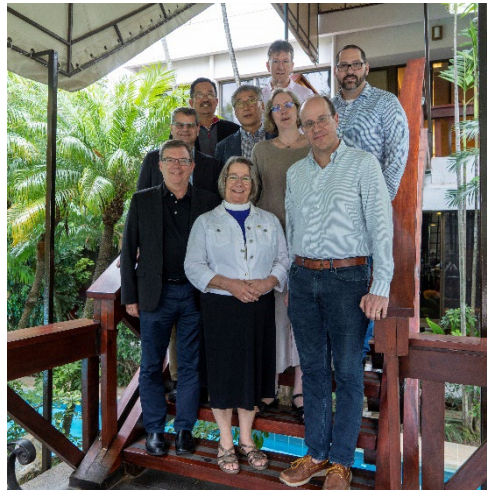


Communiqué
Anglican–Lutheran International Commission on Unity and Mission (ALICUM)
Steering Group
San José, Costa Rica
6–10 March 2023



The ALICUM Steering Group met in San José, Costa Rica from 6 to 10 March 2023. After the Anglican–Lutheran International Co-ordinating Council completed its work in 2016, ALICUM was constituted in 2018 by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation Council. ALICUM provides a new approach to the promotion and monitoring of Anglican–Lutheran relations around the world. It is a dispersed commission, consisting of regional or national pairings of Anglican and Lutheran bishops and other church leaders exercising episcopé (presidents, superintendents, etc.). The ALICUM Steering Group is tasked with identifying and accompanying these pairs.

After a considerable hiatus caused by staff changes at both the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion Office, the work of the Steering Group was then held up by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Steering Group met via Zoom in November 2020 and June 2021, and the Co-Chairs and Co-Secretaries met in Geneva in May 2022. The meeting in San José was therefore the first in-person meeting of the Steering Group. Visa issues prevented the attendance of two members: the Anglican Co-Chair, the Rt Revd Dr Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondoia in the Anglican Church of Tanzania, and Ms Titi Malik, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. Bishop Given was able to attend part of the meeting via Zoom.

The Steering Group members worshipped together, beginning and ending their meeting with a Eucharist from each tradition, and sharing in morning and evening prayer. They received regional reports of on-going Anglican–Lutheran work and developments in relationships between the two communions, particularly in North America, Germany, Singapore, and South Korea. They reviewed the existing Anglican–Lutheran full-communion agreements (the Porvoo Declaration, Called to Common Mission and the Waterloo

Declaration) and the Jerusalem Report of the Third Anglican–Lutheran International Commission. They noted how earlier agreements and reports testify to the depth of existing relations and inform future work. They also affirmed the close relationships between Anglicans and Lutherans in many areas of the world where no formal agreement exists.

Reflecting on the history of Anglican–Lutheran relationships, and indeed that of the ecumenical movement, the Steering Group engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of the contextual complexities within which Lutheran and Anglican churches live out their mission and ministry. They also explored the variety of ecumenical models that underlie existing work with an appreciation of the benefits of an expansion of approaches to Church unity. One key question that emerged is the relationship between more doctrinal (Faith and Order) and more practical (Life and Work) aspects. The Steering Group affirmed the interaction between these two aspects and the importance of holding them together. It was noted that the dominant focus has often been from doctrine to mission, but that this is not the reality of the churches' life in many regions. Mission informs and shapes doctrine just as doctrine informs and shapes mission. The Steering Group recognises that there is much that our churches can achieve together without full doctrinal consensus even as it encourages local churches to explore the value of formal bilateral agreements in their context.

In keeping with the mandate of ALICUM, the Steering Group members compiled terms of reference for ALICUM's work and collated resources to support and define the relationships of the pairs of Anglican and Lutheran church leaders and the work of the Steering Group. They also drew up a list of regions where it is hoped that encouraging such a partnership might support the mission of both communions. It is planned that the pairs of church leaders will be approached this year, with a view to having them begin a new stage of their shared work in 2024. An in-person meeting of all the pairs together with the Steering Group is planned for March 2025; a summit is scheduled to take place in 2028 which will complete the work of this first phase of ALICUM.

During the meeting, the Steering Group members were welcomed by the Rt Revd Orlando Gómez, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Costa Rica, and members of his staff. They visited the Episcopal Day Care Centre, Hogar Escuela Episcopal, in the Mata Redonda District of San José, which offers facilities and support for over 200 children aged between 0 and 12 years. The Steering Group members were impressed by the level of support being offered to these children, the vast majority of whom are from very deprived backgrounds. The Steering Group members also visited the Episcopal Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, which stands on the site of the first Protestant chapel in Costa Rica. The original 'Iron Chapel' (*Iglesia de Hierro*) was built in 1865 for an ecumenical Protestant congregation in which Anglicans, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians worshipped together, a vivid witness to the kind of mission-focused ecumenical relationships ALICUM is seeking to promote.

Members of the Steering Group

Co-Chairs

The Rt Revd Dr Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondo, Anglican Church of Tanzania (unable to be present in person; attended part of the meeting via Zoom)

Bishop (ret) Cindy Halmarson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Lutheran Members

The Revd Terry Kee, former Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Singapore; Pastor of Jurong Christian Church, Singapore

Ms Titi Malik, Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; member of the LWF Council (unable to be present)

The Revd Oberkirchenrat Dr Oliver Schuegraf, Executive for Ecumenical and Theological Studies of the LWF German National Committee; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria

Anglican Members

The Revd Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen, Scottish Episcopal Church/Church of England; Convener of the SEC Inter-Church Relations Committee

The Revd Canon Dr Scott Sharman, Anglican Church of Canada; Animator for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

The Revd Professor Jeremiah Yang Guen Seok, Anglican Church of Korea; former president of the Sungkonghoe University, Seoul

Staff

Co-Secretaries

The Revd Professor Dirk G Lange (Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, Lutheran World Federation)

Dr Christopher Wells (Director of Unity, Faith and Order, Anglican Communion Office)

Administration and executive support

The Revd Neil Vigers (Programme Executive for Unity, Faith and Order, Anglican Communion Office)