

**Mission and Summary for the Ministry  
of NC Synod's Ecumenical Affairs Committee**

MISSION:

**As the Ecumenical affairs committee we will:**

**assist congregations and rostered leaders of the North Carolina Synod to live out the visible unity of Christ's whole Church into which our crucified risen Lord calls and reconciles us, in order that the unity for which he prayed in the night of his betrayal, as recounted in the John 17, as a constitutive part of the Synod's mission, may be actualized and that the world may believe that Christ Jesus is the Son of God.**

Within the Mission of the North Carolina Synod of "Walking Together, Sharing Christ", we assist the NC Synod's vision of "Reaching out through witness and service to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a changing world", specifically through the goal of striving to "strengthen the cooperation with ELCA and ecumenical partners"

The ELCA, at its Second Churchwide Assembly in August of 1991, adopted *The Vision of Ecumenism* in which it states:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to be faithful to its scriptural and confessional foundations. As a confessional church that is evangelical, catholic, and ecumenical, this church will pursue the goal of full communion and will rejoice in all movement toward that goal.

In the spirit of that vision, the ELCA has entered into full communion relationships with the Episcopal Church USA (Called to Common Mission, 1999), The Presbyterian Church, USA, the Reformed Church in America and the United Churches of Christ (A Formula of Agreement, 1997) and Moravians (Lutheran - Moravian Full Communion Agreement, 1999), and the extension of that Full Communion agreement with the Alaskan Province and East Indies Provinces of the Moravian Church (2007). In that same spirit, the ELCA entered into an Full Communion Agreement under the title *Confessing Our Faith Together* (2009).

In North Carolina since 1991 "A Covenant between the Diocese of Charlotte and the Diocese of Raleigh -- Roman Catholic Church and The Synod of North Carolina -- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" has been in place. This document was signed by the bishops of all three judicatories including Bishop Bolick and his two predecessors.

Members of the AMEZ-ELCA Bilateral Discourse began meeting in the fall of 2006. This "Discourse" began here in North Carolina after local and regional efforts between these two churches established a national need. The cooperative ecumenical efforts of this Discourse are important to the pursuit of visible Christian unity in the world today. Topics of the Discourse include:

- The nature of the church;
- HIV/AIDS related ministries;
- seminarian education;
- and how the complex history of race-relations shape the mission and ministry of our churches in the North American context today.

The Discourse addressed this last topic throughout 2009 and met most recently in April of 2010.

It is the fervent hope of Bishop Leonard Bolick, and indeed the ELCA's Office of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations and the NC Synod Ecumenical Affairs Committee, that such "Discourse" may bear fruit in the future. As Bishop Bolick said in a letter dated August 25, 2006 to Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., Bishop of the AMEZ Church, "I am personally excited about the opportunities available to the AME Zion and ELCA." The Ecumenical Affairs Committee supports this "Discourse" in its work as a Committee and will continue to share ongoing information to the congregations and rostered leaders in the NC Synod as they become available.

The ELCA is also involved in differing levels of conversation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Mennonite Church USA, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Orthodox Church in America.

In Dialogues between the ELCA (or its predecessor bodies over the last forty years and the Roman Catholic Church, conversations have borne significant fruit. The latest dialogue document to have emerged was US Lutheran Roman Catholic Dialogue, Round XI under the title *The Hope of Eternal Life*

With all of these efforts at a national and local level it is incumbent upon the NC Synod, and specifically the Ecumenical Affairs Committee to foster and strengthen the ties that have been established by the ELCA and its full communion partners, and with other denominations, as well as the relationships which this synod enjoys with its covenant and dialogue partners.