

Questions and Answers
about the relationship between
All Saints' Episcopal Church
and
Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Are All Saints' Episcopal Church and Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in a mutual ministry relationship?

Yes. In fact, for the past 17 years The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the ELCA) have been in full communion with each other. This full communion relationship is defined in a document entitled [Called to Common Mission](#) and is characterized by things like mutual recognition of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, exchangeability of members and clergy, and common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service. All Episcopal parishes and all ELCA congregations everywhere share this mutual relationship.

How has this full communion relationship been manifested by All Saints' and Christ the King over the past 17 years?

Over the years, joint worship services between the two congregations have been held on several occasions, sometimes at Christ the King and sometimes at All Saints'. When Called to Common Mission was formally adopted by the ELCA and The Episcopal Church, a joint service of thanksgiving was held at Christ the King. The Blessing of the Animals at All Saints' has long been a shared tradition with Christ the King. All Saints' and Christ the King have held joint vacation bible school for many years. For a long time the clergy of All Saints' and Christ the King covered for each other for things like pastoral emergencies in one of the churches when the clergy of the other was away. But perhaps the most memorable example of the Called to Common Mission full communion relationship was the tenure of the Rev. Dr. Michael Lippard, an ELCA pastor, on the staff of All Saints' during All Saints' last time of transition in 2007-08.

Has the full communion relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King changed recently?

Yes. Christ the King has endured difficult times since 2014. Christ the King has been unable to support a pastor and had to sell its church building in 2016. The members of Christ the King approached All Saints' in 2016 about gathering here and how the two congregations might work together so that Christ the King might survive as an ELCA congregation and regain its independence.

Do the members of Christ the King plan to join All Saints' or to become Episcopalians?

No. The members of Christ the King are retaining their Lutheran identity and their affiliation with the ELCA. Likewise, Christ the King is retaining its charter as a congregation of the ELCA.

Do All Saints' and Christ the King worship together?

Yes. The members of Christ the King worship with All Saints' at All Saints' regular worship services on Sunday mornings and other non-Sunday special occasions, like Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week.

Do Christ the King members participate with All Saints' in other ways?

Yes. Christ the King members contribute to and share with All Saints' in many ways. For example, Christ the King members participate in Sunday school (youth and adult), acolytes, EYC, altar guild, and Saints' Brew. A Christ the King member, Michelle Hester, is a volunteer part-time member of the All Saints' staff, serving as Coordinator for Children's Ministry. Christ the King members pledge along with the members of All Saints'.

Do Christ the King and All Saints' have a common operating budget?

Yes. During 2017 Christ the King and All Saints' are sharing the same operating budget. Christ the King members contribute about 5.5% of total pledge revenues, and about 1% of total operating fund expenditures are earmarked specifically for Christ the King.

Have All Saints' and Christ the King merged into a single church?

No. All Saints' and Christ the King are separate churches with separate governing bodies. All Saints' is governed by its Vestry, and Christ the King is governed by its Council. All Saints' is a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, and Christ the King is a congregation of the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Do All Saints' and Christ the King plan to merge into a single church?

No. All Saints' and Christ the King will remain independent, autonomous churches.

Have the names of All Saints' Episcopal Church and Christ the King ELCA been changed to All Saints'/Christ the King?

No. All Saints' is still All Saints', and Christ the King is still Christ the King. Occasional references to "All Saints'/Christ the King" were a shorthand way to refer to the two congregations' common mission and worship.

Why is the Christ the King banner on display in the front of the church?

Display of both the Christ the King and All Saints' banners is a visual way of acknowledging the common mission shared by the two congregations, both in common worship and in outreach beyond our doors.

Does All Saints' plan to use the Lutheran liturgy at regular Sunday worship services?

Nothing definite has been decided about use of the Lutheran liturgy, but when Christ the King members began attending All Saints in 2016 the mutual expectation was that All Saints' would

find ways to use the Lutheran liturgy periodically. Since July 2016 the Lutheran liturgy, which is in many ways very similar to *The Book of Common Prayer*, has been used twice at the All Saints' Sunday 10:45 service.

Why can't Christ the King just have their own services on Sundays in the All Saints' chapel?

Christ the King is currently doing that. However, it is less than ideal for two congregations that are in full communion to worship separately on the same property at the same time. One of the ideals of common mission is mutuality of worship.

Why hasn't Christ the King partnered with the other Lutheran church in Tupelo?

The other Lutheran congregation in Tupelo, Holy Trinity, is a part of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which is not a part of the ELCA and is in many ways very different from the ELCA. Christ the King ELCA has far more in common with The Episcopal Church than with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Are other Episcopal parishes and Lutheran congregations involved in joint worship relationships?

Yes. Nationwide there are about 65 such relationships in 28 states.

What problems have been experienced as the full communion relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King has changed?

There has been inadequate communication to the congregations as to what the current nature of the relationship is and what might be expected. This has resulted in some misunderstandings. The appearance of Christ the King's logo on weekly emails, newsletters, service bulletins, pledge materials and the All Saints' letterhead in October 2016 was sudden and took some by surprise. Likewise, the removal of Christ the King's logo from these in February 2017 was also sudden and surprising to some and discouraging to Christ the King members. The All Saints' Vestry and the Christ the King Council have realized that the relationship needs clarification.

What is being done to clarify things?

The All Saints' Vestry has created a joint task force to work toward clarifying the relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King and making recommendations going forward. The task force is comprised equally of members from the two congregations. The members of the task force are, from Christ the King, Michelle Hester, Toni Hill, Corey Jackson and Flo Poplin, and from All Saints', Les Alvis, Ken Murphree, Cathy Sparks and Rufus Van Horn. The specific charge to the task force is to make recommendations to the Vestry regarding:

- 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

This FAQ is a product of the task force. The task force hopes to make its initial recommendations at the May 2017 meeting of the Vestry. Anyone with questions, ideas, concerns and comments concerning the work of the task force or the relationship between All Saints' and Christ the King is encouraged to email [Michelle Hester](#) or [Les Alvis](#).

Will this FAQ be updated?

Yes. The task force will update these questions and answers and make them available as its work progresses.