



A Thumbnail Guide to:

A Gift to the World: Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness The Proposed Full-Communion Agreement between The United Methodist and Episcopal Churches

WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Recognizes that each church is a valid part of the one, holy catholic and apostolic church
- Allows for clergy from one denomination to serve in the other (with the approval of local bishops)
- Requires United Methodist bishops be present at and participate in Episcopal consecrations and Episcopal bishops in United Methodist consecrations.

WHAT DOES IT NOT DO?

- Merge church government or congregations.
- Change worship and liturgy in either denomination's churches.
- Change the way wine and/or grape juice is used in either denomination.
- Require either denomination to adopt the discipline or moral teaching of the other.

WHY DO IT?

- Because on the night before he died, Jesus prayed that we as Christians might be one (John 17:22). This agreement is yet another step in following our Lord's command.
- Exchangability of ordained ministry allows for greater flexibility in shared ministry in contexts such as rural areas, medical institutions, and college chaplaincies.
- This agreement "Closes the loop." Methodists and Episcopalians are already both in Full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Episcopal Church is in Full Communion with the Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Provinces), which the United Methodist Church is close to entering an agreement with.

WHAT IS OUR SHARED HISTORY?

- In Colonial America, the spiritual ancestors of both Episcopalians and Methodists were members of the Church of England.
- Methodists attended church in Anglican parishes, but held their own small-group meetings for study and encouragement in Christian life, which was the "method" in Methodist.
- After the Revolution, the future of Anglicanism in America was uncertain. At least half of the Church of England's clergy fled to Canada and half of its parishes were closed.
- The post-colonial leaders of the Episcopal and Methodist churches came to different solutions for the crisis.
- "Following the American Revolution, The Episcopal Church adapted the office of bishop to its new missional context: bishops were elected by representative bodies (Diocesan Conventions) and exercised oversight in conjunction with clergy and laypersons. After the American Revolution, Methodists also adapted the episcopal office to the missional needs of their ministerial circumstances and settings." (From *A Gift To the World*, 2017)

WHAT DO METHODISTS AND EPISCOPALIANS SHARE?

- A belief in Jesus Christ as Savior
- A belief in the Holy Trinity as formulated in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
- A belief in Scripture as "containing all things necessary for salvation," and as the primary rule for the life of the church.
- The practice of Baptism as the initiation into the life of Christ through the Church.
- The sacrament of the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion) as a means of divine grace that sustains and deepens our faith and that contains the "Real, personal, living presence of Jesus Christ." (from *This Holy Mystery*, 2004)
- The historic pattern of a three-fold ordained ministry in Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, open to both women and men.
- That prayer and holiness of heart and life are ways of growth in the Christian faith.
- That pursuit of social action and justice is an inherent practice of Christian discipleship.

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