



AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION

BETWEEN

**THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND and
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

The motivation for this agreement emerges from the Holy Scriptures, particularly from Proverbs 17:17, John 17:20-23, Col. 3:12-14, Eph 2: 11-22 and 1 Peter 1:2-12.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), confessing the Christian Faith based on the Holy Scriptures and expressed in the three Creeds of the Early Church and in the Lutheran Confessions;

sent in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the world;

participating in faith in the one universal Church of Christ and her mission to promote common witness, service and unity;

respecting their common historical background and Lutheran heritage;

belonging to the worldwide Lutheran Communion and sharing an altar and pulpit fellowship as member churches in the Lutheran World Federation;

respecting their wider ecumenical commitments in the World Council of Churches;

aiming at promoting the cooperation of the churches and the understanding and fellowship between their members and developing other forms of cooperation and fellowship between the churches;

respecting each other as equal partners;

respecting the decisions of cooperation which are stated in this document and which are made in accordance with the Constitution and regulations of the agreeing churches;

accept this Agreement on Cooperation and commit themselves to comply with the following principles:

ARTICLE 1

Partners state that the Constitution and regulations of the Churches in force at the time of signing of this document and the ways of common action and ongoing forms of cooperation are the expressions of cooperation meant in this document.

Such forms of common action and cooperation are:

1. Cooperation between Churches
2. Cooperation between Dioceses
3. Cooperation between Circuits/Deaneries
4. Cooperation between Parishes
5. Cooperation between institutions and organisations related/owned and operating within the churches dealing especially with education, training, diaconia and development.

ARTICLE 2

Partners promote mutual sharing and it will be realised by:

1. Informing each other about important processes and events in the local, international and ecumenical levels in the life of the church.
2. Visits, sending representatives to churchwide gatherings, meetings of the Synods/Assemblies.
3. Organizing occasionally special consultations for church leaders and those who are responsible for the ecumenical relations of the churches.

ARTICLE 3

Partners commit themselves that those who are ordained in the partner churches are allowed to serve as ministers as follows:

1. That ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament in the one church can conduct worship and ecclesiastical/ministerial services in accordance with the Constitutions/Regulations of the respective church.

ARTICLE 4

The adoption of this Agreement goes through the Synod of the ELCF and the General Assembly of ELCSA.

The official representatives in matters concerning this agreement are the Council for International Relations of the ELCF and the Churchwide Office of ELCSA.

The correspondence will also be handled by the Dioceses, Deaneries/Circuits and Parishes.

The preparation of the revision of this document is the task of the official representatives mentioned above.

The delegation which shall consist of the representatives from the Council for International Relations of the ELCF and the leadership at the Churchwide Office of ELCSA shall at least meet once in every three years of the agreement in time. Partners may have advisors or experts present in these meetings.

ARTICLE 5

This agreement will be in force for six years. It shall be implemented as from the first day of the next month after the signing. The intention to cancel this agreement should be submitted in written form to the respective partner church six months before it expires.

ARTICLE 6

By common decision of the partners this Agreement on Cooperation can be revised.

Signed on the ____ of _____ in _____ .

Archbishop of Turku and Finland
Evangelical Lutheran Church of
Finland

Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Southern Africa