



Communion in Faith, Life and Witness

Partnership Agreement 2018-2026 (revised) between The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA) and Church of Norway (CoN)

1. PREAMBLE

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA) and the Church of Norway (CoN) confess our common faith in the triune God, and believe that we through our common baptism belong to the one, holy, apostolic and catholic Church. We confess together that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as found in the Holy Scripture and as interpreted and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions, is the power of God that creates, equips and sustains for faithful participation in God's mission in the world.

As members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), we are in communion, sharing Word and Sacraments and recognizing one another's ministries. As members of LWF and the World Council of Churches (WCC) we affirm our common calling and commitment to unity in faith, life and witness. In our communion we are bound together to explore, extend and deepen our communion in mutual accountability.

We acknowledge the relationship and cooperation already established between our churches, as well as partnership agreements and cooperation between institutions and congregations of our churches.

2. OUR COMMON HISTORY

We acknowledge that ELCSA and the CoN through the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) have built a historical relationship through longstanding missionary and church cooperation since the first missionaries arrived in South Africa in 1883. We thank God for what has been granted to our churches through this relationship, by sharing of the Gospel, through the mutual sharing of spiritual gifts, through the longstanding encounters and through the sharing of our human resources. We also acknowledge the involvement of the CoN in the ecumenical struggle against racism and the apartheid regime as an important part of our common history. Other partners of our churches have also established cooperation and exchanged resources, like the Norwegian Church Aid, theological faculties and a few of our dioceses.. This history of our churches is intertwined in a way that has a deep impact on our churches. This inspires us to a further common involvement in the life of one another, in order to encourage one another to fulfill our calling to share the Gospel in word and deed, each in our place in our common world.

3. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

As churches in communion in faith, life and witness for Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we commit ourselves to deepen and develop our mutual relationship through common efforts, in order to:

- Exchange and share general information, experiences and concerns of our churches
- Exchange and share our experiences, spiritual gifts, intercessions and concerns,
- Facilitate consultation between church leaders and official delegations through visits and meetings in conjunction with synods and ecumenical assemblies
- Facilitate exchange between representatives of our churches in different positions in order to share information, work and experiences in specific areas of common interest through exchange of information, visits and exchange programs
- Explore further possibilities for concrete cooperation and action in order to strengthen the holistic mission of the church
- Establish a concrete Common Plan of action for a limited period of time, for possible renewal
- Pray for each other

4. Evaluation and reporting

This agreement shall be in effect for a period of eight years, from the date of its signing and celebration. Each church will implement the agreement according to the regulations of the respective church. The agreement shall be mid-evaluated and evaluated at the end of the period and revised according to a common understanding between the two parties.

Johannesburg 4th of December 2018

Presiding bishop, ELCSA

Moderator, ELCSA

Presiding bishop, CoN

Moderator, Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, CoN