. They are together committed to a visible unity in the church’s mission to proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments” (“Called to Common Mission,” paragraph 2).

Full communion describes a relationship in which the partner churches fully recognize each other as part of the whole Church of Jesus Christ and seek to cooperate with each other in witness, life, and service.

Mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord’s Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members, also are part of a relationship of full communion.

Have other agreements of full communion been approved?

Yes. The ELCA is in a relationship of full communion with the other member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. In addition, the ELCA established full communion with the Reformed churches [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ] under *A Formula of Agreement* in 1997. In 1999, a Lutheran-Moravian relationship of full communion was affirmed. These relationships already have been fruitful for mission in a variety of ways.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is moving forward for such a relationship with the Anglican Church in Canada. Lutherans in northern and eastern Europe and Anglicans in Great Britain share a similar relationship, within the European context, as a result of the Porvoo Agreement, named for a town in Finland where the agreement was written. The Leuenberg Agreement for Lutheran-Reformed relations in Europe offers another example of such a relationship.

Does “Called to Common Mission” change doctrine?

No. Lutherans and Episcopalians agreed early in the dialogues leading to this agreement that nothing was dividing them theologically. Both were born out of the Reformation of the 16th century—one in Germany and the other in England. A summary of theological agreement is provided in paragraph 5 of “Called to Common Mission.”

Immigrants carried both churches to North America. Separate histories emerged, particularly with the varied threads of Lutheran church bodies established here along language or ethnic lines (such as German, Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish, and so on). The mergers of the 20th century brought all those Lutheran threads together into the ELCA. In spite of the separate church structures, Episcopalians and Lutherans have shared much in common, particularly in patterns of worship and liturgical material.

Was only the ELCA being required to make changes?

No. The Episcopal Church took a significant step in terms of its own history and heritage by recognizing and accepting ELCA ordained ministers. The Episcopal Church also recognized in the Augsburg Confession and Luther’s Small Catechism “the essentials of the one catholic and apostolic faith” (paragraph 4).

What changes are required in the ELCA?

Major change in the ELCA took place in the adoption of provisions to implement the 1997 Lutheran-Reformed agreement and other agreements for relationships of full communion. That major change involved constitutional and bylaw amendments to open the possibility of service by an ordained minister of a full-communion partner church within an ELCA setting.

Adoption of “Called to Common Mission” means that the pastor who presides at ordinations and participates with other pastors in the laying-on-of-hands will be an ELCA synodical bishop, as is the pattern in most synods now. Further, at least three of the persons present for installations of future bishops will be bishops previously installed into the historic episcopate.

Does accepting “Called to Common Mission” imply a merger?

No. Not at all. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America retains its own Confession of Faith, governance patterns, and relationships in all of its expressions as a church—congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries (paragraphs 20 and 23).

Does “Called to Common Mission” make the Word subordinate to ordained ministry?

No. “Called to Common Mission” explicitly affirms the “primacy of the Word” (paragraph 17). Lutherans and Episcopalians together affirm “that the historic catholic episcopate under the Word of God must always serve the Gospel, and the ultimate authority under which bishops preach and teach is the Gospel itself.” Further, the “canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments” are embraced by both churches. For both the ELCA and The Episcopal Church, the Gospel is proclaimed with the purpose of announcing “that in Jesus Christ God loves and redeems the world.” Both churches also embrace “a common understanding of God’s justifying grace” (paragraph 5).

Is “Called to Common Mission” really about mission?

Yes. Witnessing to our unity in Christ is in itself a vital aspect of Christian mission, especially in a fragmented, increasingly secular society. There are many places where “Called to Common Mission” will open possibilities of sharing ministries that will extend the outreach of both churches. Developing mission plans in common with partners in full communion conserves valuable resources for outreach.

Steps in the implementation of the Lutheran-Reformed relationship of full communion, through the 1997 *Formula of Agreement*, opened helpful mission possibilities for many congregations and various synods. The Lutheran-Reformed partnership has provided helpful models for implementing the relationships of full communion between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church.

Why is this “full communion” relationship important?

The relationship of full communion between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church increases opportunities for mission and witness. By allowing for the exchange of clergy between our two churches, one pastor or priest may serve congregations of both church bodies. In some rural areas and many inner city situations, along with campus ministry sites and a variety of other situations, this new relationship is proving invaluable in increasing our opportunities for service to the world. The full range of such opportunities would not be possible without the exchangeability of clergy.

Will my congregation be served by an Episcopal priest in the future?

Perhaps. But *ONLY* upon the invitation of your congregation and with the authorization of your synodical bishop. Any priest serving in a Lutheran congregation would remain Episcopalian but would need to serve according to Lutheran teaching and practice, abiding by the ELCA “Confession of Faith” in its constitution and by the ELCA’s policies related to the standards for pastoral ministry (paragraph 22; see also ELCA churchwide bylaws 8.72.12., 8.72.14., and 8.72.15.).

Will an ELCA pastor be able to serve in an Episcopal parish?

Yes. “Called to Common Mission” acknowledges “the full authenticity of each other’s ordained ministers” (paragraph 7). An ELCA pastor now can be asked by an Episcopal parish to serve in that setting.

Doesn’t “Called to Common Mission” ignore the priesthood of all believers?

No. As stated explicitly in “Called to Common Mission,” the two churches emphasize together “that all members of Christ’s church are commissioned for ministry through baptism. All are called to represent Christ and his church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world; and to participate in the life, worship, and governance of the church” (paragraph 6 in “Called to Common Mission;” see also provision 7.11. in the ELCA constitution).

Does “Called to Common Mission” imply grades or levels of ministry?

No. In fact, “Called to Common Mission” counters the notion that the ordained ministry is on a higher grade than others among the priesthood of all believers. Specifically, “Called to Common Mission” declares, “We 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. They fulfill their particular ministries within the community of the faithful and not apart from it” (paragraph 7). By saying that the ordained ministry exists to serve, all notions of hierarchy and power are eliminated. By emphasizing the “one” ministry of Word and Sacrament and the continued sharing in the priesthood of all believers, “Called to Common Mission” rejects any grades in ministry.

Although the Augsburg Confession does not discuss the priesthood of all believers, “Called to Common Mission” affirms this fundamental Lutheran conviction. “We believe that all members of the church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. They are therefore given various ministries by the Holy Spirit” (paragraph 5).

As Martin Luther wrote in the Commentary on Psalm 82 (*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 13, page 65), “It is true that all Christians are priests (*sacerdos*), but not all are pastors. To be a pastor one must be not only Christian and a priest but must have an office and a field of work committed to him [or her]. This call and command make pastors and preachers.” (See also Article 14 of the Augsburg Confession.)

What actually changes?

At ordinations of pastors, one of the ordained ministers “to preside and participate in the laying-on-of-hands” is to be a synodical bishop. This is the pattern now followed in most ELCA synods. Other pastors also will be

present to preach and participate in the “laying on of hands” in the ordination rite. (No Episcopal bishop is required for a Lutheran ordination.)

In the ELCA and predecessor church bodies, the synodical bishop has been the person to authorize the ordination of clergy. The bishop now regularly will preside at the ordination of candidates in the company of other pastors. There is no special “grace” imparted during the rite of the installation of a bishop that qualifies the bishop to ordain clergy; bishops carry out the role of presiding ministry as a sign that candidates for ordination are ordained for service in this whole church, not simply for a specific congregation.

For installation of new bishops, the presiding bishop of the ELCA will continue to be responsible for the installation rite, as in the past. The presiding bishop, or another ELCA bishop appointed to do so, will conduct the rite. Others from the ELCA, representatives from full-communion partner churches, including an Episcopal bishop as a collegial expression of this relationship of full communion, and other bishops also may participate. Three of the participants are to be bishops previously installed into the “historic episcopate.”

Will “Called to Common Mission” limit the freedom of congregations?

No. “Called to Common Mission” in no way changes the relationship of congregations to one another, to their respective synods, or to the larger church. None of the power, rights, or responsibilities of congregations are changed.

No constitutional or bylaw amendments related to “Called to Common Mission” are required by congregations.

If a congregation desires the service of an ordained minister from a full-communion partner church, a model constitutional provision is offered for the congregation’s consideration.

Who will confirm ELCA youth in our congregations?

Pastors of ELCA congregations will continue to preside at confirmations, just as in the past.

The present rite for the affirmation of baptism in *Lutheran Book of Worship*, conducted by the congregation’s pastor, will continue to be used.

Will “Called to Common Mission” change the way my congregation calls a pastor?

No. Pastors of the ELCA are called by the congregation in consultation with the synod office during the call process. This ELCA practice will not change. In particular circumstances, an ordained minister of full-communion partner churches—that is, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, The Episcopal Church, and the Moravian Church—may be invited by a congregation, with the authorization of the synodical bishop, to provide pastoral ministry.

Is “Called to Common Mission” inconsistent with Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession?

No. First, “Called to Common Mission” takes care to be consistent with the position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as expressed in the “Statement on Ecumenism—The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” That statement was adopted by a 93 percent vote by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly. The statement explains that Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession does not exempt Lutheran churches from church order, but rather frees them to practice those church polities that may serve the unity

of the whole Church. According to Article 7, “For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word....”

Second, Article 7 in the 16th century addressed a particular historical situation. The Church was threatened with disunity. The Augsburg Confession sought to preserve unity while, at the same time, allow for reform. By contrast, today’s situation for the churches is one of visible divisions. The ELCA’s statement on ecumenism, in upholding Article 7, declares, “In a context of unity [in the 16th century], the *satis est* [“it is sufficient”] was proposed to preserve that unity. Today the *satis est* provides an ecumenical resource to move to levels of fellowship among divided churches.”

Third, “Called to Common Mission” shares the goal of Article 7 in regard to the unity of the Church and the preserving of the basic elements needed to sustain such unity. It also promotes the freedom that Article 7 allows in order to realize a communion between the churches in which such unity can be lived. On the basis of Article 7 and the true unity it describes, the ELCA is free to adopt an evangelical episcopal succession for the practice of full communion with The Episcopal Church while at the same time maintaining its full communion relationship with the Reformed churches (paragraph 13) as well as the agreement with the Moravian Church.

Why will pastors be ordained into the historic episcopate?

Pastors will *NOT* be ordained into the historic episcopate. The historic episcopate relates to the installation of future bishops. Pastors will be ordained to serve as ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament within ELCA congregations and other ministry settings. One of the pastors “to preside and participate in the laying-on-of-hands” at ordinations is to be a pastor in the office of bishop.

The presence of a bishop in the rite of ordination is a reminder that a person is ordained into the pastoral ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ, and not simply for service in a particular place. A bishop exercises oversight of the work of the Church in a geographic area. In that responsibility, a bishop serves as a symbol of the Church beyond the congregation and region.

Did the ELCA adopt a three-fold pattern of ministry (deacon, priest, bishop)?

No. In “Called to Common Mission,” paragraphs 14 and 15 clearly affirm the ELCA’s continuing pattern of ordained ministry. The one ministry of Word and Sacrament remains focused in the office of pastor.

“Called to Common Mission” reads: “We 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. They fulfill their particular ministries within the community of the faith and not apart from it” (paragraph 7). Bishops are pastors who serve a number of congregations in a geographical area.

“Called to Common Mission” makes clear that the ELCA will not need to change its position to designate deacons or diaconal ministers as members of the clergy. “Called to Common Mission” states in paragraph 9: “The ordination of deacons, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers by the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America is not required” by the adoption of “Called to Common Mission.”

The reference to the sharing of ministry recognizes the continuation of a three-fold pattern in The Episcopal Church and the continuation of the existing pattern affirmed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

What is the historic episcopate anyway?

The historic episcopate is the orderly transmission of the office of bishop or overseer, with its roots in the time of the early church. It is a symbolic succession pointing back to the centrality of Christ and the teaching of the apostles. It also looks forward to the carrying out of the mission of the Gospel in the Church of today.

This pattern existed for centuries prior to the Reformation of the 16th century, long before the rise of either Lutheranism or Anglicanism. Most Christians in the world today live in churches that have practiced the historic episcopate.

Is the historic episcopate new for Lutherans?

No. The historic episcopate has been part of the life of some Lutheran churches, such as in Sweden and Finland, since the time of the Reformation. In more recent years, the historic episcopate has become a part of Lutheran church life in Tanzania, Namibia, El Salvador, Norway, and elsewhere.

About 25 million of the world’s 63 million Lutherans are part of churches that practice an evangelical and historic succession in the office of bishop. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession (Article 14) expresses the “deep desire” of the Reformers to preserve a reformed polity of oversight with bishop serving under the Gospel.

Will bishops be considered superior to pastors?

No. The ELCA embraces one ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament. For the good order of the church, however, bishops working with synod councils and committees are to exercise authority on behalf of this church, as defined in the ELCA’s constitutions. This may result, for example, in the removal of a pastor for improper behavior or false teaching. Similarly, candidacy committees and other synod committees exercise responsibility for decisions in the synod, including suitability of candidates for pastoral ministry. This is not a matter of “superiority” but of assigned responsibility. The role of bishops in the ELCA is in keeping with Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession. Likewise, the role is in accord with the ELCA Study of Ministry, adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly.

A bishop exercises oversight of the work of the church in a geographic area in a way similar to the role of a pastor in giving oversight to the work of the church in a particular congregation.

Is the “Tucson Resolution” of the Conference of Bishops binding?

Yes. The “Tucson Resolution” of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is binding for implementation of “Called to Common Mission” because:

1. Most of the items listed in the Tucson resolution are in the official text of “Called to Common Mission.”

2. The Tucson resolution is acknowledged by specific reference in the official text of “Called to Common Mission” as having “correctly interpreted” the agreement for a full communion relationship between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church. In other words, it is binding by reference in the document itself.
3. Some items in the Tucson resolution are addressed in the bylaws of the ELCA and, therefore, are binding under those bylaws.

The Tucson resolution was adopted by the ELCA’s Conference of Bishops in March 1999 as a brief summary of “Called to Common Mission.” The text of the resolution is provided as information in an “endnote” in the printed booklet that contains the amended text of “Called to Common Mission,” as adopted by the ELCA’s 1999 Churchwide Assembly.

The Tucson resolution relates specifically to the ELCA’s internal life. It does not address the internal life of The Episcopal Church. For example,

1. Terms of ELCA bishops (Tucson resolution, Item A.2.) are defined in the synodical constitution (§8.51) and the churchwide constitution and bylaws (10.31.05. and 13.22.). Further, paragraph 18 in “Called to Common Mission” acknowledges that tenure in office of an ELCA bishop “may be terminated by retirement, resignation, disciplinary action, or conclusion of term.”
2. The possibility within the ELCA of authorization of a lay person to preside for Holy Communion when no ordained minister is available for an extended period of time (Tucson resolution, Item B.4.) is provided in this church’s bylaws (7.61.01.) and the sacramental policy document approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, “The Use of the Means of Grace.”
3. The possibility of service by an ordained minister of a full-communion partner church in any ELCA congregation (Tucson resolution, Item A.5., Item B.5., and Item B.8.) is by invitation only, as specified in this church’s bylaws (8.72.12., 8.72.13., 8.72.14., 8.72.15., and 8.72.16.).
4. The declaration of no requirement that the ELCA must eventually adopt the three-fold order of ministry with ordained deacons (Tucson Resolution, Item A.1. and Item A.4.) is shown in paragraph 9 of “Called to Common Mission.”
5. There is no expectation or requirement (Tucson Resolution, Item A.6) that the ELCA adopt the Ordinal or rules that apply to ordinations in The Episcopal Church (paragraph 16 of “Called to Common Mission”).
6. An ordained minister of a full-communion partner church body serving within an ELCA setting (Tucson Resolution, Item B.5.) is to abide by the standards of this church (churchwide bylaw 8.72.16.; paragraph 16 of “Called to Common Mission,” that is, such service is “subject always to...constitutionally approved invitation,” and paragraph 22, “respecting always the internal discipline of each church”).
7. “Called to Common Mission” affirms the confessional foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (paragraph 4) and does not represent in any way a change in this church’s confessional stance (Tucson Resolution, Item B.6.).
8. Future decisions related to the relationship of full communion (Tucson Resolution, Items B.10., B. 11., and B.12.) will be made in mutual consultation (paragraphs 23, 24, 25, and 26). The legislative processes and authority of the respective churches remain unchanged. The joint commission—known as the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee—is a consultative group, not a legislative body. It is to be “fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches” (paragraph 23 of “Called to Common Mission”).
9. The current pattern of confirmations in the ELCA (Tucson Resolution, Item B.13) will continue (§14.02.b.1 in the *Constitution for Synods* and *C9.03.b.1 in

the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*).

10. The pattern for ordinations (Tucson Resolution, Item B.1.) is addressed in paragraph 20.
11. Recognition of other full-communion relationships of the ELCA (Tucson Resolution, Item B.2.) is contained in paragraphs 13 and 25 of “Called to Common Mission.”
12. Provision for the reception of the historic episcopate in the installation of future ELCA bishops (Tucson Resolution, Item B.3.) is indicated in paragraphs 18, 19, and 20 of “Called to Common Mission.”

Why is the “Mind of the House” resolution of The Episcopal Church different from the Tucson Resolution?

The “Mind of the House” resolution addresses implementation of “Called to Common Mission” in The Episcopal Church. Likewise, the resolution of the ELCA Conference of Bishops (“Tucson Resolution”) addresses implementation within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Each church body remains responsible for its internal governance and life.

Do the Lutheran Confessions reject the historic episcopate for Lutherans?

Nowhere do the Lutheran Confessions reject the historic episcopate. In fact, the Augsburg Confession (Article 28) expresses the desire to maintain the traditional ecclesiastical and canonical polity (see also paragraph 11 of “Called to Common Mission”). The Lutheran Confessions affirm the tradition of the Church throughout the centuries. They point to Scripture and also to the teachings of the “Church Fathers,” including bishops such as Augustine and Ambrose, as well as the doctrinal statement of the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325).

Does “Called to Common Mission” make the historic episcopate essential to the church or to a true ministry of Word and Sacrament?

No. In “Called to Common Mission,” both the ELCA and The Episcopal Church acknowledge that the historic episcopate is not essential to the church as church (paragraph 13). The Episcopal Church accepts the ministry of present ELCA ordained ministers (paragraphs 7 and 15).

The ELCA continues to receive the ministry of non-episcopally ordained ministers through its relationship of full communion with the Reformed churches under *A Formula of Agreement*. That agreement was adopted in 1997 with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ (paragraphs 13 and 25). The ELCA also is in full communion with the North American provinces of the Moravian Church.

Will this give more power to bishops?

No. The responsibilities and constitutional authority of synodical bishops are in no way increased by “Called to Common Mission.” At the same time, the constitutional limitations on the role of bishops remain unchanged.

Does “Called to Common Mission” create bishops-for-life in the ELCA?

No. “Called to Common Mission” explicitly states that ELCA bishops will continue to be selected by assembly elections under six-year terms of service (paragraph 18), which may be terminated by retirement, resignation, disciplinary action, or conclusion of term.

Synods may still honor a retiring bishop by resolution as “bishop emeritus.” That is a custom in many synods, a practice unrelated to “Called

to Common Mission.” No continuing authority, responsibility, or role comes with the honorary designation “bishop emeritus.”

Why are we spending so much time on this one issue?

Practicing unity with other churches is not a trivial matter. The Preface to the Augsburg Confession, the most authoritative of the Lutheran Confessions, declares that “we on our part shall not omit doing anything, in so far as God and conscience allow, that may serve the cause of Christian unity.” One of the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (constitutional provision 4.02.f.) is to “manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.”

Why are we facing this issue now?

“Called to Common Mission” is the result of a 30-year process, which began with the first U.S. Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue in 1969. At every stage, the process has been mandated by the churches, and the results published and distributed to all clergy for study.

In 1982, the predecessor bodies of the ELCA entered into an “interim” agreement with The Episcopal Church for eucharistic sharing. The churches also made a commitment to a new round of dialogue to address issues that needed to be resolved for a relationship of full communion between the churches. The original Concordat of Agreement was distributed throughout the churches in 1991. The document was voted on at the 1997 Churchwide Assembly and fell six votes short of the two-thirds needed for adoption. Earlier, that same year, The Episcopal Church had approved the document by an overwhelming margin. The 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly directed that a revision of the Concordat be developed and submitted to the 1999 Churchwide Assembly. That revised document, “Called to Common Mission,” was adopted by a nearly 70 percent vote (716-317). The implementing constitutional amendments were approved by 84 percent (802-152).

Will the “Joint Commission” govern our church?

No. The Joint Commission is known as the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee. Its charter is similar to that of the Lutheran-Reformed Coordinating Committee and the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee.

The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee has no legislative authority over either the ELCA or The Episcopal Church. The group is a means for discussion of matters of mutual interest for the implementation of “Called to Common Mission” and the relationship of full communion. The coordinating committee is to be “fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches” (paragraph 23).

Is this agreement just a “power grab” by bishops?

No. The provisions for representation on Synod Councils and Synod Assemblies—as well as the Churchwide Assembly and boards—remain unchanged. That is, at least 60 percent of those who serve in these capacities must be lay persons, half of whom shall be women and half of whom shall be men. While synodical bishops serve among the ordained ministers as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, bishops are not eligible for election to the Church Council or any churchwide boards or committees. They will

continue to serve as members of the Conference of Bishops and advisors, when so designated, to the council, boards, and committees. There is no change in the decision-making authority of bishops.

Didn't Luther oppose the idea of bishops presiding at ordinations?

We can find passages written by Martin Luther that speak disparagingly of bishops. In other writings, he and other Reformation leaders speak of the desirability of having bishops preside for ordinations. They sought bishops who were willing to embrace the reforming movement, but did not find any at that time in Germany.

Will the ELCA be required to accept ordained deacons in the future?

No. There is no requirement or expectation that the ELCA will move to ordain deacons, as is the case in The Episcopal Church. As stated in "Called to Common Mission" (paragraph 9), "The ordination of deacons, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is not required by this Concordat." The lay rosters of the ELCA will continue to function as they do presently. Associates in ministry are commissioned to their service. Diaconal ministers and deaconesses are consecrated for their work.

Lutherans for centuries have affirmed one office of Word and Sacrament. The role of pastors as ordained ministers was confirmed by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly in response to the Study of Ministry. Bishops have been and continue to be pastors elected to serve in a particular role.

Was the 1999 Churchwide Assembly forced to accept "Called to Common Mission?"

No. The voting members at the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA received the text for study in the months prior to the assembly. During the assembly, informational hearings were held with resource people who favored and opposed the proposal. In the plenary session, two persons—one in favor, one opposed—made presentations to all the voting members. More than 90 people participated in the floor debate. Upon votes of the assembly to ask them to speak, two people—the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and the Rev. John Thomas from the Reformed tradition as president of the United Church of Christ—offered their observations on "Called to Common Mission."

In the assembly, the voting members cast their ballots following a prayer asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each person used the voting machine at her or his place on the assembly floor. The proposal was adopted after an extensive process of study and deliberation.

Is there a hidden "Phase Two" that will require the ELCA to adopt the ordination rite of The Episcopal Church?

No. "Called to Common Mission" contains no hidden "Phase Two." The Episcopal Church's Ordinal (ordination rite) remains in force with The Episcopal Church. As part of the relationship of full communion with the ELCA, The Episcopal Church suspended a restriction in its Ordinal's Preface to allow for interchangeability of ordained ministers with the ELCA (paragraph 16). This restriction and its suspension concern the internal order of The Episcopal Church. Nothing in "Called to Common Mission" implies that the ELCA will ever need to adopt The Episcopal Church's Ordinal.

Will lay people be able to assist with communion?

Yes. Full communion relationships in no way alter the current practice of Holy Communion as expressed in the statement on sacramental practices, "Use of the Means of Grace," adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly.

Is there a secret plan for a new joint hymnal?

No. Many of the worship resources that have been used by Lutherans for decades are drawn from the English *Book of Common Prayer*. While some congregations of full-communion partner churches have purchased and used Lutheran worship resources, no plans exist for any new joint hymnal with any church body in a relationship of full communion with the ELCA. Future worship resources, as in the past, will be developed in consultation with other churches.

Will the Queen of England have authority to name future ELCA bishops?

No. The ELCA governing documents clearly indicate that the presiding bishop is elected by the Churchwide Assembly and synodical bishops are elected by synodical assemblies. Only those ordained ministers on the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are eligible for election.

Will future ELCA bishops be ordained into the office of bishop?

No. Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are ordained ministers who have been elected to serve in the office of oversight. Bishops are installed, therefore, into this office, similar to the way in which a pastor is installed to any new call.

These answers are based on the approved text of "Called to Common Mission," as adopted by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the 2000 General Convention of The Episcopal Church. Materials provided by the faculties of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, as well as documentation prepared in the Eastern North Dakota Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, Northwest Washington Synod, and the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also were employed in the preparation of this booklet.

Single copies of the Lutheran-Episcopal full-communion agreement, "Called to Common Mission," are available by calling 1.800.638.3522, ext. 2610. Multiple copies, 35 cents each, plus postage and handling, may be ordered from the ELCA Distribution Service, 1.800.328.4648; Augsburg Fortress order code 69-1346; ISBN 6-0001-1652-7.

Single copies of "Since You Asked: Questions and Answers on 'Called to Common Mission'" also are available, 1.800.638.3522, ext. 2610. Multiple copies, for the cost of postage and handling, may be ordered from the ELCA Distribution Service, 1.800.328.4648. Use the order code on this page when placing the order.