

# Common Guidelines for Bishops, Clergy and Laity for the Implementation of Interim Eucharistic Sharing Between The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church

In 2005, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church adopted a covenant relationship of **Interim Eucharistic Sharing** with The Episcopal Church. A complimentary resolution was approved by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church in June of 2006. In this covenant, the two traditions recognize each other as members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in which the Gospel is rightly preached. The resolution permits common, joint celebration of the Eucharist where it is deemed appropriate for the sharing of worship by congregations of the respective Churches. The adopted resolutions require that an ordained United Methodist elder or bishop and an ordained Episcopal priest or bishop stand together at the Lord's Table. Further, the resolution requires that the service of worship be an authorized one and agreed upon by the United Methodist and Episcopal bishops involved.

## Implementation Guidelines

- Episcopal and United Methodist bishops are encouraged to hold joint services of worship. Episcopal and United Methodist bishops acting together also can encourage local congregations to establish or strengthen relationships in support of the vision for eventual full communion.
- As a general rule, the normative patterns of Eucharistic worship in the host location should govern the joint worship service. Out of respect for the two traditions, the following conventions should be observed:
  - In either Episcopal or United Methodist settings, the clergy should stand together at the Lord's Table.
  - The elements for the Lord's Supper should include bread, wine, and grape juice.
  - Any and all of the consecrated elements should be reverently consumed.
  - Authorized services should be used. For United Methodists, those authorized liturgies are in the *Book of Worship* and *The United Methodist Hymnal*; for Episcopalians they are in the *Book of Common Prayer* and other authorized liturgies.
  - Joint Eucharistic services should be approved by the bishops in whose areas the celebrations will be located.
  - Approved joint Eucharistic services between congregations are not intended to and do not normally replace Sunday worship.

- Bishops can urge congregations to extend to the members of the other tradition a special welcome to their regular Sunday worship. Members of the partner congregation could be invited to preach, read Scripture, or offer prayer.
  
- The covenant calls on bishops to encourage the development of common Christian life throughout our respective Churches by urging:
  - mutual prayer and mutual support, including parochial/congregational and diocesan/annual conference covenants or agreements;
  - common study of the Holy Scriptures, the histories and theological traditions of each Church, and the materials produced by the Episcopal—United Methodist Dialogue;
  - joint programs of religious education, theological discussion, mission, evangelism, and social action; and
  - the joint use of facilities.

Authorized Episcopal—United Methodist dialogues will continue for the discussion of any other outstanding questions that must be resolved before full communion can be established between the respective Churches.

For additional information, contact your ecumenical office:

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