



*We're listening*  
to God



*We're listening*  
to the church



*We're listening* to scripture



*We're*  
*listening*  
to each  
other

# **ORDINATION** *We're listening.*

**LCA GENERAL CONVENTION OF SYNOD 2015  
DIALOGUE HANDBOOK**

# **FIVE PRINCIPLES** *of Dialogue in the LCA*

## *1. Communion*

Because God has gathered us in communion with one another through his word and sacraments, we have freedom to dialogue with one another on contested matters. Strengthening this God-given communion is the goal of dialogue.

## *2. Trust*

Because God has made us brothers and sisters in Christ, we can trust God to use our communion to build us up in love and use our differences to grow us in holiness of life.

## *3. Listening*

Because God gives each of his children a unique perspective, we can listen to each other, trusting God that as we listen we will grow in understanding of ourselves, of the other person, and of the communion that God creates.

## *4. Speaking*

Because God gives each of his children a unique perspective, we can speak to each other, trusting God that as we speak we will grow in understanding of ourselves, of the other person, and of the communion that God creates.

## *5. Patience*

Because the communion God gives us in Christ is God's doing and not ours, we can be patient in listening and speaking to each other, trusting that God will deepen the unity he has already given us.

# SESSION ONE

## *Your story*

Use the following suggestions for your dialogue:

- Recall when you first heard about the ordination of women. What was your initial reaction?
- In what ways have you changed or modified your view since then?
- Who/what influenced you along the way?
- Share any presuppositions or biases you may bring to this discussion.
- Describe some of your hopes – and any of your anxieties – in relation to the ordination of women.

# SESSION TWO

## *God's story*

God works in and through his church, and so in this session you are encouraged to explore the church's teaching and God's word together.

Paragraph 11 of Article VI (The Ministry) of the Theses of Agreement enshrines the LCA's current official teaching on the matter of the ordination of women. The 1966 Theses of Agreement together with the Constitution formed the foundation of the LCA at its inception.

### VI THESES ON THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY

11. Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired.

Use the following suggestions for your dialogue:

- 1) Read the whole of 1 Corinthians 14 in order to see 33b–36 in context.  
From what St Paul says here, try to describe the situation in Corinth that led him to write as he does in chapter 14.  
Look closely at 1 Corinthians 14:34,35.
  - What parts of this text are unclear to you, or you find difficult to understand?
  - What parts of the text are clear to you?
- 2) Read the whole of 1 Timothy 2 in order to see verses 11–15 in context.  
What circumstances or situation is St Paul giving Timothy advice about?  
Look closely at 1 Timothy 2:11–14.
  - What parts of this text are unclear to you, or you find difficult to understand?
  - What parts of the text are clear to you?
- 3) How do you believe these texts speak to the issue of the ordination of women?
- 4) Other texts:  
While the Theses of Agreement quote only these two texts in support of the church's current teaching, are there other texts that you believe speak to the issue? If so, what texts are these, and how do they relate to the issue?
- 5) What new insights, if any, have you received through the dialogue of the last two days?
- 6) Refer to the General Pastors Conference advice in the Book of Reports.
  - How does this advice speak to you?

You are encouraged to conclude by spending some time in prayer for one another and for the church.

*Thank you for engaging in this dialogue*

# 1 Corinthians 14 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. <sup>2</sup> For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. <sup>4</sup> Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. <sup>5</sup> I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.

The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. <sup>6</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? <sup>7</sup> Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? <sup>8</sup> Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

<sup>9</sup> So it is with you. Unless you speak

intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. <sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.

<sup>11</sup> If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. <sup>12</sup> So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. <sup>13</sup> For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. <sup>14</sup> For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. <sup>16</sup> Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? <sup>17</sup> You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified. <sup>18</sup> I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. <sup>19</sup> But in the church I would rather

speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. <sup>20</sup> Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. <sup>21</sup> In the Law it is written: “With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” <sup>22</sup> Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. <sup>23</sup> So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? <sup>24</sup> But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, <sup>25</sup> as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” <sup>26</sup> What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. <sup>27</sup> If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most

three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. <sup>28</sup> If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God. <sup>29</sup> Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. <sup>30</sup> And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. <sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. <sup>32</sup> The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. <sup>33</sup> For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. <sup>34</sup> Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. <sup>35</sup> If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. <sup>36</sup> Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? <sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. <sup>38</sup> But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored. <sup>39</sup> Therefore,

my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup> But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

## 1 Timothy 2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. <sup>9</sup> I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not

with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup> but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. <sup>11</sup> A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup> But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

*Thank you for engaging in this dialogue*



**LUTHERAN CHURCH**

OF AUSTRALIA

*where love comes to life*