



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 17, 2012

To: Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church

From: Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine

Re: Lutheran World Federation Membership

At our 2012 convocation, the Joint Commission on Theology and Doctrine was directed to provide information and guidance regarding our church's membership in the Lutheran World Federation. Three of our members, Amy Schiffrin, Paull Spring, and David Hahm, have prepared a note on the issue of altar and pulpit fellowship.

By way of this memorandum, we wish to indicate that we support and endorse membership by our church in the LWF. We see no theological or doctrinal impediment in this matter. For the North American Lutheran Church, altar and pulpit fellowship is a goal and hope for LWF member churches, and not yet a present reality.

We recognize that the LWF is not an absolutely perfect fit for us in the NALC. Some LWF churches differ with us on doctrinal and ethical issues. On balance, however, we feel that the positives outweigh the negatives.

Membership in the LWF will provide us with the opportunity to engage meaningfully with fellow Lutheran Christians. Our African brothers and sisters desire that we join. LWF membership will enable us to participate in ecumenical dialogs with other international Christian churches. We feel that it is important that we be "at the table" as the LWF considers matters of Christian faith and life.

We are sure that our congregations will take the ratification process prayerfully and seriously. We are a congregationally-focused church. We hope that the congregational ratification process will result in a decision to approve membership by the North American Lutheran Church in the Lutheran World Federation.

God's blessings to you all!