

CHURCH RELATIONS



**Making
Disciples
for Life**



Interchurch Relationships of the LCMS

Interchurch relationships of the LCMS have been growing by leaps and bounds in the last triennium. In addition to our growing family of official “Partner Church” bodies with whom the LCMS is in altar and pulpit fellowship, the LCMS also has a growing number of “Allied Church” bodies with whom we collaborate in various ways but with which we do not yet have altar and pulpit fellowship. We presently have thirty-nine official partnerships that have already been recognized by the LCMS in convention as well as good relationships with an additional forty-three Allied Church bodies, many of whom are in various stages of fellowship talks with the LCMS.

In addition, the LCMS also has fourteen “Emerging Relationships” with Lutheran church bodies that we are getting to know but with whom we do not yet have a formal relationship. Most of these have approached the LCMS out of a desire to share our solid, biblical theology.

These various relationships make for a total of nearly one hundred Lutheran church relationships in a total of seventy-five countries! This represents nearly twenty-two million people.

Lastly, the LCMS also has a growing number of “Ecumenical Relationships” with non-Lutheran church bodies for the sake of dialogue and *cooperatio in externis*.

*Indicates a member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

Partner Churches (already recognized by the LCMS in convention)

1. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Almaty
2. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina*
3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium*
4. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil*
5. Lutheran Church – Canada*
6. Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile
7. Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Denmark*
8. Evangelical Lutheran Church of England*
9. Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland
10. Evangelical Lutheran Church – Synod of France*

11. Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (Germany)*
12. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana*
13. Lutheran Church in Guatemala*
14. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti*
15. Lutheran Church – Hong Kong Synod*
16. India Evangelical Lutheran Church*
17. Japan Lutheran Church*

** For over 13 years, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has encouraged, exhorted, and convened theological discussions with the Japan Lutheran Church (JLC) to uphold the clear teaching of the infallible Word of God, as held by the historic confessional Christian Church, that only men may be ordained to the pastoral office, that is, the preaching office.

Sadly, tragically, and against the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, the JLC in its April 2021 convention codified the ordination of women to the pastoral office as its official doctrine and practice. This adoption of false doctrine and practice breaks the confession and unity of the true faith and makes it impossible for the LCMS to continue to recognize and practice altar and pulpit fellowship with the JLC.

Barring a change in the doctrine and practice of the JLC, the serious matter of the formal cessation of altar and pulpit fellowship will be brought before the Synod at its next convention in July 2023.

18. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya*
19. Lutheran Church of Korea*
20. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
21. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia
22. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania
23. Lutheran Synod of Mexico*
24. Lutheran Church of Nigeria*
25. Lutheran Church of Norway
26. Gutnius Lutheran Church (Papua New Guinea)*
27. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay*
28. Lutheran Church of the Philippines*
29. Portuguese Evangelical Lutheran Church
30. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria (Russia)*
31. Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Russia)*
32. Confessional Lutheran Church of South Africa
33. Lutheran Church in South Africa (South Africa)*
34. Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Africa*
35. China Evangelical Lutheran Church (Taiwan)*
36. Lutheran Church of Togo

37. Lutheran Church of Uruguay*
38. Lutheran Church of Venezuela*
39. The American Association of Lutheran Church (USA)*

Allied Churches

1. Lutheran Church of Australia*
2. Lutheran Church in Africa – Synod of Benin*
3. Evangelical Christian Lutheran Church of Bolivia*
4. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Burkina Faso*
5. Lutheran Church in Africa – Synod of Burundi*
6. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambodia
7. Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church in the Congo
8. Evangelical Lutheran Church in East Congo
9. Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Congo
10. Lutheran Church in Africa – Côte D'Ivoire
11. Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic
12. Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Czech Republic)
13. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Eritrea
14. Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
15. Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC)
16. Lutheran Church of Gambia
17. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guinea
18. Indonesian Lutheran Christian Church*
19. West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church
20. Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Kazakhstan
21. Lutheran Church Concordia – Kyrgyzstan
22. Malagasy Lutheran Church (Madagascar)*
23. Confessional Lutheran Church – Malawi Synod
24. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia
25. Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church
26. Lutheran Church Synod of Nicaragua*
27. Evangelical Lutheran Diocese in Norway*
28. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Panama
29. Evangelical Lutheran Church – Peru*
30. Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church – Sierre Leone
31. Spanish Evangelical Lutheran Church
32. Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran Church (Sri Lanka)
33. Mission Province in Sweden
34. Lutheran Church of East Africa (Tanzania)
35. Istanbul Lutheran Church (Turkey)

36. Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine (ELCU)
37. The Lutheran Ministerium and Synod – USA*
38. Lutheran Mission in Africa—Synod of Thousand Hills (Rwanda)
39. South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church
40. Lutheran Church of Uganda
41. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
42. Anglican Church in North America
43. North American Lutheran Church

Emerging Relationships

1. Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
2. Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belarus
3. Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Cuba
4. Charismatic Anglican Church of Ecuador
5. Gambella Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ethiopia
6. Himlayan Evangelical Lutheran Fellowship (Nepal)
7. Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium of Kenya
8. Evangelical Lutheran Church Society (DELK)
9. Lutheran Church of Rwanda
10. Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rwanda
11. Lutheran Church in Singapore
12. Lutheran Church in South Sudan
13. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan and South Sudan
14. Lutheran Church of the Republic of China

Ecumenical Relationships

1. Roman Catholic Church (The Vatican)
2. North American Lutheran Church (NALC)
3. Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)
4. Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS)
5. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

The International Lutheran Council (ILC)

Many of the church bodies with which the LCMS cooperates are members of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The origins of the ILC can be traced to a meeting of leaders of confessional Lutheran churches in Uelzen, Germany, in July 1952. A second meeting was held in 1959 in Oakland, Calif., to discuss the topic “The Fellowship Between Our Churches.” This was followed in 1963 by a third meeting in Cambridge, England, where the name “International Lutheran Theological Conference” was chosen for these informal international gatherings. During the next three decades, 11 more informal gatherings of the heads of confessional Lutheran churches took place. The ILC as a council of church bodies officially came into existence in 1993 in Antigua, Guatemala, with the adoption of a constitution by representatives from Lutheran church bodies from all six continents.

Confessional Basis

The ILC is a worldwide association of established confessional Lutheran church bodies that proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and infallible Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* as the true and faithful exposition of the Word of God.

Objectives

The ILC exists for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening and promoting confessional Lutheran theology and practice centering in Jesus Christ, both among member churches and throughout the world:

- By providing opportunities for the joint study of contemporary theological issues;
- By giving mutual support and encouragement to the heads of member church bodies;
- By encouraging and assisting member churches in planning for mission outreach;
- By strengthening theological education through conferences of theologians and seminary teachers, mission staffs and those involved with human care;
- By facilitating communication between confessional Lutheran churches of the world through the publication of ILC news; and
- By stimulating and facilitating the preparation and publication of confessional Lutheran literature.

Organizational Structure

The ILC has three officers: a chairman, a vice-chairman and a secretary. An Executive Committee made up of the officers and one representative from each of its five world areas (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America) is responsible for implementing the objectives of the ILC. An executive secretary, working under the general supervision of the Executive Committee, also helps implement the objectives. Member church bodies contribute, on an annual basis, financial support (based on their baptized membership and the GNP of the country in which it exists) for the costs of operating the ILC. The council has 38 participating church bodies. ILC meetings take place on a three-year cycle: In year one, regional meetings take place; in year two, the entire council meets in conference; and in year three, a conference of representatives from each of the ILC seminaries is held.

See ilc-online.org for more information.

