

Lutherans Today

Rev. Matthew Tooman

Have you ever heard of "Altar and Pulpit" fellowship? This refers to a close connection between two church bodies. They are not the same church body, but they have the same confession. With a common confession, two or more church bodies can share pastors, and their people can take the Lord's Supper at each other's altars. Altar and Pulpit Fellowship happens when distinct church bodies discover that they are together in a common confession.

Altar and Pulpit Fellowship should happen in an organic fashion. If Altar and Pulpit Fellowship arises through manipulation or some other contrived means with ulterior motive, then what is called Fellowship is a dangerous lie that mocks the Lord's table and the preaching/teaching of His Word. If church bodies maintain Altar and Pulpit Fellowship where disagreement persists they deny the requirement for unity in the fellowship as described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. "But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized."

Some church bodies come to Altar and Pulpit Fellowship very slowly. That is because there are areas of disagreement regarding doctrine that prevent Altar and Pulpit Fellowship. Over time, length of conversation and the persuasion of the Holy Spirit, they come to agreement and discover that they now hold together a common confession. Other church bodies develop separately, either through missionary work or through some other historically independent means. It can happen that these different church bodies discover each other, and as their leaders talk they find agreement in confession.



500 Years of the Lutheran Reformation
Southeast Circuit North Dakota District

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“Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord, exulting in his salvation.” (Psalm 35:9) When Altar and Pulpit Fellowship exists, the Lord gladdens our hearts. In the end, Altar and Pulpit Fellowship happens and gets recognized through the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Without that work, we would all live separated and alone. With the work of the Holy Spirit, we have fellowship!!! Give thanks to the Lord for He is good!!!

The churches listed below rejoice in their fellowship with one another.

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia (ELCL)
- The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN)
- Free Evangelical - Lutheran Synod in South Africa (FELSISA)
- Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA)
- Lutheran Church of Togo (ELT)
- China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) (Taiwan ROC)
- The Lutheran Church - Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS)
- India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC)
- Japan Lutheran Church
- Lutheran Church in Korea (LCK)
- Gutnius Lutheran Church (GLC) (Papua New Guinea)
- The Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP)
- Lanka Lutheran Church (LLC) (Sri Lanka)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium (ELKB)
- Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Denmark (ELFD)
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church - Synod of France (EEL-SF)
- Independent Evangelical - Lutheran Church (SELK-Germany)
- Kazakhstan — Evangelical Lutheran Church of Almaty
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL)
- Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (CELCL)
- The Lutheran Church in Norway
- Portuguese Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR)
- Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (IELA)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB)
- Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile (IELCHI)
- Lutheran Church of Guatemala (ILG)
- Lutheran Synod of Mexico
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay (IELP)
- The Lutheran Church of Uruguay
- Lutheran Church of Venezuela (ILV)
- Lutheran Church - Canada (LCC)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELCH)
- The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC)
- The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

<https://www.lcms.org/leadership/commission-on-theology-and-church-relations/documents/partner-church-bodies>

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