

## REPORT OF THE JOINT ANGLICAN LUTHERAN COMMISSION

The Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission is pleased to report to the 41<sup>st</sup> General Synod. After the very successful Joint Assembly, which our two churches enjoyed together in 2013, the Commission undertook its work with new members, and a renewed sense of mission. The Commission was established, following the promulgation of the **Waterloo Declaration**, in 2001, to

*‘nurture our growth in communion, to coordinate the implementation of this Declaration, and report to the decision-making bodies of both our churches’.*

Since 2001, representatives of both churches have met regularly and productively to monitor the deepening relationship between our churches, to work with members of the national staff of both churches as we implement the undertakings of *Waterloo*, and to encourage, support, and enliven the moving and exciting work, for God’s mission in the world, which we do together. The members of the commission are grateful for the opportunity to do this work, and commend so much of what we have witnessed to the churches.

We deeply appreciate the care with which our work is held and coordinated for us by our staff members: The Rev. Andre Lavergne of ELCIC, and The Ven. (now *Bishop!*) Bruce Myers of ACC. We will miss very much Bruce’s gentle and eloquent leadership among us and we are holding him and the Diocese of Quebec in our prayers.

The commissioners, all of whom were appointed by the Council of General Synod in 2013 to a six-year term, have met 5 times over the course of this Triennium – four meetings in Central Canada (near Toronto) and one in Winnipeg, which coincided with an annual meeting of the members of Senior Staff of both our churches. We have welcomed representatives of *The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee, USA (LECC)* and we have regularly sent representatives to LECC meetings.

We have been privileged to have had both The Primate and The National Bishop with us together at one of our meetings, and we have often welcomed our former Co-Chair, Bishop Michael Pryse, now the Lutheran Co-Chair of the *Anglican-Lutheran International Coordinating Committee*, as a regular guest, in order to keep us up to date with international developments.

The Commission monitors the many ways in which we work together as churches in full communion. We rejoice at the deep and mutually supportive relationship between the Primate, Archbishop Hiltz, and the National Bishop, Susan Johnson. We are very much aware of the importance of the friendships that exist and grow between our Bishops, particularly in the annual joint meeting of the Anglican House of Bishops and the Lutheran Conference of Bishops. National staff members of both churches meet together semi-annually, and there is close cooperation between various departments of both of our

churches. From shared prayer cycles to collaborative desk diaries and pocket calendars, to the coming 2017 Church calendar featuring churches from both of our traditions – our relationship has grown into a deep and abiding friendship.

We are proud that two originally Lutheran programme events – the National worship Conference and the National Youth Gathering are both now ‘full-communion’ events, and 2016 will see the National Worship Conference taking place in Waterloo, ON later in July and the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering taking place in Prince Edward Island in August. Both events have joint Anglican-Lutheran planning and participation and have enriched both of our churches over the years.

As we look forward, as two churches walking and working together, to our second *Joint Assembly*, scheduled for the summer of 2019 in British Columbia, we look back joyfully on the second joint meeting of National Church Council and The Council of General Synod, which took place in November of 2015. This amazing gathering of two national executive bodies was one of the highlights of this triennium.

We have continued our work on the diaconate and diaconal ministry in both of our churches, and are encouraging the ongoing work among our Bishops to develop effective and appropriate guidelines for Confirmation across both of our churches.

It is, of course at the local level where so much of the reality of full-communion is lived out, and we are so pleased with the growing number of what we call ‘*Waterloo Ministries*’ – those parishes and communities across our country who are working together in so many different ways – as joint congregations, as congregations worshipping in each other’s building, as congregations being served by clergy from the other church, as new and developing communities of faith who are forging new ways of being Anglican and Lutheran together. The *Directory of Waterloo Ministries* is kept up to date and is available on the web-sites of both churches, providing a rich tapestry of shared ministries which are life-giving, transformative, and innovative.

We also know that each church has its own challenges and opportunities; there are times when we can share in those things, and other times when we can support those matters, from a somewhat different perspective. We watched with great interest, but with no degree of alarm, as the ELCIC resolved, at its National Convention in 2015, to authorize certain lay ministries which included the presidency at the Eucharist, under very specific circumstances. We had the gift of being able to discuss this with both the National Bishop and with the Primate, and we were able to affirm to both churches our understanding of the issues involved and our awareness that these report ‘*represents an expression of legitimate diversity of practice as envisioned by the Waterloo Declaration*’.

We were pleased to receive the draft report: *Receive One Another*, moving our churches, along with ELCA and TEC to greater transitivity of clergy across borders and between churches. Annual meeting of the four heads of churches (ACC, ELCIC, ELCA, TEC) had discussed this report in very positive ways and we also have made an overture to both our American colleagues at LECC (The Lutheran Episcopal

Coordinating Committee) and to the Porvoo Communion of Churches inviting dialogue and to begin discussions on a 'communion of communions', to make the implications of the three regional full-communion agreements – including mutual exchange of clergy – operative in all three regions. Exciting stuff, this – stay tuned.

Through our experience of full communion congregations/parishes around our country, and because of some specific requests, we have established a *Working Group on the Polity of Joint Congregations*, aimed at collecting and examining the various kinds of agreements which currently exist and developing a set of principles by which this work can continue and be enriched.

Finally (among so many other important things on the Commission's plate) we have been delighted to watch the planning for the Commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and we rejoice both at the faith and missional excitement of ELCIC and its challenges and undertakings, but also to say how wonderful it will be for Anglicans to learn about and to be invited to mark this auspicious moment in the history of the Church.

We, as Co-Chairs of the Commission, consider it an enormous privilege to be asked to do this work; we know how lucky we are! We also know how blessed we are to work with such dedicated and wise colleagues, and we thank them all:

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