

Boiling the Frog

An update on the ELCA's adoption
of the Episcopal episcopate.



1. **Required.** The first attached sheet shows the **constitutional change** (§10.81.01) required by CCM (1999) for the ELCA to achieve fellowship with The Episcopal Church: Every new ELCA bishop must be consecrated by three bishops in the historic episcopate, including one bishop from The Episcopal Church.¹
2. **Sacramental.** The last attached sheet shows that Anglicans and Catholics agree that **ordination** into their historic episcopates **conveys special grace**, channeled through bishops, grace to “safeguard the gospel,” (CCM ¶5) and to make Christ present in communion. This special grace is not available to laity.
3. **You don't have to believe it; you just have to do it.** ELCA bishops commonly say that they don't believe the new required “installation” ceremony conveys special grace. Bishop Craig Johnson (Minneapolis Area Synod) said: “I simply see the Historic Episcopate as a symbolThere is absolutely no **ontological change** that takes place.”

The problem is that personal opinion is not relevant in this matter. It is like being married or drafted into the army. One is incorporated into an institution with necessary consequences, regardless of one's personal opinion. ELCA bishops have to kneel and receive Episcopal hands on their heads. They don't have to believe it; they just have to do it.

4. **“Installation” is a misnomer; the rite is really an “ordination.”** In Lutheran parlance an installation is a rite repeated every time a pastor moves to a new congregation or post. But the ELCA's rite for bishops to enter “the office of bishop,” is not to be repeated.² It has the one-time character of an Episcopal ordination into “the office of bishop.”

¹ No exceptions can be allowed. By this legalistic requirement, the ELCA surrendered the freedom of the gospel because gospel freedom includes freedom for the church to alter its structures. *For Lutherans an adiaphoron is only an adiaphoron when it is an adiaphoron for both sides.* Gospel-plus = gospel altered.

² See page 5 of the attached ceremony and notes: “The laying on of hands and its accompanying prayer is not repeated for a person who is currently serving as a bishop.”

For Lutherans an ordination is a one-time ceremony, but it is not sacramental. No special grace is given; no ontological change happens. It is a non-sacramental rite acknowledging an individual's readiness for the public ministry of Word and sacrament. An ordination is the churchly equivalent of a lawyer, doctor, or plumber receiving a license to practice his/her craft. Entering a profession or a guild (craft) happens once.

In contrast, Episcopalians regard the ceremony by which a bishop enters the "office of bishop" as sacramental. It is a one-time sacrament. It conveys special grace "to safeguard" the gospel, the unity of the church, and to ordain lesser clergy.

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson has said that when a bishop's term in office is finished, he/she will no longer be a "bishop" but return to the rank of pastor. Episcopal officials have not responded publicly to Hanson's comment. They know enough to keep silent. They are confident that belief will follow ceremony. Over time Lutheran bishops will be regarded as having the same power as Episcopal bishops. Thus even when ELCA bishops retire or leave office, they will be regarded as having special authority to ordain.

5. **The so-called "exceptions clause" bylaw will be dropped when it is politically expedient to do so.** The ELCA adopted a temporary bylaw allowing seminary graduates to be ordained by a pastor if their bishop grants permission. Since 1999 less than 1% of ELCA seminary graduates (about 40) have successfully appealed to be ordained by a pastor. This temporary bylaw never did address **the central requirement of CCM** – that all bishops must be ordained in the historic episcopate. It was essentially a ploy to divide those opposed to CCM, and it was a successful ploy.

6. **As you "buy into" the Episcopal episcopate, you "sell out" the next generation.** Time is on the side of the ELCA. The next generation will do it and believe it. It is not realistic to wave a Lutheran flag within an Episcopal system. Every denomination is an organic whole. For Lutherans the freedom of the gospel **necessarily** includes the freedom from particular required structures. For Episcopalians, like Catholics and the Orthodox, the **hierarchical sacramental priesthood is required** because it channels the grace necessary to safeguard the church and make Jesus truly present in the Eucharist.

The ELCA is shifting from being a Word-centered church to being a bishop-centered church in which political and sacramental power are grounded in the bishops. Congregations often think of themselves as islands, but in fact they are dependent upon and beholden to their bishop, synod, and churchwide organization.

- a. When a congregation calls a new pastor, the Letter of Call must be signed by the bishop.
- b. Congregations conform and promote ELCA agendas by using ELCA hymnals, confirmation materials, and participating in ELCA events.
- c. Congregations must support their synod and churchwide headquarters with benevolence dollars.

- d. Pastors must curry favor with their bishops in order to advance their careers. If a congregation's giving to the synod is not up to par, its pastor will be covertly punished or neglected by the synod.

Moreover, the ELCA Constitution for Synods has been gradually altered to give bishops and synods more power over congregations. Three examples:

1. **Constitution for Synods S14.13b:** *"When allegations of ... ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the bishop...the bishop in his or her **sole** discretion may ... investigate such conditions personally in company with a committee of two ordained and one layperson."* (Emphasis added)

Note two issues: 1. Who picks the committee of two ordained and one lay? The bishop. 2. Who decides what is "ineffective conduct"? What is "ineffective conduct"? Cutting benevolence to the synod?

2. **S14.13d:** *"In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation...the bishop with the committee described in S14.13.b shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation....If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor.... **(b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call'** (Emphasis added).*

Note two issues: 1. The Constitution was here changed from requiring a 2/3 vote to only "a simple majority." 2. The "committee" is the one appointed by the bishop.

3. **S13.23 and S13.24:** *"...if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion,...title to the property shall revert to the synod.....

"....if in the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished...the Council...may take charge and control of the property of the congregation."*

Note: Even if these provisions are not actually used, the power has been centralized in the synod council, which in effect means the bishop and his staff.

- 10.62. Each synod may establish such boards, committees, task forces, and other organizational forms as it deems necessary to carry out effectively the functions assigned to the synod.
- 10.63. Each synod shall have an executive committee, a consultation committee, and a committee on discipline. Each synod also shall establish a mutual ministry committee to provide support and counsel to the bishop.
- 10.70. FISCAL POLICY
- 10.71. Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod, such percentage to be determined by the Churchwide Assembly. Individual exceptions may be made by the Church Council upon request of a synod.
- 10.72. Each synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm selected by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by the synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of the synod. Synodical financial reports shall be in a format approved by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer in order to attain uniformity in reporting.
- 10.73. Each synod shall have the fiscal year of February 1 through January 31.
- 10.74. Each synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.
- 10.80. INSTALLATION
- 10.81.01. The presiding bishop of this church, or a bishop appointed by the presiding bishop of this church, shall preside for the installation into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, of each newly elected synodical bishop.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Authorized Rite for the

INSTALLATION OF A BISHOP

The Hymn of the Day is sung.

The Creed may be spoken.

INSTALLATION

The secretary presents the bishop-elect to the presiding minister:

I present *name*, who has been elected and called by the Church,
for installation into the office of bishop of _____.

The assembly is seated. The secretary steps aside.

The presiding minister addresses the bishop-elect:

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;

if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (John 20:21-23)

And again:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:18-20)

Hear also the words of the apostles:

“Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock,

of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,

to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28)

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him,

a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)

“Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me,

in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.”

(2 Tim. 1:13-14)

The presiding minister questions the bishop-elect:

To you is being given the care of the pastors and congregations of this *church/synod*.

I ask you in the presence of God and of this assembly:

will you assume the office of bishop of _____ ?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be faithful in your office?

Will you discharge your duties in accordance with the Holy Scriptures

and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church,

and in harmony with the constitution of this *church/synod*?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and in your use of the means of grace?

Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments,

and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you guide, encourage, and support the ministers and the congregations
of this *church/synod* in their ministries?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things,
graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Amen.

The assembly stands. The presiding minister addresses the assembly:

And you, people of God, representatives of this *church/synod*,

will you receive *her/him* as a servant of God and a shepherd in Christ's Church?

We will.

Will you pray for *her/him*, help and honor *her/him* for *her/his* work's sake,

and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will.

The bishop-elect may kneel.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the head of the bishop-elect.

Following a time of silent prayer the presiding minister continues:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

it is your Spirit that sustains the Church.

By the power of the Spirit
you call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Church.
Pour out your Spirit upon *name*
to empower and enlighten *her/his* ministry as a bishop in your Church.
Sustain *her/him* as a shepherd who tends the flock of Christ with love and gentleness,
and oversees the ministries of the church with vision and wisdom.
Uphold *her/him* as a faithful steward of your holy Word and life giving sacraments
and a strong sign of reconciliation among all people.
Give courage and fortitude to sustain *her/him* in this ministry.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son,
through whom glory and power and honor are yours
in your holy Church now and forever.
Amen.

The presiding minister addresses the bishop-elect:

The **office of bishop** is now committed to you
in the name of the Father, and of the Son +, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The newly installed bishop may remain kneeling for the blessing.

The presiding minister may lay her/his right hand on the head of the newly installed bishop.

The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,
equip you with everything good that you may do his will,
working in you that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The newly installed bishop may remain kneeling or stand for the prayers.

An assisting minister invites the assembly into prayer with these or similar words.

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus,
let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Prayers reflect the wideness of God's mercy for the whole world—

for the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel;

for the newly installed bishop, the unity of the Church, all ministries in the Church,

all Christians in their vocation, the Church, and the communities it serves.

for the well-being of creation;

for peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority,

the community and those who govern;

for the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely;

for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit;

for the assembly, and for special concerns.

Additional prayers may come from the assembly.

Prayers of thanksgiving for the faithful departed may include those who recently have died and those commemorated on the church's calendar.

Each portion of the prayers concludes with these or similar words.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

OR

Let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

OR

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great

The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these or similar words.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

The newly installed bishop may kneel, as the presiding minister continues:

Remember to rekindle the gift of God that is within you.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. Amen.

When a pectoral cross is given, the presiding minister places it around the new bishop's neck and says:

Receive this cross and wear it as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and his people,
and as an emblem of the office to which you have been elected.

*The newly installed bishop stands and the presiding minister presents her/him to the people.
The assembly may offer acclamation with applause.*

PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say Peace be with you or similar words.

All return to their places. The assembly is seated.

The service continues with the offering.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

- > This service is the approved rite of this church for the installation of a bishop.
- > Set within the liturgy for Holy Communion, this order is used following the Sermon. The Creed may be said between the Sermon and the Hymn of the Day.
- > At the installation of a synodical bishop, the presiding minister is normally the presiding bishop. At the installation of a presiding bishop, the presiding minister is the retiring presiding bishop or, where that is not possible, another bishop designated by the church.
- > The secretary of the church presents a presiding bishop-elect. The secretary of the synod presents a synodical bishop-elect.
- > The full name of the bishop-elect is used in the initial presentation. At other places in the rite only the Christian name is used.
- > Three bishops in historic succession (the presiding bishop and two others) join in the laying on of hands in conformity with the canons of the Council of Nicaea. Other bishops and representatives of churches with which a relationship of full communion has been established with this church join in the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands may happen in different ways:
 1. After the presiding minister lays on hands and keeps a time of silence, all may lay hands simultaneously as the presiding minister speaks the prayer.
 2. All may lay hands in silence, either one at a time or simultaneously, followed by the prayer spoken by the presiding minister as *she/he* alone lays on hands. If the laying on of hands is done one at a time, it is important that silent prayer is kept.
- > The laying on of hands and its accompanying prayer is not repeated for a person who is currently serving as a bishop. When a bishop is called to a new ministry, the following prayer is used without the laying on of hands:

Ever-living God, strengthen and sustain your bishop *name*,
that with patience and understanding *she/he* may follow Jesus Christ
in this new ministry as *presiding bishop/bishop of the (name) synod*.
Pour out your grace, that *she/he* may love and care for your people and teach the faith;
grant that together they may follow Jesus, offering to you their gifts and talents;
through Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

- > The pectoral cross is the one symbol of the office of bishop that we hold in common throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Normally, the same cross that was worn by the outgoing bishop is presented to the newly elected bishop as part of the rite of installation.

In some synods, additional symbols associated with the ministry of oversight are presented at the time of installation. These additional presentations often reflect the piety and longstanding practice in the synod.

When a crozier (bishop's staff) is given to mark the shepherding aspect of the bishop's ministry, the minister may say:

Receive this staff as a sign of your pastoral office: keep watch over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you to shepherd in the Church of God.

PROPER S

- > When the installation is set within a service apart from the chief service of a local congregation, the propers listed below are always used.
- > When the installation is set within the chief service of the congregation on a Sunday for which the color is green, the propers listed below are always used.
- > When the installation is set within the chief service of the congregation on another Sunday or festival, the propers for that Sunday or festival may be used. The Prayer of the Day for installation is said following the Prayer of the Day appointed for the Sunday or festival.
- > It is not desirable to schedule this service during Holy Week because of the solemn character of that time.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ
you gave the holy apostles many gifts
and commanded them to feed your flock.
Inspire all pastors to proclaim your Word diligently
and your people to receive it willingly,
that finally we may receive the crown of eternal glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Psalms and Psalm Antiphons

Psalm 16
Psalm 84
Psalm 91
Psalm 99
Psalm 103
Psalm 113
Psalm 121
Psalm 122

I love you, O Lord my strength. (Ps. 18:1a)

How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of Hosts! My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh rejoice in the longing for the courts of the lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. (Ps. 84:1)

Or an appropriate phrase or verse from the selected psalm may be used.

Readings

Exodus 3:13-15

Numbers 6:22-27

Isaiah 40:6-11

Isaiah 42:5-9

Isaiah 52:7-10

Jeremiah 23:1-5

Jeremiah 23:25-28a

Acts 20:28-35

Romans 10:13-17

Romans 12:4-8

2 Corinthians 4:1-7 (8-12)

1 Timothy 4:14-16

2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 Peter 5:2-4

Matthew 9:1-8

Mark 4:1-9

Mark 10:42-45

Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

John 10:7-18

John 13:(3-11) 12-17, 20

John 21:15-19

Hymn of the Day

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord,” ELW 395

“Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove,” ELW 577 or 578

“Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray,” ELW 743

Gospel Acclamation Verse

The verse for St. John, Apostle and Evangelist; The Conversion of St. Paul; St. Bartholomew, Apostle; Holy Cross Day; St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist; or Reformation Day may be used. Or, during Lent the Verse may be Matthew 28:19-20 or Luke 4:18-19.

Preface: Apostles

Color: Red

Agreement on Threefold Ministry

- ECUSA General Convention stated that its adoption of CCM was based on the ELCA and ECUSA:
“... **having agreed** that the **threefold ministry** of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in historic succession will be the **future pattern** of the one ordained ministry **shared corporately** within the two churches in full communion...”

Resolution A041, July 2000

Episcopalians and Catholics Agree on Ministry

- on “the **sacramental** nature of ordination”
- ordained ministry “is not an extension of the common Christian priesthood but belongs to **another realm** of the gifts of the Spirit”
- at the Eucharist “the action of the **presiding minister ... stands in a sacramental relation** to what Christ himself did in offering his own **sacrifice**”

ARCIC I Final Report adopted by Lambeth 1988
and The Episcopal Church 1988

A Common Pattern of Ministry

- “we agree that the one ordained ministry will be shared between the two churches in a common pattern ... the **future common pattern**” ¶8
- “the historic catholic episcopate” ¶13, ¶24
- “a common and **fully interchangeable** ministry of bishops in full communion ... a shared ministry of bishops in the historic episcopate ” ¶14
- “The purpose of temporarily suspending this restriction ... is precisely in order to secure the **future implementation of the ordinals**’ same principle in the sharing of ordained ministries.” ¶16

Why ELCA bishops’ Tucson Resolution Doesn’t Count

- *ELCA Sec. Almen told ECUSA after 1999 ELCA Assembly:*
“The Tucson resolution was **not voted on** by the Churchwide Assembly and thus the **national secretary of the ELCA** has clarified that it is **not part** of the amendment to paragraph 3 of CCM and that the EC is **not being asked to vote on it**.”
- *ECUSA officials told their General Convention in July 2000:*
“You need to remember that the [ELCA] Churchwide Assembly did not vote on the Lutheran Bishops’ statement of what they believed about it, that was not important, so **it does not carry the weight** it would appear to carry.”

“CCM Questions Answered,” available online at
www.ecusa.anglican.org/ecumenism/ccmoutline.html