

PROTOCOL DOCUMENT

between

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERAN CHURCHES

and

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

THE BASIS OF OUR PARTNERSHIP

Praising God for the cordial relationship that has developed between The American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC) and The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS), the AALC and the LCMS have joyfully decided as two independent church bodies to enter into a partner church relationship recognizing each other as separate but interdependent church bodies in Christ. We gratefully acknowledge that this partnership is based on our common public confession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in *The Book of Concord*. Each of our churches confesses an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God and to the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in *The Book of Concord* as a correct exposition of the Word of God.

The basis of our partnership is attested to in Article 03 of the AALC's Constitution "Confession of Faith:"

ARTICLE III – CONFESSION OF FAITH

- 03.01. *The Bible* – The American Association of Lutheran Churches accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and joyfully submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.
- 03.02. *Faith in the Triune God* – The American Association of Lutheran Churches is built upon faith in the ever-living Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as revealed in the Holy Scriptures to Whom be the glory for ever and ever (see the three Ecumenical Creeds).
- 03.03. *God the Father*
- 03.03.01. Almighty God, Creator of the universe, Who formed man in His own image, Who from the beginning loved goodness and hated evil, desires that the children of His creation live in eternal fellowship with Him. We hold to the creation as described in the first chapters of Genesis, not as myth, but as historic facts.
- 03.03.02. Therefore, the Creator gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16) to be the Savior of the world, that people might be set free from the bondage of sin, and become joint heirs with Christ of eternal life.
- 03.04. *Jesus Christ, God's Son and Our Savior*
- 03.04.01. At the heart and center of this faith is confidence in Jesus Christ and love for Him, true God and true man, the eternal Word of God, the only Son of God and the only Savior of the world.
- 03.04.02. To proclaim salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is our reason for being as The American Association of Lutheran Churches.
- 03.05. *Dependence upon the Holy Spirit* – We also acknowledge dependence upon the Holy Spirit working solely through the Means of Grace to call

- unbelievers into saving faith in Jesus Christ, to empower believers to grow in faith, to bestow His gifts for the ministry of the Church locally and universally, to inspire love for one another, and to bring glory to the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church.
- 03.06. *Symbols: Basic and Required* - As brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God, this Association accepts and confesses the following Symbols, subscription to which shall be required of all its members, congregations and individuals:
- 03.06.01. The ancient ecumenical Creeds: The Apostolic, The Nicene, and the Athanasian;
- 03.06.02. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.
- 03.07. *Book of Concord: Normative* – As further elaboration of and in accordance, with these Lutheran Symbols, this Association also receives the other documents in the Book of Concord of 1580: the Apology, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord; and recognizes them as normative for its theology.
- 03.08. *Pure Doctrine* – The American Association of Lutheran Churches accepts without reservation the symbolic books of the Lutheran Church, not insofar as but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the evangelical Lutheran Church.

and Article II of the Constitution of the LCMS:

ARTICLE II CONFESSION

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:

1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice;
2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: The three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.

Our two churches confess boldly and zealously that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, the Son God and the Son of man. There is no salvation apart from Him. Our common faith and confession are focused on God's atoning work in His Son, Jesus Christ, and are clearly stated in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith without works. It is our commitment to this article of faith as revealed in the Holy Scripture, that binds us together and forms the basis of our partnership,

Based on this common confession of faith, our partnership has the goal of fulfilling the mission Christ has given to His church, namely, "You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), so that "every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11). This goal shall be our chief endeavor toward which all our efforts shall be directed. To this end we pledge to work in partnership, utilizing the resources God gives to each of our church bodies.

In order that the goal our Lord has given us may be pursued with all zeal and that this partnership may be carried out in Christian peace, harmony, and joy, we agree to the following:

MUTUAL ALTAR AND PULPIT FELLOWSHIP

Having declared our respective churches to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with each other, communicant members of member congregations of either church body may freely participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion as administered at a congregation of the other church body. In addition, the ordained ministers of each church body may freely be invited by a congregation or other appropriate entity of the other church body to lead or participate in the worship services, to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion, and otherwise to engage in all activities as fully as such ministers would in the congregations and other entities at associated with their own church bodies.

AALC/LCMS COMMISSION ON FELLOWSHIP

In order that our partnership may be carried out in Christian harmony, peace and joy, and in all order and decency, we agree to relate officially through the offices, of the President (LCMS) and the Presiding Pastor (AALC). To accomplish their responsibilities to maintain contact between our churches, they agree to work with the appropriate boards or committees of their respective churches to bring into being a Commission on AALC/LCMS Fellowship for the purpose of monitoring relationships between our two church bodies.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Each of our church bodies is a union of member congregations, which also recognizes membership rights and responsibilities of called church workers. We agree that we will abide by the mutually agreed upon policies and procedures to be developed by the AALC/LCMS Commission on Fellowship for such matters as the transfer of church workers from one church body to the other, eligibility for calls, maintenance of church rosters, etc.

COMMON PARTICIPATION IN CERTAIN MEETINGS

We acknowledge that common participation in certain meetings will be beneficial in our mutual desire to nurture and deepen the partnership relationship developed by this Protocol Document. This will be particularly true regarding meetings of the Council of Presidents of both church bodies, but it may also be applied to other boards, commissions and councils. Each of us, therefore, will periodically invite representatives of the other church body to such common meetings and to full participation (excluding only voting) in such meetings.

SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

We agree that requests for funds by individuals, congregations, circuits, parishes, districts, dioceses, or any other church entity from one of our churches to the other shall be processed and approved by both the Office of the Presiding Pastor (AALC) and the office of the President (LCMS) or their designated representatives. We also agree that projects started with resources provided by one partner will not become the responsibility of the other partner, unless this was agreed when the project was planned.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER CHURCH BODIES

We deeply respect the church fellowship and partnership we have with each other in Christ. We, therefore, agree that we will consult with each other before entering into church fellowship or partnership with another church body or church federation. We also agree, however, that each of us is finally responsible to the Lord of the Church for decisions made in these matters.

OPERATING AGREEMENTS

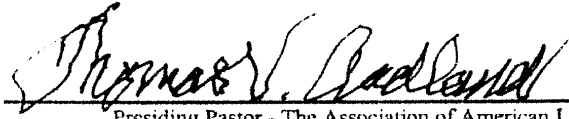
We agree, finally, to prepare jointly Operating Agreements detailing the administration, programming and funding procedures that support the objectives of our partnership.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PROTOCOL DOCUMENT

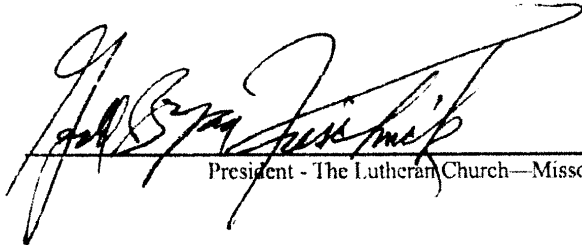
This Protocol Document may be modified by our mutual agreement as determined from time to time. Any modification will become the subject of a written amendment signed on behalf of both of our respective church bodies.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will both bless and guide our joint efforts in meeting the challenges placed before us by the Lord, and which are summarized in this document. God helping us, we pledge our best efforts in meeting the goals and objectives of our partnership.

Signed this the 16th day of July, 2007.



Presiding Pastor - The Association of American Lutheran Churches



President - The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod