



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ATTENTION:

- Bishop-elect
- Installation Planning Committee
- Worship Planners

ECUMENICAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS GUESTS

In general, the protocol for the installation of a bishop reflects the closeness of other church bodies' official relationships to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, rather than a personal relationship between the bishop-elect and other individual ordained ministers or representatives. Churches closest to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are those with which this church has an established relationship of full communion.

First among these are the Lutheran churches that share the relationship of full communion through the Lutheran World Federation.

Other full communion churches include:

- The Episcopal Church (USA)
- Moravian Church in America
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
- Reformed Church in America
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church

Churches in covenant relationships with individual synods, such as a Roman Catholic diocese in the United States, are in the next closest relationship, followed by those churches with which this church is in official dialogue. (See: <http://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Bilateral>.)

Processional order for guests from other church bodies is usually based on seniority in tenure within their respective church bodies.

Invitations to ecumenical guests and leaders of other faith traditions should be clear about all installation-related events to which they are being invited, and should provide information about location, parking, vesting/assembling area, seating, and worship. Invitations can be sent directly to local or regional judicatory leadership, with the exception that invitations to Moravian partners should be sent to the president of the Provincial Elder Conference of the appropriate Province. Churchwide staff are available to answer questions as needed. The invitation should include the name and contact information for the person from the synod who will host or assist the guest. A reply to the invitation should be requested from the invited guest.

A person from the synod should be stationed in the area where ecumenical and inter-religious guests will assemble, to provide hospitality and directions. Procession and seating arrangements should be made well in advance of the day of the service. An orientation immediately before the service will provide information and a welcoming climate for each guest.

All participants in the laying on of hands should be seated in an area most convenient for them to come forward at the appropriate time. In addition to Lutheran bishops, we honor the full communion agreements of this church by including Episcopal bishops in this group, as well as other full communion judicatory leaders. Their presence is an important public witness to our partnerships; every effort should be made to ensure their representation and participation.

Other Christian leaders and leaders of other religious traditions should be seated in a place of honor. However, their seating should be sensitive to whether or not they will need to move at any time during the service.

In general, guests who might receive Holy Communion should have easy access to an aisle. Other guests should be seated in an area where they will be comfortable, but not awkwardly positioned in the path of those who may be moving forward for the laying on of hands or for receiving the sacrament.

Ecumenical clergy of local churches may be invited to vest in the vestments associated with their traditions and process and be seated together with the pastors of the synod.

For additional assistance, contact:

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