

COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. NAME

Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, referred to as “the Commission”.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH

The Commission is accountable to the College of Bishops and shall fulfil its responsibilities in keeping with the Constitution and the policies of the Church.

3. PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the Commission is to

- 3.1.1 engage in the study of theological matters and inter-church relations;
- 3.1.2 provide the Church with an informed position on issues and developments on theological matters and inter-church relations; and
- 3.1.3 give guidance to members of the Church on current theological and inter-church questions.

4. AUTHORITY

4.1 The Commission has no decision-making authority.

4.2 The Commission may speak for the Church on issues of theology and inter-church relations and/or publish statements and documents on these matters, following approval by the College of Bishops or the General Church Board.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The Commission shall consist of sixteen [16] members:

- 5.1.1 the Bishop of the Church;
- 5.1.2 the Assistant Bishop of the Church;
- 5.1.3 two [2] District Bishops of the Church;
- 5.1.4 five [5] members of the teaching staff of Australian Lutheran College;
- 5.1.5 four [4] pastors, three of whom shall be parish pastors; and
- 5.1.6 three [3] lay members.

5.2 The Commission shall consist of members with knowledge and experience in the following areas:

- 5.2.1 hold a tertiary degree in theology;
- 5.2.2 generation, evaluation and critical assessment of writings on a broad range of theological issues from a Lutheran theological and confessional standpoint;
- 5.2.3 writing from a pastoral perspective on theological and doctrinal issues;
- 5.2.4 ecumenical engagement, both domestically and internationally; and
- 5.2.5 understanding of the global Lutheran churches and organisations.

5.3 The membership shall include a mix of backgrounds and perspectives which, together with the relevant skills, qualifications and experience, will enable the Commission to fulfil its role.

5.4 The pastors and the lay members of the Commission shall be appointed by the General Church Board on recommendations from the Standing Committee on Nominations, in consultation with the College of Bishops.

5.5 The nomination of the staff members from Australian Lutheran College shall be endorsed by the College of Bishops.

- 5.6 The District Bishops shall be nominated and appointed by the College of Bishops.
- 5.7 The Chairperson shall be appointed by the College of Bishops.

6. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AND REPORTING

- 6.1 Meetings shall be convened by the Chairperson.
- 6.2 It is at the discretion of the Commission to meet face-to-face, by electronic means, or by other means of communication.
- 6.3 Email correspondence may be used for the distribution of minutes, advisory information or approval of documentation.
- 6.4 The minutes of the meetings of the Commission shall be submitted to the College of Bishops.
- 6.5 An annual report of the activities of the Commission and any subsidiary bodies shall be submitted to the College of Bishops.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The work of the Commission shall consist of
 - 7.1.1 studying and evaluating theological trends, within and outside the Church, in relation to the confessional paragraph of the Constitution of the Church and to report its findings to the General Church Board through the College of Bishops;
 - 7.1.2 giving advice, on request, on theological matters in the Church or its Districts;
 - 7.1.3 acting, on request, in an advisory capacity to the Church and the General Church Board through the College of Bishops; and
 - 7.1.4 consulting with other Lutheran bodies and organisations within the Christian church.

8. REVIEW

- 8.1 The Terms of Reference for the Commission shall be reviewed during each Synodical term.
- 8.2 Any changes to the Terms of Reference shall be approved by the General Church Board on recommendation of the College of Bishops, upon review by the Standing Committee on Constitutions.