

LOOKING AHEAD

TOGETHER **2013 Joint Assembly** for the *love* of the world

Two Canadian denominations will meet for business, community, and action in the nation's capital this summer.

Under the theme "Together for the Love of the World," the ELCIC and its full-communication partner, The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), have scheduled their 2013 national meetings jointly from July 3–7 in Ottawa.

"It's a historical event," said National Bishop Susan Johnson. "It's the first time two churches have come together to share an opportunity of this magnitude."

Some 1,000 delegates will assemble, representing nearly 650,000 members from almost 2,300 parishes and congregations from coast to coast to coast.

National councils for the denominations determined that there were significant benefits to both to be found in a joint national assembly, particularly insofar as it might deepen the covenant relationship between the churches.

"Our churches are held together by a full commitment," said ACC Primate Archbishop Fred Hiltz, "to meet, pray, and work together."

Draft schedules for the five-day event reflect the distinct need of both churches to conduct national-level business, as well as the shared desire to worship, socialize, and provide enrichment to delegates. Mornings are tentatively set for community building and dialogue with both denominations, while afternoons and two evenings reserve time for separate business meetings. Joint reporting on the events of 2012 will open the assembly. The keynote address, meals, and worship, including Holy Communion, will be shared.

This year's National Convention will provide a unique opportunity for the two denominations to join in expressing concern for Canada.

On Saturday morning, delegates from both churches will gather on Parliament

Hill for a liturgical expression of public witness. According to Rev. Paul Gehrs, assistant to the National Bishop, justice and leadership, this will include prayer, scripture, song, and lifting up of symbols. Young adults from both denominations will be offering primary leadership to this event, which will help the Joint Assembly experience the significance of meeting in Canada's capital city.

The denominations share a mission-oriented outlook. In the ELCIC, the *In Mission for Others* framework offers five areas of focus for congregations and the church as a whole to explore in response to God. In the ACC, this is expressed through the "Five Marks of Mission" initiative, which serves as a kind of checklist for congregations seeking to serve Christ by serving the world.

The 2013 Joint Assembly is an opportunity for that shared mission-oriented outlook to be bolstered and put into action by the partners, working together for the love of the world.—**Canada Lutheran staff**



Delegates during a business session at the 2011 National Convention in Saskatoon.

PHOTO BY TRINA GALLOR

LOOKING AHEAD

Taking Care of Business

National structural renewal is among items on the agenda for 2013 National Convention.

Delegates to the National Conventions of 2009 and 2011 will find a familiar item on the agenda: structural renewal.

The Structural Renewal Taskforce, appointed by the National Church Council (NCC) in February 2009, will bring fresh recommendations to the National Convention for ways to make the ELCIC a more flexible, affordable, and sustainable organization that can live out its call to be *In Mission for Others*.

The 2013 recommendations will focus on four areas related to the National Church.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BYLAW CHANGES

The goal in this area is to refine the constitution to reflect matters related primarily to the identity of the ELCIC—who and what the ELCIC is. Items related to functioning and administration belong more properly in the administrative bylaws, where they will be easier to amend, making the church

more able to adapt quickly to our changing environment and landscape. Items that fall under synod jurisdiction, such as seminaries, will be removed from the national constitution.

SYNODICALLY RECOGNIZED MINISTRIES

The current definition of membership in the ELCIC requires each person to be a member of an ELCIC congregation. However, legislative expectations of what constitutes a congregation can cause hardship for very small congregations such as those in decline or new worshipping communities. This new category of church membership permits synods to enfranchise such groups as Synodically Recognized Ministries, whose members will be full members of the ELCIC.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Holding National Conventions every three years, rather than the current practice of every two years, will save money church-wide. Electing National Convention repre-

sentative delegates from synods as opposed to parishes, and doing so at Synod Conventions, will help ensure that there will be a majority of laypersons at National Convention. Electing fewer delegates overall will save money—especially helpful since synods will bear the costs for their delegates.

NATIONAL CHURCH COUNCIL

While still representing all synods, NCC will be smaller. Members will be elected to three-year terms, renewable twice, to stay in line with the proposed triennial National Convention schedule. To ensure high lay representation, the positions of vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer will be lay positions. As is the case now with treasurer, the NCC will present a nomination for secretary to ensure a necessary skill set is met. Terms for the National Bishop will be for six years; in cases where the National Bishop is eligible for re-election, the first ballot will be a yes/no vote on the election of the incum-

Getting the Most Out of the 2013 Joint Assembly

Whether you're a first-time delegate or a grizzled veteran of decades of National Conventions, this year will bring new experiences as we join our Anglican Church of Canada sisters and brothers for five days in Ottawa. Here are some suggestions for making the most of the experience.

1 Push yourself out of your comfort zone. If you've ever been to a national event before, or participated in community, conference, or synod activities, chances are there will be some familiar faces at the 2013 Joint Assembly. It's great to take time to renew old acquaintances, but make sure you spend some time fostering new relationships, too. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and set a goal to introduce yourself to a few new people every day. Sit down with someone new during meal times, or engage someone you don't know in conversation over the breaks.

2 Participate online. Whether you're a blogger, or you Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, find time during the Joint Assembly (although preferably not during the

sessions) to update your online community and post highlights. Watch for the Joint Assembly hashtag and use it in your posts so you can connect with others who are also following the event. Doing so will help you reflect on the proceedings and share your experience with others.

3 Stroll through the exhibitors' area. Convention planners work hard to ensure a wide variety of relevant exhibitors are present at the Joint Assembly. This year is a joint Anglican and Lutheran endeavor, so there are bound to be more exhibitors than ever. Don't just go to the exhibitors you're familiar with; over the course of the Joint Assembly make sure you take time to visit all the exhibitors. Ask questions. You aren't obligated to take copies of all the handouts. Think about the needs of

bent. Election would require a two-thirds majority. Should the election fail, voting would continue with an ecclesiastical ballot. The Court of Adjudication will become a Court of Appeal.

A draft constitution presenting the above recommendations will come to the 2013 Joint Assembly for first reading. If approved, the constitution will come to the 2015 National Convention for second reading, along with revised administrative bylaws to complement the recommendations.

All five synods have passed motions that support exploring synod-level structural renewal further, some with specific suggestions on how structural renewal at the synod level might be achieved. Previous recommendations approved by 2011 National Convention related to synod amalgamation were rejected by four of the five synods at their Synod Conventions this past summer.

Since 2009, the ELCIC has been intensely focused on matters related to its administrative and organizational structure in the face of changing needs and diminishing financial resources.

As the pace of social change quickens and new ministry needs emerge, the ELCIC

has recognized a need for lighter, more responsive administrative structures. It is thought that a simplified framework for decision-making and accountability would give the church greater flexibility. Streamlining processes and committee structures could also make the denomination more accessible to newcomers.

The demographics of the church are changing, too, and the result is a leaner pro-

file, both in terms of members and money.

For more information on structural renewal at the National Church level, or to download the Structural Renewal Implementation Guide, visit elcic.ca/structural-renewal.

If you have comments or questions, email the Structural Renewal Taskforce at structuralrenewal@elcic.ca.—*Canada Lutheran staff*



PHOTO BY LISA LANDRIE

Take advantage of opportunities to meet and chat with other Lutherans—and Anglicans.

your congregation and seek out information that you can use and share when you return home.

4 Create a post-Assembly action plan. As a delegate you have a unique opportunity to share your experience with those who are not able to experience the first-hand goings-on of the Joint Assembly. Think about what aspects of the business sessions are of particular interest to your congregation and community. Consider whether there are programs or invitations for participation that you can invite your congregation to be a part of. Work with your council to hold a post-Assembly gathering and invite questions and discussion on the topics raised at convention. Create a page in your notes at the Assembly titled “Highlights from Assembly” and write down reminders of what you want to tell others about when you’re asked, “How was the Assembly?”

Not a delegate to the 2013 Joint Assembly?

You can still be involved! Here are a few ways to participate in the Joint Assembly, even if you aren't a delegate.

Volunteer. Will you be in Ottawa July 3–7? Hundreds of volunteers are needed to help with local arrangements. Email Carol Christensen at localarrangements@gmail.com for applications and details.

Read the *Bulletin of Reports* (to be posted at jointassembly.ca) and discuss it with friends, family, and congregation members.

Watch the live video streaming of the proceedings. A link will be posted on jointassembly.ca closer to July. Follow along on Facebook and Twitter. Weigh in on the conversation with your perspective and feedback.

Meet with your delegates when they return. Ask about their highlights, and share your experience as a long-distance participant.

Common Ground, Cooperation, and Full Communion

The signing of *The Waterloo Declaration* in 2001 launched a new era for the ELCIC and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). Since then, we have found ways to build on our common ground and explore the benefits of closer cooperation in ministry and mission.

Across church life, Lutherans and Anglicans are discovering ways to share resources, build relationships, and increase understanding of our common call in the name of Christ.

LOCALLY

Many communities across Canada have benefited from close collaboration among ELCIC and ACC clergy and congregations, known as Waterloo Ministries. As of April 2012 we have 49 shared ELCIC-ACC ministries where Lutherans and Anglicans share facilities, programs, worship, and/or rostered ministers.

NATIONALLY

The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth gathering brings the enthusiasm and excellence of youth ministry in both denominations into one event.

The jointly-hosted National Worship Conference allows musicians and liturgists to exchange resources and ideas, and to grow together as worship leaders.

We regularly share expertise with our full-communion partners through national issue-based groups including the ACC's Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee, and the ACC's Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee. As well, we both actively support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

INTERNATIONALLY

The desire for fuller communion continues globally. Since 2006, the ELCIC and the ACC have been part of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission which is considering ways to work toward bringing all of the churches of The Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion into fuller communion.

LEARN MORE

To find extensive resources about current Waterloo Ministries, the history of full communion, and how to pray for or work more closely with our ACC friends, visit elcic.ca/ecumenical/anglicans.cfm.

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