

## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMON MISSION TASK FORCE

Since 2001, The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have been in a relationship of full communion as expressed in the document *Called to Common Mission* (<http://tinyurl.com/Called-to-Common-Mission>). By being in full communion, each church recognizes the membership, sacraments and clergy of the other as an expression of visible unity for the sake of living and sharing the gospel. *Called to Common Mission* has resulted in many Episcopal-Lutheran relationships throughout the country and has proved particularly useful where smaller congregations of one of the churches can benefit from sharing resources with a congregation of the other.

For the past year, following difficulties experienced by Christ the King ELCA and departure from their building in Tupelo, All Saints' and Christ the King have experimented with ways by which the survival of Christ the King might be facilitated at All Saints' through the principles of *Called to Common Mission*. This experimentation was reviewed by a Task Force of members from All Saints' and Christ the King which made recommendations to the Vestry for how the relationship between the two might be clarified. In May the Task Force presented a report and recommendations to the Vestry and at its June meeting the Vestry approved the recommendations. The full report and recommendations are available on our website. What follows is a summary of the main recommendations.

1. All Saints' will serve as host for Christ the King in worship, in programs, and in outreach. However, All Saints' and Christ the King will remain separate church entities, with All Saints' governed by its Vestry and Christ the King governed by its Council. Members of Christ the King will not have vote at any All Saints' parish meetings, and members of All Saints' will not have vote at any Christ the King congregational meetings.

2. Notwithstanding this separate church structure, some functions between the two churches will be shared. A member of Christ the King will be appointed to have voice, but not vote, at All Saints' Vestry meetings, and a member of All Saints' will be appointed to have voice, but not vote, at Christ the King Council meetings. With a few exceptions, members of Christ the King will be eligible for membership on All Saints' committees, and members of All Saints' will be eligible for membership on Christ the King committees.

3. Communications such as the newsletter, Sunday service bulletins, email and the web site will continue principally in All Saints' name but will be accompanied by recognition of All Saints' common mission with Christ the King. Christ the King will continue to have space in each monthly newsletter, and Christ the King web pages, linked from All Saints' home page, will be hosted on the All Saints' web site.

4. All Saints' and Christ the King will worship together at All Saints' on Sunday mornings and on other occasions. This worship will generally be according to All Saints' usual custom and liturgy from *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Episcopal hymnal. But once a month, alternating between the 10:45 and 8:30 services, All Saints' and Christ the King's mutual worship will be according to the liturgy from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The initial plan is to use *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for Sunday worship at All Saints' once every two months at the 10:45 service with music, and once every two months at the 8:30 service without music, each on a published schedule. When he or she arrives, All Saints' priest-in-charge will preside at these

services, and until then the supply priests serving All Saints' will preside. As this occasional use of the Lutheran liturgy is phased in, Christ the King's separate Sunday services in the chapel will be discontinued.

5. It is anticipated that when he or she arrives, All Saints' priest-in-charge will serve simultaneously as priest-in-charge of All Saints' and as pastor of Christ the King under the shared clergy arrangements adopted by The Episcopal Church and the ELCA under Called to Common Mission.

6. Because All Saints' and Christ the King will continue as separate church entities, their respective property will remain separate as well, and Christ the King will obtain its own insurance. But All Saints' and Christ the King will continue to share a joint operating budget, basically the same as has been done in 2017, and Christ the King members will continue to pledge and give to the joint operating budget as they have in 2017. Because the operating budget is shared, a member of Christ the King will serve on the All Saints' budget committee. All Saints' will administer the budget and All Saints' employees will serve both congregations.

The recent parish survey (<http://tinyurl.com/Parish-Survey-Results>) undertaken by the All Saints' Search Committee indicated good support for these kinds of recommendations. Of those responding, 72% supported further development of the relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King,<sup>1</sup> and 85% indicated openness to use of the Lutheran liturgy on some periodic basis.<sup>2</sup> But presently, the recommendations adopted by the Vestry are just that—recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations is being phased in as a work in process. It is anticipated that the recommendations will be adjusted as needed as All Saints' and Christ the King gain experience with and learn from them. It is also anticipated that after the priest-in-charge arrives, the recommendations will be expressed in a formal document between All Saints' and Christ the King, subject to the approval of the Episcopal and ELCA bishops.

---

<sup>1</sup> I support further development of All Saints' relationship with Christ the King ELCA.

Strongly agree	29.05% (43)
Agree	43.24% (64)
Don't know	14.86% (22)
Disagree	8.78% (13)
Strongly disagree	4.05% (6)

<sup>2</sup> I would be open to All Saints' using an ELCA Lutheran liturgy for worship at a principal Sunday service:

Twice a month	6.99% (10)
Once a month	32.87% (47)
Every six weeks	16.78% (24)
Quarterly	27.97% (40)
Never	15.38% (22)

# REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

to the Vestry of All Saints' Episcopal Church

by the

**COMMON MISSION TASK FORCE**

May 15, 2017

## Introduction

The Common Mission Task Force created by the Vestry in March held seven meetings from March 29 to May 10, 2017, involving approximately eleven hours of meeting time and many more hours of work between meetings to address the following tasks assigned by the Vestry:

- defining more clearly the hopes and expectations of All Saints' and Christ the King in common mission
- identifying opportunities and problems
- educating the two congregations as to the nature of the common ministry relationship
- reviewing how similarly-situated Episcopal/Lutheran parish relationships have been implemented
- identifying possible terms for a cooperative agreement
- advising the Search Committee as to points for its consideration
- advising the Vestry as to whether, and in what form and with what objectives, the Task Force or some other group should continue

Minutes were kept for each meeting and are available to the Vestry.

Beginning with the full-communion agreement, Called to Common Mission (<http://tinyurl.com/Called-to-Common-Mission>), the Task Force consulted a number of documents more particularly identified in the minutes and reviewed the web sites of several Episcopal and Lutheran churches involved in one form or another of common mission partnership. Members of the Task Force contacted and received input from several such churches. The Task Force found it somewhat difficult to identify "similarly-situated Episcopal/Lutheran parish relationships" in that the Episcopal/Lutheran makeup of most such partnerships was closer to equal than is the case with All Saints' and Christ the King. Here, by just about any measure—whether membership, ASA, giving, or number of pledges—the ratio is about 94% All Saints' and 6% Christ the King. The closest example found was St. Patrick's Episcopal/Our Saviour Lutheran in Albany, Georgia, (<http://stpatricksalbany.org/>) where the ratio is about 85% Episcopalians and 15% Lutherans. Of note, St. Patrick's is currently in a search process. Members of the Task Force spoke with St. Patrick's interim rector (an Episcopal priest) who holds in high regard the partnership in place there.

The Task Force produced an FAQ (<http://tinyurl.com/All-Saints-CtK-FAQ>) which was posted to the All Saints' web site on Maundy Thursday, mentioned in announcements on Easter Sunday, and distributed via the Saints' News email the following Tuesday. The Task Force does not have a good indication of how many have read the FAQ; there is a concern that it's not many. The Task Force also suggested questions to the Search Committee which were incorporated into the parish profile survey. The Task Force does not have the responses to those questions. While the responses would be very interesting information to have in compiling these recommendations, the Task Force is of the view that the responses would likely not have significant impact on most of the recommendations made.

The Task Force identified as the two most problematic issues in the relationship the incorporation of the Lutheran liturgy into worship from time to time and how best to refer to the relationship in communications, given the difficulty that some had with the “equal billing” format of the communications that were in use from last October to February. The feeling of the Task Force is that each of these issues need not be insurmountable obstacles, and recommendations have been made accordingly.

Most importantly, the members of the Task Force spent many hours listening to each other. There was not always agreement, and the conversations had points high and low, but the landing spot was that there is promise in this relationship between All Saints’ and Christ the King, and we ought to give it a fuller, more well-defined try and see where it goes. The Task Force regards these recommendations as points to be lived into and refined, trusting that the Holy Spirit won’t fail us.

## **Recommendations**

The Common Mission Task Force makes the following recommendations to the Vestry:

### **A. Common Mission**

1. The Vestry and staff of All Saints’ and the Council of Christ the King should commit themselves to promoting the principles, objectives and ideals of Called to Common Mission consistently with these recommendations.
2. All Saints’ should host Christ the King at All Saints’ buildings and grounds, in worship, in programs, and in outreach in furtherance of a shared common mission and full communion and as an expression of visible unity for the sake of living and sharing the gospel.

### **B. Structure**

3. All Saints’ and Christ the King should remain separate church entities, with All Saints’ retaining its status as a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi and Christ the King retaining its status as a congregation of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.
4. All Saints’ should continue to be governed according to its bylaws, the constitution and canons of the Diocese of Mississippi and the constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church.
5. Christ the King should continue to be governed according to its constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA; and the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the ELCA.
6. All Saints’ should make provision for one member of Christ the King, appointed by the Council of Christ the King, to have voice, but not vote, at meetings of the All Saints’ Vestry, with such participation subject to the Vestry’s “Standards for Our Life Together”.
7. Christ the King should make provision for one member of All Saints’, appointed by the Vestry of All Saints’, to have voice, but not vote, at meetings of the Christ the King Council.
8. Members of Christ the King should not have vote at annual or specially-called All Saints’ parish meetings.

9. Members of All Saints' should not have vote at annual or specially-called Christ the King congregational meetings.
10. Members of Christ the King should be eligible for membership on any All Saints' committee or group except where such membership would be inconsistent with the provisions of any applicable bylaw, canon or constitution, and subject to any diocesan prerequisite such as "Safe Church" training.
11. Members of All Saints' should be eligible for membership on any Christ the King committee except where such membership would be inconsistent with the provisions of any applicable bylaw, constitution or continuing resolution.

**C. Worship**

12. The members of All Saints' and the members of Christ the King should worship together at All Saints' on Sunday mornings and other occasions.
13. Liturgy and music from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* should be used at Sunday morning worship at All Saints' at least once per month, alternating between the 8:30 and 10:45 services, so that *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is used at the 8:30 service (without music) six times per year and at the 10:45 service (with music) six times per year, each on a consistent publicized schedule.
14. A member of Christ the King should be designated to consult with the All Saints' worship committee.
15. Worship services should include prayer for the empowerment of the common mission relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King, as opposed to "generic" intercessions for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**C. Priest-in-Charge**

16. All Saints' priest-in-charge should serve simultaneously as pastor of Christ the King under an agreement with Christ the King, the Bishop of the Southeastern Synod and the Bishop of the Diocese of Mississippi in accordance with the provisions of *Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests* (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/oepp.pdf>) published by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee.
17. As pastor of Christ the King, All Saints' priest-in-charge should take part in Christ the King Council meetings (expected to be quarterly) and in the annual assembly of the Southeastern Synod.
18. The single compensation package received by All Saints' priest-in-charge under the combined operating fund (see Items 32-36 below) should include service as pastor of Christ the King.
19. The member of Christ the King appointed to have voice, but not vote, at meetings of the All Saints' Vestry (see Item 6 above) should be included in the Vestry's meetings (both formal and social) with the priest-in-charge candidate recommended by the Search Committee. If the candidate so

requests, opportunity should be provided for the candidate to meet with the Christ the King Council, subject to the rules of confidentiality to which Vestry members are bound.

**D. Communication and Education**

20. Christ the King should have a dedicated space in each All Saints' newsletter.
21. Christ the King should have one or more web pages hosted on the All Saints' web site that are easily accessible from the All Saints' home page.
22. All Saints' should include a page on its web site devoted to Called to Common Mission.
23. Templates should be developed for the All Saints' newsletter, weekly emails, letterhead, service bulletins and other communications that include Christ the King's name and logo in a context which emphasizes common mission and All Saints' as the host church. Suggested templates are attached to these recommendations.
24. Service bulletins should include every Sunday a concise statement of All Saints' common mission relationship with Christ the King, aimed particularly at visitors.
25. Members of the All Saints' Vestry and staff and members of the Christ the King Council should read and familiarize themselves with Called to Common Mission.
26. All Saints' and Christ the King should cooperate in offering educational opportunities from time to time such as newsletter pieces, Wednesday night programming, EYC programming, and adult Christian education focusing on Called to Common Mission and how All Saints' and Christ the King might more fully live out its objectives.

**F. Administration, Property and Finance**

27. All Saints' employees should serve both All Saints' and Christ the King.
28. All Saints' should share use of its buildings and grounds with Christ the King so that members of Christ the King have places to gather and to store Christ the King's property.
29. All Saints' and Christ the King should retain ownership and control of their own separate property.
30. To avoid misunderstanding concerning ownership of property, All Saints' and Christ the King should cooperate in developing and agreeing to a listing of property owned by Christ the King which is kept in All Saints' buildings.
31. Liability and property insurance currently carried by All Saints' should cover liabilities and losses that may involve Christ the King. The Wardens of All Saints' should determine that implementation of these recommendations will not adversely impact such insurance, such as through lack of coverage or increase in premium. If the Wardens determine that such adverse impact will result, the All Saints' Vestry and the Christ the King Council should agree on how appropriate insurance will be obtained.

32. All Saints' and Christ the King should share a combined budget and operating fund similar to the operating fund that is being shared in 2017. The respective members of All Saints' and Christ the King should generously support the operating fund with financial pledges, and All Saints' should administer it.
33. The combined budget should be developed by the All Saints' budget committee and approved by the All Saints' Vestry.
34. A member of Christ the King should be appointed to the All Saints' budget committee.
35. Christ the King should submit an annual budget request to the All Saints' budget committee each year in accordance with All Saints' usual budgeting process.
36. Christ the King expenditures in the combined budget should be more detailed than the single line item provided in the 2017 combined budget.
37. For tax purposes, giving by members of Christ the King to the operating fund will be shown on statements as gifts to All Saints'.
38. Although they should not be discouraged from doing so, the members of Christ the King should not be expected to pledge to future All Saints' capital campaigns for retirement of All Saints' current debt.

**G. Implementation**

39. The Search Committee should ask its consultant to review these recommendations and to offer any comments he may have concerning them, particularly as they may impact the search process. If discussion is required, arrangements should be made for the consultant to speak directly with the Common Mission Task Force or its chair.
40. These recommendations should be incorporated into a formal memorandum of understanding or similar document between All Saints' and Christ the King after the new priest-in-charge has arrived and after consultation with the Bishop of the Diocese of Mississippi and the Bishop of the Southeastern Synod.
41. Prior to the arrival of the new priest-in-charge, these recommendations should be used as a working document, and All Saints' and Christ the King should implement as many of them as reasonably can be done during a time of transition.
42. The Common Mission Task Force or a successor group comprised equally of members from All Saints' and Christ the King should continue to meet regularly, to evaluate as many of these recommendations as have been implemented, to discern where further work is needed, to make additional or improved recommendations, and to assist with development of a memorandum of understanding or similar document after the arrival of the new priest-in-charge.
43. These recommendations should be understood as aspirational, and the relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King should be understood as a work in process. Accordingly, these

recommendations and any memorandum of understanding or similar document incorporating them should be open to revision and modification as experience may indicate.

44. All members of All Saints' and Christ the King should be asked to pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit as new expressions of God's church unfold.

#### COMMON MISSION TASK FORCE

##### From All Saints':

Les Alvis (chair)  
Ken Murphree  
Cathy Sparks  
Rufus Van Horn

##### From Christ the King:

Michelle Hester  
Toni Hill  
Corey Jackson  
Flo Poplin