

Anglican Church of Canada-United Church of Canada Dialogue
Statement of Mutual Affirmations and Commitments
February 2019

Christians in the Anglican and United Church traditions in Canada have been working together in witness, mission, service, and education for nearly one hundred years. For the last fifty of those years we have been engaged in focused bilateral dialogues, seeking to grow as churches in our God-given unity in Christ. While recognizing that differences remain between us, the great potential for partnership in reconciliation, mission, and ministry that continue to lie before us in the 21st century presents us with an opportunity to remind ourselves of the many important mutual recognitions which our two churches have made with one another in previous dialogue documents and reports, from 1972 to 2016. Therefore, on this basis, and at this important time in our histories, we, the Anglican Church of Canada and The United Church of Canada, make the following reaffirmations and commitments, and rededicate ourselves to live them out as fully as possible:

1. Affirmations

- a. “[B]eing united in the belief that God has created one Church, which is the fellowship of all those who in response to God’s forgiving love have been incorporated into Christ through baptism and through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we gratefully recognize one another as part of the body of Christ, and individually members of it.” **(Plan, ¶1)**
- b. “We stand together in faith in Christ and in hope of the kingdom he proclaimed and inaugurated; together we embrace the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the apostolic and historic creeds of the undivided church; we celebrate the sacraments of the new covenant [baptism and holy communion]; together we recognize the obligation of witness and service to our nation and the world.” **(Principles, Section II, as quoted in TMROM, ¶15)**
- c. “We recognize that both our churches intend to be the faithful community of Jesus Christ, visible in the world, gathering sinful and broken people in response to his gospel as it is proclaimed in both word and sacrament.” **(TMROM, ¶18)**
- d. “Ministry is the defining activity of the Christian community, which begins with baptism, the ministry of all the baptized.” **(St. Brigid, p. 38)** Additionally, some Christians are called to ordered ministries, “entrusted by the Church with special responsibilities, [and] are answerable to it for their ministries.” **(Plan, ¶72)**
- e. “The church’s diversity of gifts and ministries calls for a ministry of coordination and oversight, or *episkopé*, so that these gifts may enrich the whole Church, its unity and mission.” **(TCTCV ¶152, as quoted in CTUM, p. 11)** “We recognize in each other’s governance these gifts of oversight, whether they are embodied in individuals or in councils. Further, we recognize that both of our churches practice diffused power and centralized power. While mindful of our differences concerning *episkopé*, we agree that they ought not to hinder our cooperation in service to the world God loves.” **(CTUM, pp. 11-12, 15)**
- f. Further, we celebrate the many ways we already share deeply in ministries across Canada: in ecumenical chaplaincies, congregations, educational centres, and outreach; in shared advocacy for justice, peace and healing; and in our commitments to ecumenical coalitions and in our active support of and participation in ecumenical councils, local, national, and international. **(St. Brigid, p. 7)**

2. Commitments:

We commit to continue to grow together in unity and mission through the many means available to us. We will strengthen our commitment to one another through:

- Continuing to pray with and for one another.
- Establishing a national coordinating committee for unity and mission between at least our two churches. **(CTUM, Rec. 1)**
- Supporting the current and future work of reconciliation, particularly with Indigenous peoples. **(CTUM, Rec. 1)**
- Inviting participation of members from each other's churches on parallel program and mission committees and task groups. **(CTUM, Rec. 1)**
- Promoting the sharing of physical and human resources between our two churches at local, regional and national levels. **(CTUM, Rec. 1)**
- Supporting existing Ecumenical Shared Ministries, and encouraging such ministries as positive choices, both for congregations and for outreach and mission projects in urban, suburban, and rural areas. **(St Brigid, Rec. 2)**
- Continuing our dialogue about *episkopé*, with the goal of mutual recognition of the office of oversight in each church's polity, using the resources of global ecumenical dialogues to assist our efforts. **(CTUM, Rec. 2)**
- Using the Lund Principle "as a touchstone for our continuing work as two churches, exhorting us to act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel [us] to act separately." **(CTUM, p. 18)**

Documents Cited:

Plan = *Plan of Union and ByLaws*, The Anglican Church of Canada; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada; The United Church of Canada (Approved 1972)

TMROM = *Towards the Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministry* – Report of the Joint Task Force on Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministry (1983)

St. Brigid = *Drawing from the Same Well: The St. Brigid Report* – A Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue, 2003-2009

TCTCV = *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (World Council of Churches, 2013)

CTUM = *Called to Unity in Mission: A Report of the Anglican Church of Canada-United Church of Canada Dialogue* (2012-2016)