



# LUTHERAN ECUMENICAL REPRESENTATIVES NETWORK

# MANUAL

**LERN**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# Manual and Governing Document

## For the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network

### of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

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## Chapter I

### *The Manual of the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network*

#### **Introduction**

The ELCA Section for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ER) supports a volunteer network of representatives from each of the sixty-five synods of the Church. This network is called “The Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network” (LERN). Each volunteer in the network is individually appointed by their respective synodical Bishop to serve on the network and to encourage greater ecumenical and inter-religious collaboration in their synod, in consultation with their Bishop and with ER

This manual is designed for two purposes: To serve the needs and interests of the LERN network, and to share with any and all Lutherans who have an interest in advancing the interests of ecumenical and inter-religious work in the life of the church. The manual is periodically updated and regularly refined in order to serve ongoing developments and circumstances as they arise.

#### **1. The Lutheran Ecumenical Representative**

Definition:

The Lutheran Ecumenical Representative serves:

1. as a model for ecumenical and inter-religious endeavors in the life of the synod and the Church,, and
2. as an agent for his/her respective Bishop

The Ecumenical Representative represents the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord’s gift of unity, and his desire for the manifest unity of the church.

In the ELCA, the LERN Representative represents the Synodical Bishop, who is the synod’s Chief Ecumenical Officer. The Bishop is responsible for setting ecumenical and inter-religious strategy in his/her synod in conjunction with the policies of the Church, the counsel of the Conference of Bishop, in consultation with ER, and in partnership with the Synod Council.

The LERN Representative is familiar with the ecumenical vision of the ELCA and its ecumenical achievements, so that he/she may interpret the church’s ecumenical life both among its own members and with its Christian and inter-religious partners.

The LERN Representative:

a. Accountability & Responsibility :

- Is appointed by the synodical bishop, and may be a lay member or a rostered member of that Synod. This appointment to serve is reported by the bishop or the new LERN representative to ER.
- Encourages, articulates, and helps to implement the Bishop’s ecumenical and inter-religious strategy within synodical structures.
- Is aware of and demonstrates the ELCA’s ecumenical and inter-religious vision throughout the synod.

- Takes the initiative to call, email, or otherwise contact ecumenical and inter-religious colleagues within the synod and region.
- Takes the initiative to call, email, or otherwise contact other LERN representatives within the region.

b. Representing and Serving the Synod Bishop

- Serves the Bishop, who is the Chief Ecumenical Officer for the Synod.
- Serves on the Bishop's behalf in consultation with ER and with colleagues in the LERN network, and serves in dialogue with ecumenical and inter-religious colleagues.
- Seeks opportunities to serve the Bishop that vary from community worship to community-based organizing. The Representative is to remain ecumenically knowledgeable, serving his/her Bishop in local, synodical, and churchwide ecumenical efforts.
- Represents his/her own synod and region, sharing best-practices and problem-solving tools toward common aims of greater Christian unity and enhanced inter-religious awareness, and being aware of the diversity of models of representation present in the ELCA
- Is responsible to initiate regular meetings with his/her synodical Bishop in order to discuss activities and opportunities in the life of the synod.

c. Representing and Serving the Synod

- Affirms and support others who work ecumenically
- Is familiar with the ELCA statement on ecumenism, *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, adopted as a policy statement of this church on August 31, 1991.
- Weaves the importance of ecumenical and inter-religious relations into the life of the synod.
- Works with ecumenical colleagues and other LERN colleagues to develop structures for mission and ministry that are ecumenically sound and inter-religiously sensitive, representing the ecumenical vision in the life and work of the Synod.
- Takes opportunities to work with ELCA full communion partners in areas that may include the following: mission development, growth and mission planning, college/university campus ministry, seminary formation, outreach and evangelism, social ministries, conflict resolution and peace building, ethnic ministries, advocacy and justice, and other specialized ministries.
- May serve on Synod Council at the Bishop's request. Synodical models of the relationship between the Bishop and the LERN Representative on synod council may include forms such as: the Bishop assuming major responsibility for representing ecumenical and inter-religious concerns; the LERN representative serving as a council liaison; or the LERN representative reporting directly to the council.
- Initiates conversation with the Bishop, in planning for the synod assembly, an agenda that reflects ecumenical and inter-religious priorities. For instance, the assembly's agenda may include time for an ecumenical partner to bring greetings, take an active role in worship, address the assembly on a specific issue of common concern, or otherwise participate in discussions on the agenda. There are examples of inter-religious partners bringing greetings to synod assemblies as well, where issues of common concern (from public service in the community to challenges of a

pluralizing world) can be identified and discussed in appropriate ways that enhance the life of the synod.

## **2. The Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network**

### **a. The Nature of The Network**

LERN is a ‘Network’ that is comprised of representatives from the 65 synods, called together for a similar interest and purpose, and in contact with each other for mutual assistance and support. This Network is not created by an ELCA constitutional mandate, but through the auspices of ER. The Network is a resource that takes on synodical responsibilities effecting regional, national and international ecumenical and inter-religious efforts. Because the LERN Representative represents his/her respective synodical Bishop, the LERN Network is a constellation of sixty-five distinct but not necessarily separate perspectives. In this way, the LERN Network does not function as one voice with legislative or authoritative license; rather the Network is a constellation of individuals who take seriously their appointment by the synod Bishop, working through the auspices of ER. The Network:

- Gathers annually at the National Workshop On Christian Unity (NWCU) for which it has major responsibilities and at which it conducts its formal business.
- Assists ER in the distribution, study, and evaluation of ecumenical and inter-religious materials. This responsibility is one of the most important and compelling aspects of the work of the Network.
- Is drawn together as a resource for best-practices throughout the ELCA in local communities and synodical life. Network representatives are encouraged to reach out to one another through mailings, e-mails, the LERNing Newsletter, and other helpful models.
- Is encouraged to seek out and welcome all ELCA and other Lutherans who have an interest in enhancing the ecumenical and inter-religious commitments of the church.
- Interacts for mutual upbuilding with similar networks or associations of other church bodies, as well as with ER.
- Is enhanced and strengthened when representatives from each of the nine regions of the ELCA collaborate on regional, synodical, and local common concerns. Time is provided at the NWCU for regional caucusing.
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### **b. The LERN Board**

- The LERN Board includes nine individuals, one from each of the ELCA’s nine regions. The board is responsible for electing a president, vice-president and secretary to a 2-year term, with a limit of 2 terms served on the board.
- The president has the responsibility to be in regular contact with the Board and the entire Network. The President is likewise to be in regular contact with ER, submitting an annual report to ER listing the activities of the Network.
- The President of the board is to correspond regularly with the Vice-President and the secretary, and to call the board to regular meetings using appropriate technology.
- Each member of the Board (ie: Regional Representatives) has the responsibility of maintaining contact with the LERN Representatives in his/her region throughout the year. Regular regional collaboration throughout the year is more effective to the life of the Network, and it is the responsibility of the LERN Board to maintain this level of communication.

- The Board develops the program for the Network at the NWCU, including the agenda for the annual meeting. The Board also remains in contact with its own membership while being available for all meetings called for by the President.
- ER coordinates its own work in the Office of the Presiding Bishop with the Conference of Bishops Liaison Committee, which meets twice a year. The LERN Board, as with all individual members in the Network, is accountable to the respective synodical Bishops, and works in partnership with ER. The LERN Board is responsible for maintaining a healthy membership within the Network.

### **3. The Office of the Presiding Bishop's Section for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ER)**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) seeks in its faith and life “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” (ELCA Constitution 4.02.f.). The ecumenical quest for Christian unity in the world, “That they may all be one” (John 17:21), inspires the faith and shapes the life of the ELCA. The Office of the Presiding Bishop's Section for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ER) is committed to working with ecumenical and interfaith partners as fellow children of God, sustained in who we are by the love of God that calls us into the world. ER is responsible for encouraging, envisioning, engineering, implementing, and maintaining the ecumenical and inter-religious commitments of this church in their national and numerous international manifestations. Further information may be found at the ER website at [www.elca.org/ecumenical](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical) On behalf of the ELCA ER's commitments are, but not limited to, the following:

- Administrating five full communion relationships, which include coordinating committees for the following churches: The Episcopal Church, The Moravian Church (Southern Province, Northern Province, East West Indies Province), the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ. ER likewise administrates the continuing process of Interim Eucharistic Sharing with the United Methodist Church, scheduled in the ELCA for a vote of full communion in August, 2009.
- Maintaining all ecumenical and inter-religious formation activities, in coordination where necessary with other units of the ELCA churchwide structure, and other Conciliar bodies such as the Lutheran World Federation, the Young Adult Commission of the National Council of Churches, the Youth Desk of the World Council of Churches U.S. Desk, and other related bodies, commissions, or committees.
- Staffing the positions on national and international ecumenical dialogues, filling posts on Conciliar commissions (i.e., such as the Faith and Order Commission), and remaining attentive to changing ecumenical currents.
- Pursuing intra-Lutheran dialogue, and national bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogues and ecumenical discourses with churches that now include the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and other churches both national and international.
- Enhancing ecumenical relations with the Anglican Communion, serving in various capacities in Conciliar organizations such as Christian Churches Together, Churches United in Christ, the National Council of Churches of Christ, U.S.A., the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and additional Conciliar bodies.
- Encouraging, enhancing, pursuing, and maintaining inter-religious relationships, including but not limited to the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative,

Churches for Middle East Peace, the National Council of Churches Interfaith Commission, the National Christian-Muslim Initiative, and the Jewish-Christian Round Table.

- Maintaining two consultative panels on Lutheran-Muslim and Lutheran-Jewish relations for the life of the church, including resources that develop from these panels.
- Seeking ways to articulate the ecumenical and inter-religious narrative of this church. The LERN Network is an important instrument for understanding and contributing to the reception of ecumenical and inter-religious work in local communities.

#### **4. The Language of Ecumenism**

Ecumenical language has a rich history, replete with words, memories, and stories of the whole Church from its beginning. Likewise, new ecumenical and inter-religious trends and their corresponding languages are always on the horizon. The following glossary of terms is also always evolving in a flexible ecumenical and inter-religious climate. Listed here are those terms that are most commonly used. For a larger more comprehensive glossary, please visit [www.elca.org/ecumenical](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical).

##### Bilateral Dialogue

Formal conversation and study between two churches or communions. Joint statements may be the result of a bilateral dialogue. The ELCA enters into bilateral dialogues with the purpose of ultimately entering into full communion with the partner church.

##### Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (CADEIO)

The national network of those who hold ecumenical and interreligious responsibilities in Roman Catholic dioceses.

##### Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT)

An organization organized as a configuration of five ecclesial families within the Christian tradition: Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Historic Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox and Catholic. Initial talks began in 2001. The ELCA voted to become a full member of CCT at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly.

##### Coalition

Groups of church units planning and/or using their resources in joint action on specific issues.

##### Communion (of Churches)

A grouping of Christians having common origins, confessions, traditions, and creeds, as well as an established means of sharing sacraments and forming clergy.

##### Conciliar bodies

National and international Christian organizations governed by councils such as the following: the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches USA, the Lutheran World Federation, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.,

##### Covenant

A formal agreement between two or more groups (usually congregations – or between synods, dioceses or other church districts), to cooperate in certain specified missions and ministries.

Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC)

A conversation of eight denominations: Christian Church – Disciples of Christ, CME, Episcopal Church USA, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Moravian Church – Northern Province. The ELCA participates in CUIC as a Partner in Mission and Dialog. CUIC succeeded COCU (Consultation on Church Union) in 2002.

Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO).

The national network of those holding ecumenical and interreligious responsibilities in Episcopal Church dioceses.

Ecumenical The movement to receive Christ’s gift of unity among all believers.

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul)

The “first bishop among equals” in the Eastern Orthodox Church. His primacy is one of seniority and coordination rather than jurisdiction.

Faith and Order

Pertaining to the doctrines of churches and to their visible structures, especially those involving sacraments, ministry, worship, and polity. Faith and Order Conferences, along with Life and Work Conferences, led to the formation of the World Council of Churches.

Full Communion

A relationship between two distinct churches where each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other. The characteristics of full communion are:

- 1) a common confessing of the Christian faith
- 2) a mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord’s Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchange ability of members.
- 3) a mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject only but always to the disciplinary regulations of the other churches
- 4) a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service
- 5) a means of common decision making on critical common issues of faith and life
- 6) a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between churches

The ELCA is in a relationship of Full Communion with five denominations: The Episcopal Church, The Moravian Church, The Presbyterian Church USA, The Reformed Church in America, and The United Church of Christ.

Interfaith/Interreligious Activities of dialog and cooperation are pursued among Christians, Jews, and Muslims, the three monotheistic religions in the Abrahamic tradition, as well as among people of all faiths. “Interfaith” and “interreligious” are sometimes used synonymously.

Interim Eucharistic Sharing

A relationship among church bodies recognizing sufficient agreement in the understanding of the sacraments to allow members from the churches to receive communion together. This is designed as temporary step in efforts to achieve establish a full communion relationship.



Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network (LERN).

The national network of those who represent their synod bishops for ecumenical and inter-religious ministry in the synods of the ELCA.

Life and Work

Pertaining to social concerns, physical relief and advocacy. Life and Work Conferences, along with Faith and Order Conferences, led to the formation of the World Council of Churches.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

The LWF is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. The LWF currently has 140 member churches in 78 countries with a membership of over 66 million Lutherans. Headquarters are in Geneva.

National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU)

National ecumenical leaders of Christian communions meet annually for four days of ecumenical worship, study, seminars, and planning. The location varies around the United States.

Reception

The ongoing process of organizing Christian ministry and life together based on ecumenical agreements.

## **5. Best Practices – Effective Tools and Techniques**

a. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Formation/Education

- Seminaries and Schools of Theology: The LERN Representative is highly encouraged to establish a relationship with seminaries and schools of theology on the territory of the synod, offering to interpret the ecumenical vision and inter-religious relationships of the ELCA to seminarians using various formats (e.g.; teaching a course, offering a short seminar, speaking in chapel, etc.). The Representative should contact the seminary annually to provide resources, and encourage student participation in ecumenical and inter-religious activities in the life of the ELCA. The formation of emerging leaders in the life of the ELCA also takes place through an annual January course of study in ecumenical and inter-religious relations in Geneva, Switzerland. The LERN Representative is to initiate awareness of these opportunities, encouraging students to attend the course.
- Campus Ministry and other Specialized ministries: If a campus ministry is present on the territory of the synod, the LERN Representative should initiate contact with the campus pastor and staff, offering to serve as a resource for building ecumenical awareness among students and encouraging ecumenical cooperation in campus ministry activities as appropriate. Opportunities to bring resources, to share the ecumenical and inter-religious vision of the ELCA, and to speak with students about their own interpretations of the quest for Christian unity and interreligious awareness is an enriching experience. The LERN Representative is highly encouraged to foster these good relations with students in thoughtful and reflective ways. Contacts could be made to other specialized ministries, such as Prison Ministry, or appropriate social ministry organizations inside or outside of the ELCA umbrella.

b. Creating Connections

- LERN Board members will encourage regular communication between LERN Representatives and other interested Christians in the region. In geographically larger regions, communication may occur primarily via e-mail or other electronic means (e.g.; bulletin boards, websites). In smaller regions, face-to-face contact may be easier to establish. These connections are formed to facilitate sharing of specific information about ecumenical activities taking place on the local and synodical levels and more general ideas to advance ecumenical and inter-religious initiatives. Regional events might be organized where logistics permit. LERN Board members should strive for quarterly communication with ER-
- At Synod Assemblies the LERN Representative would be visibly active and present, encouraging ecumenism, teaching at workshops, etc.

## **6. Working with an Ecumenical Commission**

A number of synods have established Ecumenical Commissions within their synodical structures. Such a commission provides an opportunity to further develop and enhance the ecumenical functions and work of the synod. In recent years, many of these commissions have also developed their inter-religious portfolios, which can sometimes create challenges for understanding how ecumenical principles that inform inter-Christian relationships are unique from the principles that define inter-religious relationships. The LERN Representative is encouraged to work with ecumenical and inter-religious partners to create the kinds of trusting relationships that allow for trustful exchanges in local communities and synodical life. The LERN Representative is likewise encouraged to pursue continuing education opportunities in ecumenical and inter-religious relations. Visit the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations website at [www.elca.org/ecumenical](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical) for further information on these events. Also, see Chapter III in this document for an example of an Ecumenical commission..

a. Rolls and Responsibilities of a Commission:

- The Commission ideally would include those individuals representing the synod in various ecumenical and inter-religious capacities, including appointments to state associations of churches, local councils of churches, regional ministries, and educational institutions, et. al. Where such a commission exists, both the synodical Bishop and the LERN Representative could hold membership and fully participate.
- The Commission serves the ministry of the synodical bishop and the synod council.

b. Coordination within the Synod Structure:

- The Commission regularly interacts with other commissions and committees of the Synod.
- The Synod Council may choose to have one of its members serve on the Commission or designate a liaison to the Commission.

## **7. Working with State and Local Councils of Churches**

Councils of churches – both statewide and local – are well established ecumenical organizations with which our synods may maintain relationships. As such they offer some possibilities of supporting the overall ecumenical vision of the ELCA. Much of their work may well overlap with issues that impact the synod in which they are located. LERN Representatives may find here both personnel and programs that can complement and advance our general efforts at Christian unity and our more focused efforts at reception of our formal agreements. Such councils also

offer venues to encounter traditions with which the ELCA has not yet developed substantial relationships. The synodical LERN Representative may be either occasionally or regularly asked by the bishop to represent the synod at a council function. At more public and open events, the LERN representative should consider attending to increase the awareness of the ELCA as a committed ecumenical partner, and to learn more about how the wider church approaches issues common to us all.

a. Opportunities:

- A venue to meet and get to know a wide variety of our fellow Christians.
- A chance to witness to the ELCA's particular ecumenical vision.
- An opportunity to help others understand the difference between full communion and merger.
- A time to exchange ideas that might fall outside of our ongoing bilateral dialogues.
- A way to get good information about wider Christian concerns that may be helpful to the Bishop or the ELCA generally.
- A possible opportunity to engage some local congregations in grassroots issues with other Christians.
- Possible future bilateral partners can be identified.

b. Challenges:

- Agenda may be either too narrow or too vague.
- Some discussions may be too fixated on issues we have already addressed thoroughly in our bilateral dialogues.
- Perspectives may lack a clear Gospel focus and little opportunity for the unique Lutheran emphasis in response.
- Our limited time, energy and funds may seem better spent in more focused events.

c. Public Advocacy:

- Issues common to all Christians can be discussed.
- Legislative efforts, often seen as too political for a synod, can be undertaken.
- Successful social efforts can lay the foundation of trust for later theological and polity discussions.

## **8. Recommended Reading**

Below is a selected list of books and titles with an ecumenical interest. A fuller bibliography is available on the website for the ELCA's Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at: [www.elca.org/ecumenical/Bibliography/index.html](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical/Bibliography/index.html) .

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## Chapter II

### *The Governing Document of the Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network*

#### **Preamble**

The Lutheran Ecumenical Representatives Network (LERN) responds to the challenge of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "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." (ELCA Constitution, 4.02) and its declaration of ecumenical commitment evidenced in *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

#### **Expectations of all LERN members**

As the chief ecumenical officers of their respective synods, the bishops of the ELCA oversee the implementation of this church's ecumenical vision. To assist in fulfilling the synod's ecumenical responsibilities, the Bishop appoints a representative to serve as a member of LERN. The sixty-five appointed representatives make up the official membership of LERN. LERN members must be in regular communication with their bishops concerning ecumenical issues before the church, have a clear understanding of the bishop's plan for implementing the ELCA ecumenical vision and agreements, and be prompt in bringing to their Bishop's attention significant ecumenical information being discussed in literature from the Office of the Presiding Bishop's Section of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ER) or within LERN itself. Some synods include inter-religious issues in the scope of their ecumenical work. The LERN member will need to be clear about the extent of inter-religious involvement that is expected of him or her.

It is generally assumed that the bishops and their LERN members will be in basic agreement about an ecumenical agenda and its consequence in local program and policy. The LERN member should make every effort to represent faithfully both their Bishop's and the ELCA's ecumenical vision. If, in the course of its discussions (internally and with ER), it becomes evident that the LERN membership feels it is important to issue a statement regarding some ecumenical decision or procedure, each member will inform their Bishop before the final release of such a statement. This collegial and courteous communication is intended to avoid any misunderstandings and to give the Bishops an opportunity to raise questions or offer suggestions as they see the need.

#### **Responsibilities of a LERN member within his or her synod**

1. Be a general ecumenical resource to the synod bishop
2. Encourage synodical celebrations, activities and other efforts as a witness and model for ecumenical relationships (e.g. judicatory covenants, pastoral letters, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, etc.)
3. Encourage ecumenical resource sharing and programming within the synod
4. Encourage ecumenical cooperation in mission and ministry between the synod

- and other church judicatories
5. Promote the study of formal dialogue materials, calls for responses, and where called for, the implementation of Churchwide Assembly actions
  6. Promote the dissemination and use of education materials prepared by ER, or other units of the ELCA, or its full communion partners that relate to ecumenical issues
  7. Support other synod clergy or laity doing ecumenical work
  8. Actively encourage more people to be ecumenically involved, including through ecumenical formation of young adults who display a passion for ecumenical life
  9. Be an active member or chair of your synod's Ecumenical Relations Committee or its equivalent, if one exists, or advocate for the formation of one if it does not
  10. Advocate for ecumenical visibility at synod Assemblies e.g. workshops, guest speakers/preachers, involvement in ordinations, awards, etc.
  11. Advocate for budget lines and personnel support for ecumenical work within the synod
  12. Notify the secretary of LERN and the staff of ER promptly of any changes affecting communications or continuity of participation such as address, phone number, or email changes, as well as resignation, retirement, or moves across synod boundaries

### **Regional and national responsibilities of LERN members**

1. Attend the LERN meeting which is held annually in conjunction with the National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU), and Regional or National consultations as scheduled through ER
2. Encourage synodical representation (in addition to yourself) at the NWCU, state council of churches' events, or other opportunities for learning and mutual support
3. Initiate communication at least twice annually with the LERN Executive Board member of your Region
4. Ascertain your synod's ecumenical and inter-religious activity and communicate with your regional LERN Executive Board member and ER.
5. Communicate the work of ER to the bishop and others in the synod
6. In cooperation with the Regional LERN Executive Board member, encourage regional resource sharing and programming
7. Provide the editors of the LERN newsletter (i.e., LERNing) with information useful to the Network with copies to the LERN officers and ER
8. Accept assignments in conjunction with the LERN meetings at NWCU and serve as liaison with counterpart ecumenical networks and organizations, e.g. NWCU planning committees, EDEIO, ECCO, NADEO, as requested
9. Encourage diversity and inclusivity whenever new people are invited or assigned ecumenical tasks
10. Encourage colleagues to use sabbatical or continuing education time and funds for ongoing ecumenical growth

### **The Structure of the LERN Executive Board**

In order to provide oversight and direction to the network, LERN shall have an Executive Board. The Executive Board shall be composed of nine regular members elected from their respective regions at regional caucuses held in conjunction with the LERN meeting at the NWCU. The Executive Board members shall serve three year terms, one third to be elected annually, with a

limit of two consecutive terms with the ratification of this document. The term of office shall begin following the NWCU meeting at which the member was elected.

The officers of LERN shall be elected biennially from the membership of the Executive Board by the Executive Board. The officers shall be: president, vice-president, and secretary. The term of office shall be two years, with a limit of two consecutive terms.

If any officer is unable to finish her or his term, the Executive Board may choose to elect someone to finish the term or to begin a new two-year term. If a vacancy occurs, the Executive Board shall appoint an ecumenical representative from the same region to fill a vacancy. The appointed person shall serve until the next election, at which time that region shall elect an ecumenical representative to complete any unexpired term.

From time to time the Executive Board may request up to three at-large members for the Board. The request may be based on the need for greater inclusiveness or representation, or the need for a particular kind of skill. The Board will present any nominations for the at-large member(s) at a plenary of the LERN membership at the NWCU. If ratified by the membership, the at-large member serves one 3 year term on the Board.

The Executive Board shall appoint a liaison to the NWCU National Planning Committee for a term of three years, such a person to be normally a member of the Board. The Board shall also appoint liaisons to other ecumenical networks, such as EDEIO, ECCO, NADEO. The local LERN member serving on the NWCU Planning Committee shall be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Board to facilitate communication and planning.

In addition to the expectations of all LERN members, Executive Board members are also expected to:

1. Model to LERN members in their region the above responsibilities
2. Attend scheduled LERN Executive Board meetings annually, one in conjunction with the NWCU
3. Work in cooperation with ER and, through them, the ELCA
4. Encourage Regional celebrations, activities and other efforts as a witness and model for ecumenical relationships (e.g. judicatory covenants, pastoral letters, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, etc.)
5. Encourage LERN members in your region to attend the NWCU.
6. Encourage close communication between synod LERN members and their bishops on ecumenical issues
7. Encourage ecumenical resource sharing and programming among synods in the Region
8. Support Regional bishops and LERN members in a collegial manner
9. Communicate at least twice annually with the LERN members of your region
10. Ascertain your region's ecumenical activity and communicate this activity to ER
11. Advocate for budget lines and personnel support for ecumenical work within the region
12. Advocate for opportunities to discuss ecumenical issues at regional first call education events
13. Assist in planning for upcoming meetings of NWCU



The process for decision making on the Executive Board will be consensus. In rare cases, when ER needs a decision to come quickly, ER may request a vote, in which case, a majority of the Board present and voting will carry the question.

### **Duties of Officers**

President:

The president shall preside at meetings of LERN and the Executive Board. In consultation with the other officers and ER, the president shall prepare an agenda for all meetings of LERN and the meetings of the Executive Board. The president shall model the above responsibilities for all LERN representatives and officers. The president shall work in close connection with ER and its leadership. The president shall guide the direction of LERN during his or her tenure, and communicate with the vice-president and the secretary, as well as with the LERN executive board, on a regular basis.

In consultation with ER, the president shall attend specific meetings with the Conference of Bishops Liaison Committee to Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, particularly the fall meeting at the Conference of Bishops, in order to bring a report and address any concerns or questions by that committee or by ER.

Vice - President:

In the event of the president's inability to serve, the vice-president shall preside and fulfill the duties of the president. The vice-president shall assist the president and operate as an associate in both the construction of LERN vision and communication with the LERN Executive Board. The vice-president shall also serve as the coordinator for registration at the LERN event at the National Workshop on Christian Unity.

Secretary:

The secretary shall record, edit, distribute in a timely manner, and maintain minutes for meetings of LERN and the Executive Board. The secretary shall also maintain an updated list of all LERN members and their most current addresses, phone numbers, and e-mails. The secretary shall routinely cross-check LERN contact information with ER.

### **LERN Communication**

LERN shall have a periodic publication which shall provide communication among members of LERN and other interested persons. It shall be produced in cooperation with ER. The editorial team shall consist of three persons, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Board, and one of whom shall be selected from the present or past membership of LERN. The communication liaison shall coordinate with ER for the content on the LERN Web Page.

### **Changes in Governing Documents**

Changes will be brought before the LERN membership for ratification by a two-thirds vote of those present at the NWCU. ER will be consulted before any substantial changes are made.

Adopted by the Executive Board February, 2006 presented for ratification of the LERN membership at San Jose in May of 2006, and changed at the LERN membership at Washington D.C., 2007. Changes were made again at the LERN membership in Chicago, 2008, to be adopted in Phoenix, 2009.

## **Chapter III**

### ***Appendices***

#### **#1 – Guidelines for when the National Workshop is held in the Local Synod**

The Synod, its Bishop, and the LERN Representative have responsibilities when the National Workshop on Christian Unity is held in their Synod.

- The LERN Representative
  - A representative from LERN will serve on the NWCU National Planning Committee (NPC) with the Lutheran member on the NWCU Local Planning Committee (LPC).
  
- The Local Synodical Bishop
  - The local ELCA Synodical Bishop is to be invited to be involved in planning for the NWCU and LERN gatherings.
  - The Bishop will determine his/her preference for participation, relating that decision to the National Chair, Local Chair, and local LERN representative.
  - The local Bishop's presence will be encouraged at the NWCU Opening Worship, LARC luncheon, LERN gatherings, and entire Workshop if possible.
  
- Hospitality
  - The LERN Representative offers hospitality to Lutherans attending NWCU, determining the degree of hospitality, budget, and funding source.
  - The LERN Representative will coordinate the time/dates for Lutheran hospitality with NPC, LPC, and LERN, and provide all pertinent data to the LPC person collecting data for NWCU brochure before NPC September meeting.
  
- Publicity
  - The local Synodical Bishop will be encouraged to send letter to deans, clergy and congregations in the area to take advantage of NWCU.
  - The Bishop will be requested to extend a personal letter of invitation to ELCA Bishops in local Region (3-4 weeks prior to NWCU) to attend NWCU, including RSVP request.
  - The Representative will provide NWCU information and brochure to the local Synodical newsletter editor, will develop bulletin announcements for use by local ELCA congregations, and provide NWCU brochures to local ELCA clergy, AIMS, congregation presidents.
  - The Note NWCU website will be used for registration and schedule.  
[www.NWCU.org](http://www.NWCU.org)

**#2–Example Guidelines for a Synod Ecumenical Commission  
Northwest Washington Synod.**

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GUIDELINES FOR THE ECUMENICAL COMMISSION  
OF THE NORTHWEST WASHINGTON SYNOD  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
*Revised - September 25, 2001*

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Ecumenical Commission is to provide advice and counsel to the Synod, the Bishop, and Synod Council on matters involving work and relationships with other Christian church bodies. The Commission encourages open discussion and the sharing of information on ecumenical issues affecting the life and work of Synod. In addition, the Commission fosters cooperation with ecumenical agencies and organizations related to the Synod. The Commission follows the guidelines for ecumenical relationships spelled out in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted statement on ecumenism.<sup>1</sup>

**COMPOSITION**

The regular membership – excluding any ex officio members – of the Ecumenical Commission should be no fewer than eight (8) and no more than twelve (12) individuals. The Commission includes as standing members the Bishop of the Synod, the Assistant to the Bishop, the Synod Council liaison, any officially designated Lutheran Ecumenical Representative for the Synod, representatives of the Synod on ecumenical councils, and others serving in ecumenical capacities. The membership should include four (4) or more lay persons, at least one being an Associate in Ministry (AIM). Membership of the Ecumenical Commission should ideally reflect the diversity goals of the ELCA, as well as a geographic balance from within the Synod. Members of the Commission are appointed by the Bishop, upon consultation with the Synod Council. Regular members serve four-year terms, and are appointed at staggered two-year intervals.

**OFFICERS**

A chair shall be elected from the regular membership of the Commission. The chair may be either clergy or lay. The chair shall serve for a two-year term, which shall begin at the close of the meeting at which the chair is elected. Election of the chair shall normally take place at the first meeting of the Commission following the annual Synod assembly held in odd-numbered years. In the event of a vacancy, the Commission shall elect a new chair from its membership to serve for the unexpired portion of the term. A secretary shall be appointed and shall serve a term of two years concurrent with that of the chair.

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<sup>1</sup>The ELCA's current statement is titled Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA, adopted in 1991, by the Churchwide Assembly.

## **DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

The chair shall conduct the meetings of the Ecumenical Commission and shall be responsible for preparing the agenda for these meetings. The chair shall ensure that the functions of the Ecumenical Commission are carried out to the best of his or her ability. The chair shall make reports to the Bishop and Synod Council as needed or requested.

The secretary shall keep minutes for all meetings of the Ecumenical Commission. The secretary is also responsible for providing written notice of all meetings to members at least ten (10) days prior to the meetings.

## **MEETINGS**

The Ecumenical Commission shall meet at least three times a year at a place and time designated by the membership of the Commission. The Bishop or the chair, upon consulting the Bishop, may determine that a special meeting of the Commission is needed and provide notice to all members at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. For at least one of the Ecumenical Commission meetings each year, invitations to attend shall be extended to representatives of the Washington Association of Churches and local councils of churches, as well as to ecumenical officers of church bodies with which the ELCA is in dialogue or has established formal relations.

## **QUORUM AND VOTING**

The role of the Ecumenical Commission is primarily advisory, providing advice and counsel to the Bishop, Synod Council, and other officers and committees of the Synod. On issues for which a formal action is desired, all members of the Commission shall be notified of the issue under consideration at least seven (7) days prior to action. A formal action may be requested by the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, Synod Council, the chair, or by two or more members of the Commission. In such instances, a quorum shall be defined as a majority of the regular membership of the current Commission. Voting matters shall require the affirmative vote of a simple majority of those present and voting on the matter. Election of a chair for the Ecumenical Commission shall be conducted as a formal action of the Commission.

## **TASK FORCES**

The Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop, or Synod Council – or, with the consent of the Bishop, the chair – may appoint ad hoc or standing Ecumenical Commission task forces to advise or assist the Commission in its function. A task force shall have a specific charge, a given time frame, and shall cease to exist after its function has been performed. The membership of a task force may include laity, clergy, or other experts not serving as regular members of the Ecumenical Commission itself.

## **PARTICIPATION**

The Ecumenical Commission shall seek input and involvement of any interested clergy, associates in ministry, or laity within the Synod. The Commission shall consider a broad range of information and involvement opportunities, including dissemination of proposals and alternatives, settings for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration and response to written comments.

**RELATIONSHIP(S) TO OTHER COMMISSIONS**

The Ecumenical Commission is encouraged to engage in joint planning or support with other commissions and committees of the Northwest Washington Synod, as well as with other similar ecumenical committees of church bodies with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in dialogue or has established formal relations. Such joint work may include drafting of model covenants for cooperation, sponsoring workshops or other educational events, and developing information or resource materials for use in parishes, assemblies or other special events. As appropriate, representation on the Ecumenical Commission may be extended to partners from other church bodies with whom a covenant or other formal relationship has been established.

**AMENDMENTS TO GUIDELINES**

These guidelines for the Ecumenical Commission may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Committee by a simple majority vote of those present and voting on the matter, provided that the Bishop has been consulted and the proposed amendment has been previously distributed to all Committee members.

ADOPTED by the Ecumenical Commission of the Northwest Washington Synod on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001.

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Ecumenical Commission

Attest:

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Secretary, Ecumenical Commission

### #3 – Sample Covenant Agreement from the Virginia Synod

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#### A Call Into Covenant

*The Lutheran, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth of Virginia*

#### Preamble

We Bishops are witnesses to two powerful experiences in our time which have impelled Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Roman Catholics toward church unity: the Ecumenical Movement and the Second Vatican Council. The Holy Spirit continues to use these graced events to enlighten and form God's people as we approach the Third Millennium.

Unity is a Gospel imperative for the churches, not simply an option. We are mindful that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the night before he died prayed: ". . . that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one: I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me." (*Jn 17: 21-23*)<sup>1</sup> The Psalmist, too, reminds us: "How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together in harmony." (*Psalms 133*)

Furthermore, it is our responsibility to "make every effort to preserve the unity which the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force" because: "There is but one Body and one Spirit, . . . just as there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all and is in all." (*Eph. 4: 4-6*)

We celebrate the faithful initiative of our church leaders, past and present, in fostering church unity. In our roles as pastoral leaders, we welcome Pope John Paul II's and Archbishop Runcie's challenge: "Once more, then, we call on the bishops, clergy, and faithful people . . . in every country, diocese, and parish in which our faithful live side by side. We urge them all to pray for this work and to adopt every possible means of furthering it through their collaboration, in deepening their alliance to Christ and in witnessing to him before the world. Only by such collaboration and prayer can the memory of past enmities be healed and our past antagonisms overcome."<sup>2</sup>

In Virginia, we experience the call to full communion in various collaborative efforts among our three traditions: in particular, through the annual statewide Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic (LARC) Conference, at regional LARC events for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and in local parish initiatives. We hear this call also in the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission's (ARCIC'S) *Final Report*, in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic document, *Facing Unity*, in the Lutheran-Episcopal *Niagara Report*, and, in the United States, in *The Agreement*. In these joint undertakings our divisions are being healed and we become attuned to the Spirit who will make us one.

## **Declaration**

We recognize that it is the Holy Spirit who bestows unity. The same Spirit calls us to uncover convergences and to achieve consensus so that we can advance toward the goal of unity willed by Christ. Through conversion, this shared commitment opens us to new possibilities under the guidance of God's Spirit as we seek to provide an effective expression of God's love in Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Two decades of dialogues have led our three traditions to establish full communion as our mutual goal. We understand that we will pursue this goal in a rich variety of ways which are consistent with the Gospel and the ordering of our three traditions.

We desire to do all things together which existing agreements permit and to place no impediments to the cause of unity.

THEREFORE, relying on the faithful love of the Triune God, we commit ourselves to celebrate the unity already achieved through years of Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic conversations and to strengthen the visible unity of the Body of Christ in Virginia.

## **A Call Into Covenant**

The unity of the church is the gift of the Spirit and a task of the church. We hereby CALL INTO COVENANT our respective Synods and Diocese and COMMIT OURSELVES to the following actions. In behalf of the unity of the church, WE WILL:

1. pray for each other, particularly at the principal Sunday celebration.
2. sponsor seasonal prayer services, especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity;
3. encourage shared lectionary studies;
4. promote pulpit exchanges in accord with the respective guidelines of each tradition;
5. encourage cooperation among member churches in providing pre-marital preparation for ecumenical marriages;
6. encourage shared religious formational and educational events, e.g. youth ministry, vacation Bible school, living room dialogue;
7. develop joint efforts in evangelism and social justice;
8. develop covenants among our congregations, institutions and chaplaincies;
9. support statewide, regional and local LARC Conferences, and establish annually a joint meeting of our ecumenical bodies;
10. encourage each diocese and synod to develop supportive prayer services and covenanting models for its congregations through their respective ecumenical and liturgical committees;
11. urge congregations to study the existing dialogues among our churches (see appendix);
12. develop covenants among school and academies for shared programs;
13. ask congregations to develop and reflect on their cooperative ministries to discover areas of convergence among our three churches;
14. sponsor shared retreats and formational events for clergy and parish leadership;
15. develop campus ministry covenants among Catholic Campus Ministry, Canterbury Association, and Lutheran Student Union;
16. seek ways to coordinate program and planning at the district/ synodical/ diocesan level;
17. collaborate at the judicatory level on justice issues and social concerns;
18. review and evaluate this Covenant annually at a meeting of the state LARC Committee representatives with Bishops;
19. establish goals annually which advance this Covenant;
20. celebrate the renewal of this Covenant annually at the statewide LARC conference.



May the Holy Spirit, who has brought us to this moment of covenanting, bring us to ever deepening levels of unity. To this end we affix our names and recommend it to our respective judicatories.

Richard F. Bansemer, Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America, Virginia Synod

Walter F. Sullivan, Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Peter James Lee, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

E. Harold Jansen, Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America, Metropolitan  
Washington D.C. Synod

C. Charles Vache, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Southern  
Virginia

Robert P. Atkinson,  
Assistant Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

A. Heath Light, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of  
Southwestern Virginia

Frank H. Vest, Coadjutor Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Southern  
Virginia

John R. Keating, Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Arlington

David E. Foley, Auxiliary Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

## November 1, 1990 - Feast of All Saints

*In addition to those who initially signed the LARC Covenant, additional signatures have been added:*

David C. Jones,  
Suffragan Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of Richmond

F. Neff Powell, Bishop  
Episcopal Diocese of  
Southwestern Virginia

David C. Bane, Jr.,  
Bishop Coadjutor

Episcopal Diocese of Southern  
Virginia

aul S. Loverde, Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Arlington

Theodore F. Schneider, Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America, Metropolitan  
Washington D.C. Synod

Carol Gallagher,  
Bishop Suffragan  
Episcopal Diocese of Southern  
Virginia

James F. Mauney, Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America, Virginia Synod

Francis X. DiLorenzo, Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

## #4 – Sample Covenant Agreement from the Minneapolis Area Synod and The Saint Paul Area Synod

### Lutheran Catholic Covenant

A COVENANT between the MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD and the SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD, THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA and THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE of SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

+In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that it is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ that we "all may be one" (John 17:21). We also believe the words of Paul to the early church:

"Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all, and with all" (Ephesians 4:2).

Encouraged, also, by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our people, we, Archbishop John R. Roach, Bishop Lowell O. Erdahl and Bishop David W. Olson, in the name of the members of our respective communions, solemnly and joyfully enter this Covenant

The Reverend Lowell O. Erdahl  
Bishop, St. Paul Area Synod  
The Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

The Reverend David W. Olson  
Bishop, Minneapolis Area Synod  
The Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

Most Reverend John R. Roach  
Archbishop of the Archdiocese  
of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

November 4, 1990

### Historical Prologue

The history of Lutheran-Catholic ecumenical relationships in the Twin Cities area dates from 1965. Previous to that time there were some instances of cooperation, primarily institutional. For example, Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities agencies made joint efforts for legislation to recognize the religious background of children who were candidates for legal adoption. The Minnesota Private College Council was established in the late 1940s and included Lutheran and Catholic colleges among its members. Occasionally there would be a joint appearance of a Lutheran pastor and a Roman Catholic priest on the same speakers' platform. Further, a few dedicated and farsighted persons of both communities were engaged in ecumenical dialogue and activities.

The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church concluded its work in 1965. One of the Council's sixteen official documents was the Decree on Ecumenism. This document

encouraged greater ecumenical involvement by Roman Catholics. One of the official Protestant observance at Vatican II was Dr. Warren A. Quanbeck of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul. His comments at the Council in Rome helped shape the Decree. After his return he worked tirelessly in cooperation with his Roman Catholic counterpart, Reverend Jerome D. Quinn of the St. Paul Seminary, to promote Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in the Twin Cities and beyond. Both Dr. Quanbeck and Father Quinn died untimely deaths and are remembered as pioneers in Lutheran-Catholic dialogue.

In 1967 the seminaries of the Twin Cities sponsored a joint course in Reformation history to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Martin Luther's Nine-five Theses. Faculty members and students of Luther, Northwestern, and St. Paul Seminaries were represented in this joint venture.

One of the earliest and most successful efforts at cooperation on the parish level took place in Minneapolis in the 1960s. Interstate highway construction and the University of Minnesota's West Bank expansion project forced the parishioners of both Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church to abandon their buildings to the bulldozers. They sought sanctuary in various places before finding a common place to worship in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church and later on the Augsburg College campus. Another noteworthy instance of cooperation occurred between Hob Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Albert the Great Catholic Church. Since the late 1970s they have engaged in pulpit exchanges, adult Bible studies, and joint summer vacation church schools. In 1987 Fairview Hospital in collaboration with Health Care Services and Carondelet Lifecare

Corporation developed a joint venture agreement, unique in the United States, enabling Fairview Riverside and St. Mary's hospitals to operate as one ecumenical health care setting, Riverside Medical Center. The Center is the second largest health care campus in the Twin Cities. These are only a few examples of the many local instances of Lutheran Catholic cooperation. Also in the late 1960s the Religion Department of St. Olaf College, Northfield, began its "St. Olaf in Rome" program which has brought to Rome in the ensuing years over 3000 faculty members and students, many of them from the Twin Cities. The department established a tradition of observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Rome in January. This observance takes place in the Pauline Chapel of the Vatican. In turn, St. Olaf College twice welcomed Cardinal Jan Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, to the Northfield Campus.

In the 1970s a Lutheran "Consultation of Twelve Pastors" recommended to their various judicatories that the annual Lutheran Reformation service in the Twin Cities be transformed into a Lutheran-Catholic celebration of unity. The 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession (1530) was the occasion of this celebration. Archbishop John R. Roach preached in Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, in October 1979.

Subsequently, the "Consultation of Twelve Pastors," along with four Roman Catholic priests, helped form the Twin Cities Lutheran-Catholic Resource Committee. The Committee promoted parish conversations focusing on the book *Exploring the Faith We Share*. They planned a Prayer Service on All Saints Sunday, 1980. This service was held in the Cathedral of Saint Paul with Dr. David W. Preus, Presiding Bishop of the American Lutheran Church, as preacher. A joint prayer service has been celebrated each year since 1980 and alternates between Central Lutheran

Church in Minneapolis and the Saint Paul Cathedral. When held in Central Lutheran Church a Roman Catholic is invited to preach; when held in the Cathedral, a Lutheran preaches the sermon.

In 1977 Lutheran and Catholic bishops of Minnesota began the practice of an annual retreat together. They viewed the retreat as an opportunity for common prayer and for extended discussion of such topics as "Life Issues," "The Farm Crisis," and "Ministry and its Cultural Context." On occasion these discussions resulted in common statements sent out to their churches.

These and other experiences of common faith and hope, of common witness and prayer by individuals and congregations, pastors and bishops, bring us to this moment. For in this moment we publicly express together our thanks to Almighty God whose Spirit is at work in all Christian Churches and Who draws us closer to the unity which is the Divine Will.

### **WE AFFIRM**

That the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whom we worship and praise, is the source of the baptismal unity we share and seek to manifest in our common life.

That Christ Jesus, "the first born of the dead" and the living center of our faith, is Redeemer and Savior of the world (Colossians 1:18).

That our common prayer is the prayer of Christ Jesus for the unity of the church called by the Holy Spirit from the tapestry of peoples, tongues, and cultures.

That the life we share is a result of our common baptism into Christ's death and resurrection: "That as Christ was raised from the dead we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

That led by the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge the Scriptures as authoritative for our common faith and life in this world.

That we celebrate both "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" church as the mystery of the presence of God in the world and the richness of the Catholic and Lutheran traditions.

Our common mission to witness: to bear witness in word and deed to the Christ and his work, and to strive for the common good of all the world.

### **THEREFORE WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

Confess to God and to each other our past and present prejudice against each other's traditions, practices and beliefs, and allow God to forgive our sin against each other and God.

Give thanks for the unity God has given us, celebrate it in joint services, and pray for the day when we celebrate the Eucharist as one community.

Pray for one another in our public worship, that the Holy Spirit continue to heal brokenness that now exists in doctrine, sacramental life and church order, and enable us to work energetically for healing.

Listen to the Holy Scriptures and together be instructed by them.

Strengthen our common witness to the Christ and our quest for peace and justice.

Give special support to those who live a Lutheran-Catholic covenant in their families.

Struggle together, and with all other Christians, to resist and transform whatever in our society and culture would erode our common faith.

Study jointly the public conversations of the national Lutheran-Catholic Dialogues, and act jointly on recommendations of our respective churches in response to the official dialogues.

Urge our congregations, pastors, priests and lay ministers to cooperate in common matters wherever possible, and encourage joint programs and common use of facilities on all levels of church life.

Celebrate and renew this covenant each year.

### Covenant Commission

Pastor Jack Kelly, Co-Chair St.  
Mark Lutheran Church Circle Pines,  
Minnesota

Mary Margaret Deeney, CSJ  
Spiritual Growth Resource  
Facilitator Bloomington, Minnesota

Diane Haines, Director Spiritual and  
Pastoral Care Rosemount,  
Minnesota

Mrs. Doris Ohlsen-Huspeni St.  
Paul, Minnesota

The Reverend Dr. Arland Hultgren  
Professor of New Testament Luther-  
Northwestern Seminary St. Paul,  
Minnesota

Reverend James Perkl Parochial  
Vicar Church of St. John Neumann  
Eagan, Minnesota

Professor Lynne Lorenzen Professor  
of Religion Augsburg College  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Reverend John P. Sankovitz  
Professor of Theology University of  
St. Thomas St. Paul, Minnesota

Pastor Albert Neibacher Christ  
Church Lutheran Minneapolis,  
Minnesota

The Reverend Dr. Arthur L.  
Kennedy, Co-Chair Chair,  
Department of Theology  
University of St. Thomas St. Paul,  
Minnesota

Deacon Peter D'Heilly, Director  
Division of Outreach St. Paul,  
Minnesota