



Installation



of a BISHOP

ECUMENICAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS GUESTS

Ecumenical and inter-religious guests are a joyful expression of the centrality of relationships in our life together seeking unity, justice, and peace amongst Christians and with neighbors of other religions and worldviews.

In general, the protocol for the installation of a bishop reflects the official relationships of the ELCA and the synod, rather than the personal relationships between the bishop-elect and other religious leaders. Churches closest to the ELCA are those with which this church has an established relationship of full communion.

First among these are the Lutheran churches that, as a communion of churches, “confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God, and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship” through the Lutheran World Federation (ELCA Constitution 8.18).

The ELCA is in full communion with these churches:

- The Episcopal Church
- Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces)
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)
- Reformed Church in America
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church

Churches with whom we are in dialogue are in the next closest relationship. (See: [ELCA.org/en/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Bilateral](https://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Bilateral).) This is followed by those in covenant relationships with individual synods.

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 religious 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, vestments, 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. For more information, see “Laying on hands” document. *When there is difficulty, please contact Churchwide staff who will work with their counterparts to ensure that the appropriate representation can be secured.*

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 they will need to move at any time during the service. In the case where the installation is held in a cathedral, special care is made in consultation with the host bishop as to their role and possible seating in the cathedra (bishop’s chair).

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. You may consider having hosts seated with your guests to provide some interpretation of the service.

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 rostered ministers of the synod.

For additional assistance, contact:

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