

EPISCOPAL-PRESBYTERIAN AGREEMENT ON LOCAL SHARING OF MINISTRIES

PARTICIPANTS

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PREAMBLE: The Urgency of the Times

Such a Time as This: Pandemic and Racial Endemic

The Book of Esther recalls a time of great challenge for people of faith to act. So too, our current time finds our world amid many challenges—not least, experiencing a pandemic with as-yet-unknown overall effects on the Church. The global Christian Church has found itself in a season of reinvention and redefinition.

Individual congregations are challenged to adapt to a changing world, straining links with the past and old ways of doing church. In so doing, we have refocused on the core duties of being Christ in the world. This has created both challenges and opportunities.

Our time stands in particular need of unity. Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and The Episcopal Church acknowledge the historical and present reality of sin, racism, and white supremacy that denies the impartiality of God, the reconciling work of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit poured forth into all persons. We acknowledge our complicity and calling to end all racial discrimination, repenting of and ministering to those injured by it. We cannot remain silent about this divisiveness, nor did Christ: “Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so he said to them, ‘Any country that divides itself into groups which fight each other will not last very long. And any town or family that divides itself into groups which fight each other will fall apart’” (Matthew 12:25, GNT). Reform always comes from the margins, whether the prophetic voice crying in the wilderness or activists on city streets protesting the death of another person of color (as if Black lives do not matter).

Accordingly, there is a present and historical urgency borne in this agreement to move both churches toward that unity in mission. The triune mission of God is the foundation of the Church’s unity and its mission in the world. It is among the last of Jesus’ prayers: “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21, ESV). This document represents the culmination of many decades of dialogues between The Episcopal Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).¹

¹END NOTES

The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have been in ecumenical dialogue since 1886. See William Henry Roberts. *The Correspondences Between the Committee on Church Unity of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Commission on Christian Unity of the General Convention of the*

The Church, guided by God’s wisdom, can embrace this opportunity and examine how ecclesial bodies can work together.

Tearing Down Ecclesiastical Barriers

Old walls had prevented mission and ministry together. In this time of notable change, the participants of the bilateral dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) invited our ecclesial bodies—the General Convention 2022 and General Assembly 2022—to consider this limited exchange agreement on the local sharing of ministries. Both bodies affirmed the initiative and the church-wide study. We received feedback from both communions and the ecumenical dialogue places this proposed agreement before both the General Assembly and the General Convention for consideration and action in 2024.

The old walls preventing work together have been torn down through a vastly changing world and church context. With the foundation of the 2008 Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement, our common full communion partner (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and shared partnership with the Moravian Church—Northern and Southern Provinces,² our work together through Churches Uniting in Christ, and our work together in public witness as well as numerous collaborative local ministries, a pathway has been created for continued mission and ministry together, toward the unity that God calls us to.

Thus, the Presbyterian/Episcopal Dialogue requests our respective authorizing bodies to consider the following Agreement; to continue the Dialogue with future deliberations; and that our respective Heads of Communion commit themselves publicly to this effort and to consider a public celebration of our progress to date and our hope for the future.

“Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1, *The St. Helena Psalter*)

INTRODUCTION³

The Church does not live for itself. It is called into being by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to serve the mission of the triune God in the world. “The Church belongs to God. It is the creation of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. It cannot exist by and for itself.”⁴ The mission of God is a single all-embracing mission that confronts the Church with a range of complementary tasks. Impelled by the joyful duty of giving praise and thanks to God for all the blessings of creation and redemption, the Church seeks to serve God by making known the Good News of salvation and by meeting human need wherever it finds it. In accordance with God’s purpose to “gather up all

Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S. (Philadelphia: General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.), 1896).

² The Episcopal Church is in full communion and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a covenant agreement with with the Moravian Church.

³Adapted from *For the Sake of the Gospel: Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministries in the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia*, 2001.

⁴*The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper No. 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998), §9.

things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10), the Church is called to embody with anticipation the reconciliation and communion of all people.

The Church knows well that its mission is compromised at every point by its disunity, which continues at many levels despite the great ecumenical achievements of the last century. How can the Church credibly proclaim the unity of humankind when it is too fractured to recognize a common baptism and to gather around one eucharistic table in the one apostolic faith? We have institutionalized divisions in the Church and come to accept them as normal, forgetting that they are a stumbling block and a barrier to faith for many. We overlook the fact that they stand in conflict with the will of Christ and amount to a refusal of the unity which is his gift.

The witness of the Church—its service of the *Missio Dei*—will be greatly enhanced by overcoming historic divisions between the churches.⁵ The removal of barriers between our two churches, The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while not providing an instant or complete solution to the problems and challenges confronting the Church, will be a step of great importance, especially when seen together with other comparable steps under consideration by our churches. In many and varied contexts, diverse ecclesial communities have benefited greatly from the sharing of ordained ministries. Our two churches could expand in the joint planting of new worshipping communities and partner in united or federated parishes (referred to as *ecumenical congregations*).⁶ The matter is not less urgent, nor are the advantages less significant, in the deepening of our covenant relationship in order to establish new eucharistic communities and mission projects which feed the body, mind, and souls of God’s people.

The proposals in this paper are formulated out of our obedience to the Gospel and the better discharge of our call to mission. Unity is for the sake of God’s mission. Changes in the socioeconomic pattern of life in the U.S. in recent years provide an opportunity to develop the unity between our two churches. When Christians demonstrate in their lives that the barriers which divide the rest of society do not divide the Church, the Gospel is proclaimed. We may be certain that we are called, together, to grow in mission, the mission of the Church, within the mission of the triune God.

AFFIRMING THE CURRENT ECUMENICAL AGREEMENT

This group affirms the current Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008, including the following accords:

1. We acknowledge one another’s churches as churches belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church;
2. We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are duly administered;

⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), p 855: “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

⁶ *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. Edited by Jooseop Keum (Geneva: WCC, 2013).

3. We acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as given by God and instruments of grace, and look forward to the time when the reconciliation of our churches makes possible the full interchangeability of ministers;
4. We acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry;
5. We agree that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery;
6. We agree that The Episcopal Church will invite members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to receive Holy Communion in their churches and the Presbyterian Church (USA) will invite members of The Episcopal Church to receive Holy Communion in their churches. We encourage the members of our churches to accept this Eucharistic hospitality and thus express their unity with each other in the one Body of Christ;
7. We agree to continue to dialogue in the areas such as diaconal ministries, historic episcopate, the office of elder, etc. that would lead to full reconciliation of our ministries and interchangeability of our ministers;
8. We encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together;
9. We agree to develop a process to support and implement the above recommendations; and
10. We affirm these proposals mark an important step in moving toward the full, visible unity of the Church. We know that beyond this commitment lies a move from the recognition to the reconciliation of churches and ministries within the wider fellowship of the universal Church.

In summary, we recognize and affirm the validity of our respective churches: providing word and sacrament, ordered ministries, as well as the embodiment and exercise of the ministry of oversight (communally, collegially, and personally). We also recognize that the divergence in equally valid ecclesiastical polities, alongside existing church traditions and customs, limits the interchangeability of ordered ministers and thus full communion at this time. Despite this recognition, this group believes we have prayerfully discerned a way forward for our two churches to continue journeying together in a complementary manner and enriching each other as we participate in the mission of God.

THE WAY FORWARD

In our current agreement, our two churches agreed "that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and

approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery.” Furthermore, a conditional was established on this point: “because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the *Book of Common Worship* and the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*.”

Our current agreement also calls the two denominations to “encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide a regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational, and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together,” as well as provide a process to support and implement the above recommendations (guidelines).

Our two churches have agreed to be in continued dialogue concerning the mutual recognition of ordained ministries, as a step towards the unity that is Christ’s will for his Church. Our current agreement enabled The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to formally and publicly participate in the Churches Uniting in Christ recognition of ordered ministry (June 2017). This public proclamation underscores and casts away possible barriers to our current agreement to move forward in missional partnership.

On the basis of converging but not yet wholly compatible understandings of the ordained ministry—with a sufficient agreement in faith and ministry, alongside a continued partnership of our two churches over recent decades—this group proposes that our churches deepen our current relationship.

Sharing in ecumenical ministry

We agree with the World Council of Churches’ 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* in regard to ordered ministry,

there is no single pattern of ministry in the New Testament, though all churches would look to Scripture in seeking to follow the will of the Lord concerning how ordained ministry is to be understood, ordered and exercised. At times, the Spirit has guided the Church to adapt its ministries to contextual needs (cf. Acts 6:1–6). Various forms of ministry have been blessed with the gifts of the Spirit. Early writers, such as Ignatius of Antioch, insisted upon the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon. This pattern of three related ministries can be seen to have roots in the New Testament; eventually it became the generally accepted pattern and is still considered normative by many churches today... Among the several means for maintaining the Church’s apostolicity, such as the scriptural canon, dogma and liturgical order, ordained ministry has played an important role. Succession in ministry is meant to serve the apostolic continuity of the Church.⁷

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reflect the threefold ordered ministries expressed by Ignatius of Antioch (bishop, presbyter, and deacon), “locally adapted” in our respective polities. Thus, both denominations hold, in the broad ecumenical sense, apostolic

⁷*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214) (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 26. Cf. Ignatius of Antioch’s Letter to the Magnesians 6 and 13; Letter to the Trallians 7; Letter to the Philadelphians 4; Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8.

succession.⁸ Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have recognized the gift of *episkopé*, the ministry of oversight, locally adapted, as expressed in the 2017 Churches Uniting in Christ mutual recognition or ordered ministry. Specifically, the ecumenical dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in round two and round three, recognized that diocesan bishops and presbytery moderators have similarly constituted ecclesial authority and expression of the gift of *episkopé* as it relates to presiding at ordination, as well as the inauguration of a presbyter to a pastoral relationship, or commissioning and blessing a new ministry.

⁸ Presbyterians also hold historic *episkopé* locally adapted. The PC(USA)'s official response to the *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* shared the Reformed tradition's understanding of "Apostolic succession" to include continuity in the apostolic tradition, apostolic faith, the apostolicity of the Church's witness, and the church's ordered ministry (See https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/bem.pdf)

In the Reformed tradition, *episkopé* is corporate and not personal, tracing back to the Church of Scotland, predominantly the Presbytery of Glasgow, through presbyteries—and also to Scotland's offices of Superintendent, as well as Bishop, who personally presided at ordinations. However, in the act of ordination, there is a personal form of *episkopé* exercised in the role of the presbytery and session moderators as they preside over the worshipful act (W.M. Hetherington. *History of the Church of Scotland: from the Introduction of Christianity to the Period of the Disruption in 1843*, New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856; Jenny Wormald. *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981, pp. 75-142; John Knox, C.J. Guthrie ed., *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1898, pp. 228, 249).

Until 1688, the polity and terms of *episkopé* varied. Some years there was a bishop, exercising personal *episkopé*, in other years the office of bishop was assumed into the presbytery as a corporate expression of *episkopé*... and then back again. The Church of Scotland in 1688 finally resolved to remove from its Presbyterian polity the functionary role of the Bishop as regional administrator and liturgical overseer as common within the Roman and Anglican tradition. Those formerly consecrated as bishops within the Roman and Church of England rite, or the hybrid Presbyterian-Episcopal rite between 1578 and 1688, and who desired to remain in communion with the Church of Scotland would now truly function as pastors of congregations with a college of presbyters. Thus, the historic *episkopé* was therefore permanently assumed into the communion of the people and embodied personally within the moderators of the ordaining councils, the sessions and presbyteries.

Additional ecumenical documents and bodies to consult are the 2021 St Andrew Declaration between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland, as well as the 2016 St Columba Declaration between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England.

In *The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: PCUSA, 1789), "bishop" and "pastor" are interchangeable, and it is the pastor, as moderator of the session, that oversees as a member of the presbytery and presides at the ordination of elders and deacons (c.f., "The Successor to Peter: A Paper for Discussion from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," Discussion PC(USA) and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Louisville, Kentucky, December 6-7, 2000): endnote 5, "It may be of some interest that prior to the 1983 reunion of the northern and southern branches of Presbyterianism, the Book of Order of the northern branch, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., offered several titles for ministers of Word and Sacrament, among them the title 'bishop.' If one looks, say, at the roll calls in the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia around the middle of the nineteenth century one will read 'The following bishops were in attendance....' The concept was that every installed pastor of a congregation is bishop of a congregationally constituted diocese. He or she is surrounded by presbyters or 'elders' and assisted by 'deacons.'" Here, on a small scale, as a parochial diocese, Presbyterians have the historic threefold ministry expressed by Ignatius.

Guided by the World Council of Churches' 1982 foundational paper, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*, Chapter VI, as well as 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214), presbyteries and dioceses are strongly encouraged to invite presbytery moderators and diocese bishops to participate in each other's celebrations of ministry, not only ordinations but also celebrations of a new ministry, wherein bishops and moderators share an ecumenical blessing. It is also strongly encouraged in their ordination of presbyters, each also includes bishops from other denominations with whom each church shares recognition of mutual ministry (i.e. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America). Finally, we fervently pray that when a presbytery moderator is installed, an Episcopal bishop (or designee) be present, and when an Episcopal bishop is ordained, a Presbyterian moderator (or designee) be present; and both be invited in those moments of celebration to share an ecumenical blessing.

Limited orderly exchange of ministers

Within the current agreement (2008–2009), and without exceeding the discretion of The Episcopal Church bishops and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries, there shall be provision for the following exchange of ordered ministers between our churches:

- the acceptance of Episcopal presbyters (those ordained and referred to as *priests*) in Presbyterian placements and in ecumenical ministries where the Presbyterian Church has the right of appointment;
- the acceptance of Presbyterian presbyters (specifically those ordained and consecrated to the ministry of the word, sacrament, and teaching, referred to as *ministers of word and sacrament* or *teaching elders*) in Episcopal appointments, such as ecumenical ministries and cooperating parishes where The Episcopal Church has the right of appointment.

This agreement does not enable ordained Ruling Elders and Commissioned Pastors (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor deacons of The Episcopal Church or Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), to be considered.

THE GUIDELINES FOR LIMITED ORDERLY EXCHANGE OF MINISTERS

For missional purposes and in consultation between the diocesan bishop and local presbytery, a presbyter may be licensed (permitted) by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority to serve under the following guidelines.

The limited orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry needed by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body and the identification of a presbyter from the sending body who may serve in that ministry setting.

The Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body initiates the process of the limited orderly exchange between the presbyter and the placement or ecumenical ministry to be served. The presbyter does not initiate the exchange process.

The inviting body shall consult with the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the presbyter to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the sending body. The presbyter remains accountable to the sending church for the continuation of ministerial status.

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agree that experience in and knowledge of one's own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition. Therefore, the limited orderly exchange is only open to presbyters who have been ordained for at least three years and are active within the ministry of their denomination.

Presbyters serving in a limited orderly exchange position shall be temporary under this agreement. The service of presbyters should ordinarily be for a two- to four-year period, which may be renewed. Should a presbyter of one church intend to serve permanently in another church, the process of the transfer or reception of ministerial status should be followed according to the rules of the receiving Church.

Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the presbyter remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.

Pension and medical coverage are through the church of ecclesiastical membership.

Functions

When a presbyter is invited by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority, the presbyter is authorized to:

- to exercise pastoral and/or administrative responsibility;
- lead public worship as a presbyter under the direction of a diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- preach the Gospel;
- celebrate and administer the sacraments within the guidelines specified below;
- prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- and present the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church, assisting with the diocese or presbytery's ministry of evangelism partnership.

While a presbyter serves a particular placement or ecumenical setting because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, as stated in the 2008 agreement, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. What this means explicitly is that:

- All presbyters are bound to their denomination's authoritative liturgical mandates and resources regarding the Eucharist when they preside or are the celebrant in their particular placement or ecumenical setting of joint witness;
- All presbyters may use authorized or commended worship resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with whom both churches are in full communion, including the Eucharist liturgies, with the authorization of the inviting Ecclesiastical Authority; and
- All presbyters will be trained, authorized, and mentored in the ecclesiastical polity, customs, and traditions by the inviting Ecclesiastical Authority.

Training, Examination, and Oversight

A presbyter who serves under the terms of this Agreement on Limited Orderly Exchange of Ministers shall receive such preparation and instruction, or formation, as determined by the diocesan bishop or presbytery to be appropriate to the particular placement or ecumenical setting, and the length of time shall be determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority's own rule.

The presbyter shall be examined by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority as to personal faith, motives for seeking to serve, and the areas of instruction determined by diocesan or presbytery.

The presbyter authorized under the terms of this Agreement shall work under the supervision and mentoring of the diocesan bishop or presbytery. A presbyter shall be assigned to the invited presbyter as a mentor and local supervisor.

An authorization may be for no more than four years, and no less than two. Within an appropriate time before the expiration of the invitation, the presbyter shall review the covenant relationship with the diocesan bishop and presbytery. The invitation may be renewed with the consent of all interested parties (i.e., diocesan bishop and presbytery, presbyter, and authorized representative(s) of a particular placement or ecumenical ministry).

The diocesan bishop or presbytery may at any time withdraw this authorization for reasons it deems good and sufficient.

A presbyter who has been authorized and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve. However, they are not authorized to perform the functions specified above until an invitation is renewed in order to serve in a placement or an ecumenical setting by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority.

PRESBYTERIAN GLOSSARY

Apostolic function of *episkopé: the apostolic function of those who oversee the ministry of the church, as reflected in various New Testament texts, is the function exercised by the apostles in spreading the Gospel and exists so that the Church maintains its witness to Jesus Christ.

***Apostolic succession**: continuity with the ministry of the early church, especially the disciples of Jesus. Reformed and Roman Catholics believe that there is an apostolic succession, though they locate that succession differently. The Reformed tradition understands apostolic succession to also include continuity with the apostolic tradition, apostolic faith, and the apostolicity of the Church's witness.

***Apostolic era**: the period of the history of Christianity when the original apostles of Jesus were still alive.

The Book of Common Worship (BCW): a liturgical resource in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consisting of various liturgies and prayers consistent with the *Directory for Worship* section of Book Two of the Constitution, *The Book of Order*. The BCW's most recent edition was published in 2018.

***Catholicity**: as described in the baptismal catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem, refers not simply to geographic extension but also to the manifold variety of local churches and their participation in the fullness of faith and life that unites them in the one community.

Church: the one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Churches: fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches.

church (lowercase "c"): the local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e., congregation, parish.

Commissioned Pastor (also known as commissioned ruling elder): a ruling elder authorized by a presbytery to limited pastoral service assigned by a presbytery for a limited time. Commissioned pastors may be authorized by the presbytery to moderate session, administer the sacraments, and officiate marriages where permitted by state law.

Commissioning: an act of God through the voice of the Church whereby a council of the Church authorizes, blesses, and entrusts to an individual, usually one who is in ordered ministry, to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a particular ministry.

***Communion(s)**: the community fellowship gathered at the table together. Since we have not yet realized the goal of all churches being in communion with each other—essentially recognize our being one Church as Christ prayed we would be—we are different communions gathering at different tables with only imperfect unity in Christ.

Constitution of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): the governing documents that frame the ecclesial life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Constitution consists of two parts: Book One is *The Book of Confessions*, expressing in twelve creeds, catechisms, confessions, and statements of faith what Presbyterians believe; and Book Two is *The Book of Order*, expressing how Presbyterians live out their confessional belief with respect to governance, church discipline, and principles of worship.

Councils: duly constituted gatherings of ruling and teaching elders for discernment and decision-making for the spiritual welfare of the church. The councils of the church are the session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. Each council is distinct but mutually related to one another, the action of one council is understood to be an action on behalf of the whole and the whole church's act through that appropriate council, with the larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, governing the smaller. The session consists of all teaching elders serving in a local congregation and active ruling elders. Presbytery, synod, and General Assembly consist of an equal number of teaching and ruling elders. (Adapted from *The Book of Order*, F-3.0203)

Covenant Partnership: an ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship whereby each participating communion acknowledges that it is undertaking a serious commitment, one that involves actions as well as words. Covenant partnership cannot be achieved without awareness of existing differences and similarities among the partners; it will demand dedication to walking and working together in ways that may, at times, represent a break with the past. Walking together involves not only the likelihood, but also the certainty of mutual challenge and change; because of this commitment, each body will eventually be different in ways that presently cannot be seen. The partner churches commit themselves to this new relationship with seriousness of intent, and full assurance that the One who calls us to greater visible unity is faithful and worthy of trust. (*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Covenant Agreement with the Moravian Church*, p. 9)

***Diakonia:** the ministry of service. Many churches ordain deacons; in others deacons are officers of the church but not ordained.

***Ecclesiology:** the theology of the nature and purpose of the church.

***Ecumenicity:** the character of being ecumenical—being concerned with the unity of the churches.

***Episcopacy:** the office of oversight of the church and its ministry. Every church has some way of overseeing the church, keeping it faithful to the Gospel, fostering its unity, and overseeing the work of the ministry and the work of the church in service to the world. In this dialogue, we have focused on episcopacy as a central ecumenical issue. Thus in this document the meanings of episcopacy are somewhat different in each communion.

***Episkopé:** a Greek word meaning “oversight” from which we get the English word “episcopal,” indicating reference to a bishop or governance by bishops. In ecumenical dialogue, the use of the word *episkopé* has become the standard way to refer to the ministry of oversight, which includes, but is not limited to, the office of bishop. This use of *episkopé* has also become a way to invite those churches that have not retained the episcopal office to recognize that the ministry of that office is nevertheless present in and vital to their churches.

Executive Presbyter/General Presbyter: a chief administrative staff member employed and called by a presbytery to help provide pastoral care and guidance, administrative functions, and other such duties as determined by a presbytery in order to effectively support the mission and ministries of congregations, validated ministries, and teaching/ruling elders in that presbytery.

***Feast of Eucharist:** the Lord's Supper, the word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving," the feast of the Lord's Supper is a meal of thanksgiving. Also known as Holy Communion to denote that in the feasting of the bread and cup, the assembled community is in communion with the triune God and with the Church universal in every time and in every place.

Full Communion: an ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship between churches characterized by the following: recognition of each other as churches in which the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered according to the Word of God; withdrawal of any historic condemnation by one side or the other as inappropriate for the life and faith of our churches today; continuation of recognition of each other's Baptism and authorize and encourage the sharing of the Lord's Supper among their members; recognition of each other's various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament; establishment of appropriate channels of consultation and decision-making within the existing structures of the churches; commitment of themselves to an ongoing process of theological dialogue in order to clarify further the common understanding of the faith and foster its common expression in evangelism, witness, and service; pledge themselves to living together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow. (*A Formula of Agreement Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ on Entering into Full Communion on the Basis of "A Common Calling," p. 1*)

Holy Orders: also known as ordered ministry, these designate ordained offices into which women and men are called by God and confirmed by councils of the church to serve the people of God. These offices include bishop/priest, pastor, elder, and deacon.

Interchangeability: mutual recognition and mutual exchange of ordained ministers between two communions who have been duly authorized and commissioned by their respective ecclesiastical authority (diocesan bishop or presbytery).

Installation: a liturgical service whereby a council of the church officially places an ordinand in a particular ministry. An installed ordinand is ready to be commissioned with specific responsibilities and duties.

***Koinonia:** a Greek word meaning community, communion, or fellowship.

***Legitimate diversity:** legitimate diversity is diversity that does not violate a legitimate norm. Churches differ in what they consider legitimate diversity to include. "The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling—The Canberra Statement" of the World Council of Churches, 1991 states that, "Diversity is illegitimate when, for instance, it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community."

Minister of Word and Sacrament (also known as a Teaching Elder): an ordained office in Presbyterian polity to exercise spiritual leadership in and through the councils of the church by the ministries of preaching and teaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and attending to the health of ecclesial life in a ministry context.

Moderator: a constitutional office of the various councils of the church whose origin is from the Church of Scotland, representing the unity of the Church in council. The office of moderator is to preside over the proceedings of the appropriate council, guiding the council to discern the will and mind of Christ, ensuring that such deliberation is done “decently and in good order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). The moderator of a session is usually a teaching elder of a local congregation, or a commissioned pastor authorized by a presbytery, or another presbyter authorized by a presbytery. The moderators of a presbytery, synod, and General Assembly are elected by that respective council. The Moderator/Co-Moderators of the General Assembly is an ambassador of the Assembly, representing the “sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.A.2, pp. 6-7).

Ordered Ministry: Christ’s ministry and authority exercised through the ministry of the whole people of God, from whom certain women and men are specially called to particular functions in specific offices. The New Testament describes two primary ordered offices and their ordered ministry: the office of deacon to the ordered ministry of *diakonia* and the office of presbyter to the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament (in the case of teaching elder) and the ordered ministry of shared governance (in the case of ruling elder).

Ordinands: individuals who are inquiring or candidates for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and who are under care by a session and a presbytery.

***Presbyterian and presbyterian:** presbyterian refers to a form of church organization in which the governance of the church is in the hands of the elders (*presbyteros*, Greek). Presbyterian with a capital *P* is the name of particular churches, which characterize themselves by their presbyterian polity and subscribe to the Reformed theological tradition.

Presbytery: a governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of an equal number of teaching elders (Ministers of Word and Sacrament) and ruling elders commissioned by the sessions of local congregations in a designated region.

***Recognition:** “Accept[ing] the legitimacy and authenticity of other churches as the Church in the dialogical process towards fuller communion” (Timothy T. N. Lim, *Ecclesial Recognition with Hegelian Philosophy, Social Psychology, and Continental Political Theory* [Boston: Brill, 2017], 5).

Reformed: a Protestant theological tradition that is “in continuity with the classical Reformed theologians of the sixteenth century like Calvin and Bullinger, for example, and with the confessions of that tradition” (Jane Dempsey Douglass, “What is Reformed Theology?” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1990): 4).

Ruling elder: active members in a local congregation who have been elected by a local congregation, and ordained and installed by that congregation’s session to exercise shared spiritual leadership in the session and councils of the church with teaching elders.

Sacraments: “the Word of God enacted and sealed in the life of the Church, the body of Christ. They are gracious acts of God, by which Christ Jesus offers his life to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are also human acts of gratitude, by which we offer our lives to God in love and service. The Sacraments are both physical signs and spiritual gifts, including words and actions, surrounded by prayer, in the context of the Church’s common worship. They employ ordinary things—the basic elements of water, bread, and wine—in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God. The Reformed tradition recognizes the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also called Eucharist or Holy Communion) as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal Church” (*The Book of Order*, W-3.0401).

Session: a local governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of the pastoral staff and ruling elders of a local congregation.

Stated Clerk/Clerk of Session: a constitutional office of the various councils (called a clerk of session in the case of a session) who preserves and defends the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with the moderator of the appropriate council interpret the actions of that council, and insures the accurate recording of the appropriate council’s deliberations. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is understood to be the head of communion, and together with the Moderator/Co-Moderator of the General Assembly represents the unity of the Church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is the chief ecumenical officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is the chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly, one of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Synod: “the intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its region. It shall consist of not fewer than three presbyteries within a specific geographic region” (*The Book of Order*, G-3.0401).

Teaching elder: see “Minister of Word and Sacrament”.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC): a global fellowship founded in 2010 with the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council consisting of 233 member churches in 110 countries representing 100 million Christians from the Reformed, Presbyterian, United, Uniting, Congregational, and Waldensian theological traditions. The WCRC secretariat’s headquarters is in Hanover, Germany, and is governed by a General Council that meets every seven years, and between General Councils is governed by an Executive Committee.

World Council of Churches (WCC): a global fellowship founded in 1948 consisting of 350 member communions in 110 countries representing over 500 million Christians worldwide. The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are founding members of the WCC. The WCC secretariat’s headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland and is governed by an Assembly that meets every seven years, and between Assemblies is governed by a Central Committee.

*From the Glossary section of *The One Body Of Christ: Ministry In Service To The Church and The World*, Roman Catholic–Reformed Dialogue of the United States, Round Eight: 2012-2017. pp. 4-5.

EPISCOPAL GLOSSARY

+Anglican Communion: churches in communion with the See of Canterbury throughout the world. Member churches exercise jurisdictional independence but share a common heritage concerning Anglican identity and commitment to scripture, tradition, and reason as sources of authority. The Episcopal Church is the embodiment of the Anglican Communion in the USA and several other countries.

+Anglicanism: this way of life is the system of doctrine, and approach to polity of Christians in communion with the See of Canterbury (the bishop/diocese that is the ecclesiastical center for England and eventually all of the Anglican Communion). The term derives from the word which, in a variety of forms, refers to the people of the British Isles, and especially the English.

****Archdeacon:** a clergy person with a defined administrative authority delegated by the diocesan bishop.

#Bishop: one of the three orders of ordained ministers in the church, bishops are charged with the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the church. They stand in the historic succession, maintaining continuity with the ministry of the early Church and between Christian communities today. Bishops serve as chief pastors of the church, exercising a ministry of oversight and supervision. They are consecrated bishops for life. Since the bishop's ministry is a ministry of oversight, the term "episcopal" (derived from the Greek *episcopos*, "overseer") is applied to matters pertaining to bishops. An "episcopal" church is a church governed by bishops, and "episcopal" services are led by bishops.

****Bishop-Assistant:** a bishop, ordinarily a full-time member of the diocesan staff, who is appointed rather than elected and assists in carrying out the episcopal ministry of the diocese.

****Bishop-Assisting:** in common usage, a bishop who aides the diocese by providing additional episcopal services on a temporary basis. Appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the diocesan bishop, or the Standing Committee if there is no bishop.

****Bishop Coadjutor:** the elected bishop, with the right of succession upon the resignation of the diocesan bishop, who serves with the diocesan bishop.

****Bishop, Diocesan:** also known as the Ordinary of a diocese. A diocesan bishop, as distinct from a suffragan, assistant, or coadjutor bishop. The term apparently springs from the understanding of "ordinary jurisdiction" which is held in canon law to be the jurisdiction "permanently and irremovably annexed to" the office of bishop. By canon, a bishop may not resign jurisdiction without the consent of the House of Bishops. A bishop must resign from all jurisdiction at the age of seventy-two.

****Bishop, Presiding:** Chief Pastor and Primate of the Episcopal Church.

****Bishop Provisional:** if a diocesan bishop resigns with no bishop coadjutor (who has the right of succession) a diocese may call a bishop provisional who serves as the bishop, with full authority, for an interim period of up to three years, until the consecration of a new diocesan bishop.

****Bishop Suffragan:** a bishop who does not automatically succeed a diocesan bishop. Elected by the diocese to serve indefinitely at the direction of the diocesan bishop.

+**The Book of Common Prayer:** official book of worship of The Episcopal Church. The BCP provides liturgical forms, prayers, and instructions so that all members and orders of The Episcopal Church may appropriately share in common worship. Anglican liturgical piety has been rooted in the Prayer Book tradition since the publication of the first English Prayer Book in 1549. The current and defining edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* for The Episcopal Church was ratified in 1979.

****The Book of Occasional Services:** book of optional services and texts prepared by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.

****Canon:** the word has several different meanings in the church.

1) The canon of scripture; 2) Church law; 3) as an ecclesiastical title, a canon may be a member of the clergy or laity on the staff of a cathedral, diocese or other institution, 4) in liturgy, the fixed portion of the Great Thanksgiving.

****Canon to the Ordinary:** clergy or lay person who serves as assistant to the diocesan bishop.

****Canonical Residence:** clergy serving under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of a diocese are canonically resident in that diocese. Clergy may move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction pursuant to canonical procedures.

Church: the one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Churches: fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches.

church (lowercase "c"): the local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e. congregation, parish.

Churches Uniting in Christ: a covenant relationship among eleven Christian Communion--mainline American denominations (including both predominantly white and predominantly black churches), and was inaugurated on January 20, 2002 in Memphis, Tennessee on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. It is the successor organization to the Consultation on Church Union.⁹

****Commission on Ministry (COM):** pursuant to Title III, Canon 1, each diocese is required to establish a COM to assist the bishop in determining the present and future needs for ministry in the diocese.

Consultation on Church Union (COCU): was an effort on the part of several ecclesial bodies towards church unity in the United States, that began in 1962 and in 2002, it became Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_Uniting_in_Christ

Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church: the Constitution and Canons is the official set of governing rules for The Episcopal Church's bodies (*General Convention: House of Bishops and House of Deputies*). *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* is a part of the *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*.

****Curate:** typically refers to an assisting priest in a parish.

****Cure:** the pastoral and geographical responsibility and charge of a member of the clergy.

****Deacon:** one of three offices to which people can be ordained in The Episcopal Church, along with priests and bishops. The deacon's vocation lies in serving—especially the weak, the poor, the sick, the lonely—and in interpreting to the church the needs and hopes of the world. The sign of the office of deacon is a stole worn over the left shoulder and fastened under the right arm. In the Eucharist, deacons read the gospel, lead the Prayers of the People, introduce the confession, prepare the altar, assist with the distribution of the bread and wine, perform the ablutions, and dismiss the people.

****Diocese:** a geographical area that serves as the primary unit of organization in The Episcopal Church. A bishop and a legislative body—a convention or council—oversee each diocese.

****Diocesan Convention:** annual meeting of lay and clerical representatives from the congregations of a diocese to elect members of diocesan committees and deputies to General Convention, make decisions about diocesan policy, conduct other diocesan business (e.g., budget, program) and from time to time, elect a bishop for the diocese.

****Diocesan Transition Minister:** the clergy or lay member of the diocesan staff responsible for assisting the bishop, worshipping communities and individuals in transition.

Ecclesial body: a religious fellowship whose congregations are unified in their observance to its beliefs and traditions.

****Ecclesiastical Authority:** the responsible individual or body in a church institution. In a diocese, this authority rests with the diocesan bishop. Should the episcopate be vacant or the bishop be incapacitated, the responsibility falls upon the Standing Committee or other bishop.

The Episcopal Church: a Christian ecclesial body made up of 111 dioceses or convocations in the United States and seventeen countries; The Episcopal Church is a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

****Episcopal Church Center:** the churchwide ministries office of The Episcopal Church housing the office of the Presiding Bishop, his or her staff, and other church-related offices. Located in New York City.

****Executive Council of the Episcopal Church:** the national body that administers the program and policies adopted by the General Convention.

Ecumenical congregations: a congregation comprising of at least two or more ecclesial bodies.

Episcopal/episcopal: Episcopal refers to being of The Episcopal Church; episcopal is a term referring to bishop, from the Greek *episkopos*, meaning “overseer.” As above, an “episcopal” church is a church governed by bishops, and “episcopal” services are led by bishops.

Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008: the Agreement between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and ratified by presbyteries in 2009. The 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church approved the Agreement in 2009. Both churches authorized another round of dialogue to continue to address theological and missional issues.

****General Convention:** the national legislative body of The Episcopal Church. It consists of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies (four lay persons and four clergy persons from each diocese). Convention meets every three years.

****House of Bishops:** part of the two-house legislature of General Convention. All diocesan, suffragan, coadjutor, assistant, and most resigned and retired bishops are members of this body, which also meets periodically between General Conventions.

****The Hymnal 1982:** the collection of hymn texts, tunes, and service music authorized for use in The Episcopal Church. Also widely used: *Lift Every Voice and Sing II (LEVAS)*; and *Wonder, Love and Praise*.

Institution: occurring in a service of Celebration of a New Ministry, a bishop shares a letter of institution conferring the responsibilities of a priest in charge of a parish.

****Office for Transition Ministry:** a church-wide office that maintains a database of Episcopal and other clergy and lay professionals in Communion with The Episcopal Church, and the worshipping communities of The Episcopal Church. OTM has a website that allows clergy and lay leaders to search for worshipping communities that are themselves in search, using each other’s gifts, skills and experiences to identify possible opportunities for ministry together in order to assist the church to live into God’s mission in the world.

****Pastor** (as used in The Episcopal Church): term for a member of the clergy. It evokes one aspect of the priestly role, which is that of pastoral ministry: caring and protective responsibility for the sick, the grieving, the needy, and those in pain. It is a term especially appropriate for bishops, since they are ordained to “feed and tend the flock of Christ,” who is the Good Shepherd. (It does not normally mean a clergy person in charge of a parish as in the ELCA.) The laity shares in the pastoral role of the clergy, and a growing number of parishes have lay pastoral care teams.

+Priest or presbyter: from the Greek *presbyteros*, “elder.” In the NT, “presbyter” indicates a leader of the church. The English word “priest” is derived from “presbyter,” and used as a synonym for presbyter. After the Reformation, some churches began to use the term “presbyter” for the minister who preaches the word and administers the sacraments. The Anglican Church used the term “priest” for this order of ministry. The 1979 BCP, and thus The Episcopal Church, uses both terms. For example, directions for the Ordination of a Priest require that “at least two presbyters must be present.” The Catechism notes that “the ministry of a priest or presbyter” is “to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.”

****Priest, related terms:**

- Priest-in-Charge: practices vary widely among dioceses. In a parish without a rector, the priest-in-charge generally contracts with the vestry, in consultation with the bishop, to perform many of the functions of a rector.
 - Rector: elected by the vestry of a parish in consultation with the bishop and serves as the leader of the parish with respect to its spiritual life and mission. In charge of liturgy, music, education, outreach, and pastoral care, the rector has full use of the parish property to carry out his or her office, hires and supervises lay and clerical staff, and is generally entitled to preside at all vestry and parish meetings.
 - Vicar: the title applies to the priest-in-charge of a mission congregation, serving at the pleasure of and representing the bishop.
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****Primate:** the chief bishop in an Anglican Province is called a primate. The term relates to primacy, which in ecclesiastical terms is the status of being first, or presiding, among other bishops.

****Province:** 1) an internal division of an autonomous national church of the Anglican Communion. There are nine provinces in The Episcopal Church, including overseas jurisdictions; 2) An autonomous national church member of the Anglican Communion.

Sacrament: from the Catechism of the 1979 BCP: an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. In The Episcopal Church there are two great sacraments: Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. There are five sacramental rites: confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent, and unction.

****Standing Committee:** a body that shares the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese with the bishop in certain defined areas (e.g., clergy discipline, property of parishes, ordination). In the absence of a bishop it sometimes becomes the sole ecclesiastical authority. Its members are elected by the diocesan convention. It also serves as the bishop's council of advice.

+Vestry: the vestry is the legal representative of an Episcopal parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property. The number of vestry members and the term of office varies from parish to parish. Vestry members are usually elected at the annual parish meeting. The presiding officer of the vestry is the rector.

+Warden: officers of a parish. Two wardens are typically selected to serve with members of the vestry. The wardens are generally ranked "senior" and "junior." The senior warden is usually the primary elected lay leader of the congregation, and serves as a principal liaison between the parish and the rector. The junior warden is often given responsibility for the upkeep of the parish buildings and grounds.

+Glossary definitions used or adapted from "*An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians*," Church Publishing, New York, 2000, Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors.

**Glossary definitions used or adapted from the Episcopal Glossary of "Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Clergy between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces" from 2009/2010.
