

Guidelines on implementing ecumenical agreements

The Scottish Episcopal Church and its ecumenical relations

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) has relationships with many other churches, within Scotland, in the UK, across Europe and globally. Some of those relationships are governed by formal agreements. This paper offers guidance as to the canonical implications of the different formal levels of relationships into which the SEC has entered. With all the churches with which it stands in relationship – whether formal or informal – the SEC participates in the mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through word and through deed. The agreements into which the SEC has entered provide the basis for more formal liturgical sharing with some churches, and this paper aims to provide clarity on these provisions.



Through some of these agreements, the SEC stands in a relationship of full communion, enabling full interchangeability of ministries. Other agreements currently affirm mutual recognition of each other's churches, mutual eucharistic hospitality and pulpit exchange without yet providing for full interchangeability of ministries. Other relationships are founded in a tacit recognition of each other as churches without any formal agreement. These guidelines describe the current formal agreements into which the SEC has entered and the implications of these for how members and clergy of the partner church may participate in the worship of the SEC. It is expected that members and clergy of the SEC may participate in the worship of partner churches in similar ways, as appropriate under the policy and polity of the partner church. These guidelines seek to offer a clear explication of existing policy and canon law in the SEC.

Churches in full communion

The SEC is in full communion with the following churches (most of which are listed in the schedule to Canon 15):

- **all the member churches of the Anglican Communion**
including The Church of North India, The Church of Pakistan, The Church of Bangladesh, The Church of South India, The Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, and the Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church
- **the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht**
through the Bonn Agreement (1931) between
Anglican: the member churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion;
Old Catholic: The Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands, the Catholic Diocese of the Old Catholic Church in Germany, the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, the Old-Catholic Church of Austria, the Old Catholic Church of the Czech Republic, the Polish-Catholic Church, the Old Catholic Church of Croatia, Mission Vieille Catholique Francophone, the Old Catholic Delegation of the Utrecht Union in Slovakia.
- **the Mar Thoma Church of Malabar** (also known as Reformed Syrian Church and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar)

- **the Philippine Independent Church***
- **the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches which are signatories to The Porvoo Common Statement (1992)**

Anglican: The Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal, the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain, the Scottish Episcopal Church;
 Lutheran: The Church of Iceland, the Church of Norway, the Church of Sweden, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Worldwide, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Lutheran Church in Great Britain.

What do these agreements of full communion make possible?

Guidelines and regulations will be developed in accordance with to each church’s canon law; therefore these provisions may not exactly coincide with practice in the SEC’s partner churches.

- Lay people: Lay people who are members of a church with which the SEC is in communion should be treated as full members of the SEC. Confirmation within a member church of the Anglican Communion or the Union of Utrecht is recognised as equivalent to confirmation in the SEC. While more work needs to be done on the status of confirmation in the Porvoo Communion, it is recommended that lay people from anywhere within the other church be received with the same status they have in their own church. Unless a person is seeking ordination, those confirmed in any church with which the SEC has stands in a relationship of full communion should not normally be reconfirmed in the SEC.
- Diaconal ministers and deacons: While more work on the equivalency of diaconal ministers and deacons in the Porvoo Communion continues, it is recommended that deacons and diaconal ministers from churches with which the SEC is in full communion should be permitted to perform any liturgical role in the SEC that they would normally perform in their own church.
- Presbyters: Ordained priests and pastors from churches with which the SEC has entered into a relationship of full communion agreements should be recognised by the SEC in the same way as priests from other Anglican provinces. Similarly, Anglican priests should be recognised by other churches with which the SEC is in full communion agreements in the same way as ordained pastors from other churches within the other communion. Priests/pastors from churches with which the SEC is in full communion may also be invited to participate in the laying on of hands at ordinations of pastors and priests according to local custom. Subject to their qualifications for a particular appointment and their fulfilment of any canonical requirements, they are eligible to apply for positions in licensed ministry.
- Bishops: Bishops from churches with which the SEC stands in full communion agreements may as appropriate be invited to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops in the SEC. Such bishops may also be invited to perform other episcopal duties within the SEC, subject always to the approval of both their own bishop and the SEC bishop in whose diocese they are being invited to serve.

* The Philippine Independent Church is not currently included in the schedule, although the preface to the Canons implies that it was intended to be.

Agreements which permit limited exchange

- **the Reuilly Agreement (2001)**

between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

Anglican: the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales, the Scottish Episcopal Church
French Protestant: the Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine, the Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine, the United Protestant Church of France (formerly the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of France and the Reformed Church of France).

- **the EMU Partnership (2010)**

between the Methodist Church in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland.

- **the St Andrew Declaration (2021)**

between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland.

What do these agreements which permit limited exchange make possible?

These are agreements of mutual eucharistic hospitality and pulpit fellowship, with limited recognition of ministry. They do not enable full interchangeability of ministries.

- Lay people: The validity of baptisms performed (by water and in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in the partner church is recognised. The baptized are invited to partake of the Eucharist in the partner church, according to the communicant status they have in their own church. Lay members of the partner church, when in regular attendance in a SEC charge, may perform such liturgical tasks as they are permitted to perform in their own church, provided these are also permitted to lay members of the SEC.
- Liturgy: These agreements provide the recognition by the College of Bishops required in SEC Canon 15.3:
 - A Bishop may grant permission for an ordained minister or a member of a Trinitarian Church, not included in Section 1, to give addresses, lead prayers, and assist in the distribution of Holy Communion in any Church within the Diocese, if the College of Bishops has previously determined that the relation of this Church to the Church in question makes such action desirable.
 - In accordance with Canons 15.3, 15.5 and 16.1, clergy and lay people of a partner church may be invited to perform all or any of the following duties provided that the minister or lay person is authorized to perform a similar duty in his or her own church:
 - to say or sing Morning or Evening Prayer
 - to read the Holy Scriptures at any service
 - to preach/give an address at any service
 - to lead intercessory prayers
 - to assist at baptisms, marriages and funerals
 - to assist in the distribution of Communion.
 - Presidency at the Eucharist / Holy Communion in an SEC charge is normally restricted to those ordained in the SEC, with exceptions provided for by Canon 15.1 (churches in communion) and 15.2 (LEPs). At present there is no provision in the Canons for an

ordained minister from one of these churches to be invited to preside at a Eucharist in an SEC charge, unless that charge is part of an LEP. It is proposed that Canon 15 be amended to make a suitable provision. If a priest in the SEC is invited to celebrate holy communion/the eucharist in a partner church, they may do so provided they celebrate according to an authorised SEC liturgy. Such a service should be advertised as an SEC holy communion/eucharist.

*Inter-Church Relations Committee/College of Bishops
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