

July 19, 2024

Joint Statement on Pastoral Conference and Annual Koinonia Coordination Meeting The Lutheran Church—Canada and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

On June 24-26, 2024, about forty pastors from The Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) gathered for a joint pastoral conference, daily services, and an Annual Koinonia Coordination Meeting (AKCM) at the Mount Carmel Retreat and Conference Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. The goal was to deepen personal relationships, theological understanding, and mutual commitment and planning for mission and ministry in Canada. LCC attendees included the Rev. Dr. Timothy Teuscher (LCC President), the Rev. Dr. Thomas Winger (President of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario), the Rev. Joel Kuhl (Chairman of the LCC's Commission on Theology and Church Relations), the Rev. Mark Smith (LCC Director of International Missions), the Rev. Jacob Quast (LCC Director of Domestic Missions), the Rev. Marvin Bublitz (LCC East Regional pastor), and about fifteen other LCC pastors serving in Ontario and Quebec. LCMS attendees included the Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison (LCMS president), the Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy (LCMS English District bishop/president), the Rev. Waldemar Vinovskis (SELCD District president), the Rev. Jeff Miskus (LCMS English District bishop-elect), the Rev. Derek Mathers (LCMS English District Mission Executive), the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw (LCMS Church Relations director), the Rev. Michael Frese (LCMS Church Relations deputy director), and about ten other LCMS pastors serving in Canada.

Services of morning and evening prayer, and Holy Communion, were highlights. At opening vespers on June 24, LCMS President Matthew Harrison installed Rev. Jeffrey Miskus as English District Bishop-Elect by succession. The Rev. Dr. Winger led a study of the Book of Ephesians and the Lutheran Confessions on *unitas* (the unity which God gives through faith in Christ) and *concordia* (the harmony for which we strive).

Building on previous gatherings, discussions aimed at charity, clarity, and synergy in the LCC and the LCMS working together for mission, ministry, and pastoral care in Canada. Mutual commitments included:

- Work together through LCC and LCMS Missions for outreach and congregational plants among the First Nations and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).
- Work together in French-language Quebec ministry, Montreal LCMS-LCC joint services, and Fall Foro.
- Work together with Christ the King Lutheran Church, Port Rowan, Ontario, an independent congregation, to offer pastoral care and work toward eventual membership in the LCC or LCMS English District.
- Share home school and family support digital libraries to offer alternative Christian education.
- Support congregational/circuit-based refugee sponsorship to share brotherly love with the needy.
- Review and clarify LCC-LCMS Protocol Document paragraph 3 to allow for: pastoral discretion in encouraging LCMS congregations to join the LCC, and a process of congregational request, joint consultation, and mutual consent for enabling mission/congregational startups in Canada.
- Announce that First Ev. Lutheran Church, Kingsville, Ontario, has peaceably moved from independent status into the LCMS English District; and that St. Luke's Lutheran Church (Farsi), Toronto, Ontario, may become its own English District mission congregation when it is ready.
- A 2024 LCC President's Ministry Council—LCMS Council of Presidents meeting Nov. 11-14, 2024, in Chicago to share information, opportunities, and challenges for mutual work and support.
- A 2025 LCC-LCMS pastoral conference and AKCM Oct. 5-9, 2025, at Mount Carmel Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario, for worship, Scripture study, and mission and ministry coordination for the next year.