

Agreement

between the

Evangelical Church in Germany

Herrenhäuser Str. 12

D-30419 Hannover

represented by the

Chairperson of the EKD Council

– referred to below as „EKD“–

and the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

P.O. Box 14076

91140 Jerusalem – Old City

represented by the

Bishop

– referred to below as „ELCJHL“ called –

Jesus Christ calls us into discipleship to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and throughout the world.

In the context of the Holy Land we, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), carry out our ministries in special ways. Throughout our history relations have grown which are hereby specified in a contractual form.

I. Statement of Communion and Cooperation

- (1) In acknowledgement of our shared roots in the Anglo-Prussian bishopric of Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, our agreement in faith (cf. section II) and our shared, differentiated calling in mission and diaconal ministry, we, the signing partners, hereby recognize the communion of churches between Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) with all its member churches.
- (2) The ELCJHL is a member church of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and is thereby in communion of pulpit and altar with all member churches of LWF. It is also in communion with all the Lutheran churches in Germany which are associated in the German National Committee of the LWF and especially with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD).
- (3) The EKD is in church communion with many churches including the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE – Leuenberg Church Fellowship). The ELCJHL is also in church communion with many churches in the world including the signatory

churches of the Amman declaration involving the Reformed (Presbyterian and Congregational) churches in the Middle East.

- (4) In recognition of all the above mentioned agreements which contribute positively to our communion, we confirm the communion of pulpit and altar between the ELCJHL and the EKD.

II. Agreement in Faith

- (5) The EKD and the ELCJHL jointly affirm the theological bases of their common witness and service as laid down in their own particular constitutions:

- a. We acknowledge the authority of the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
- b. We believe and proclaim the Word of God, revealed in Holy Scripture gospel and law. The center of the Scriptures is the gospel that God in Jesus Christ loves and redeems the world. We have a common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are considered righteous and justified before God by grace alone through faith on the basis of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and not on account of our works or merits.
- c. We acknowledge the faith of the Church handed down from the beginning and set out in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds and confess the fundamental Trinitarian and Christological dogmas to which these creeds witness. This means we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true man and that God is one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
This faith of the Church through the ages is borne witness to in the historic developments and official statements of our churches. It is a faith to be proclaimed afresh in each generation.
- d. We believe that the church was founded by the triune God and is maintained by God's saving action in word and sacraments.
- e. We believe that through baptism with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God unites the one baptized with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, initiates into the one holy catholic and apostolic church, and confers the gracious gift of new life in the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ calls the baptized to a new life of faith, to daily repentance and discipleship. Since we in our churches practice and value infant baptism, we also take seriously our catechetical task for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ.
- f. We believe that the celebration of the Lord's Supper (the eucharist) is the feast of the new covenant instituted by Jesus Christ, in which the word of God is proclaimed and in which Christ crucified and risen gives his body and blood to the community under the visible signs of bread and wine. In the action of the Eucharist Christ is truly present to share his risen life with us and unite us with himself in his self-offering to the Father, the one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice which he alone can offer and has offered once for all. In this celebration we experience the love of God and the for-

giveness of sins in Jesus Christ and proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes again and brings his kingdom to completion.

- g. We believe that all members of the Church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. They are therefore given various ministries by the Holy Spirit. They are called to offer themselves as “a living sacrifice” and to intercede for the Church and the salvation of the world. This is the corporate priesthood of the whole people of God, called to ministry and service (1. Peter 2,5).
- h. We believe that the ordained ministry of word and sacrament exists in order to serve the whole people of God and its ministry. We understand this ordained ministry to be a gift of God to the church and therefore a ministry of divine institution.
- i. We believe that a ministry of oversight (episkopé), exercised in personal, collegial and communal (synodical) ways, at all levels of the church’s life, is necessary to witness to and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the church.
- j. We share a common hope in the final consummation of the kingdom of God, the coming of the Messiah and the vision of a new world (Jes. 65, Rom. 9 – 11, Rev. 21). We believe, that in this eschatological perspective we are called to engage in the witness of the gospel and to work for the furtherance of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. According to our Christian faith the obligations of the kingdom are to govern our life in the Church and our concern for the world. In this way the Church witnesses to the new humanity that has its fulfilment in Christ, our Messiah.

III. Shared Mission and Differentiated Tasks

- (6) We, the ELCJHL and the EKD, fulfill our mission in the Holy Land as autonomous, yet cooperating church bodies, in accordance with the specific responsibilities entrusted to us.
- (7) We understand our joint witness and service in the Holy Land to be the common proclamation of the Gospel to all people, and a sign of reconciliation between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. We consider our different perspectives, cultures and languages as complementary and respect our diversity, which is also a result of history involving Germany, Israel, and Palestine. We value our different perspectives on the situation and development of the Holy Land as an asset of our relationship and a challenge for good cooperation.
- (8) We understand the Christian witness in the Holy Land as a sign of the presence of our resurrected Lord. In this, we see a joint responsibility to reflect the Christian faith in times of tension and conflict and to promote a deeper understanding of the Holy Scripture on the ground of the Holy Land, and in the presence of the peoples of the Holy Land. Together we work for the future of Christian ministry, including schools and theological educational programs in the Holy Land. Through diaconal and political commitment we contribute to a secure basis for the existence and witness of the local churches at the place of origin of the Christian faith and church.
- (9) We commit ourselves to share a common life and mission. We agree to develop appropriate ways to build communion in mission, service and community life, to pray for

and with each other, and to work towards the sharing of spiritual and human resources. We commit ourselves to welcome one another's members to our worship, and to provide pastoral ministrations in accordance with the discipline of our respective churches. We welcome exchanges of our ordained pastors between our two churches by common decisions. We commit ourselves to nurture our life in communion, to hold regular consultations on all significant matters, and to coordinate the implementation of this agreement.

- (10) We commit ourselves to inform each other about meetings, consultations, theological programs and statements regarding our ecumenical and international relations, the public role and ministry of our churches in the Holy Land, as well as our links with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC) and the Evangelical Middle East Commission (EMOK) of EKD and Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland / Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW). We agree to invite each other, whenever possible, to send a representative to our respective Synod meetings and other constitutive bodies.

IV. Legal and Administrative Provisions

- (11) The Evangelical Jerusalem Foundation, the Kaiserin Auguste Victoria Foundation, and the German Protestant Institute for Archaeology in the Holy Land are foundations constituted under German law whose endowments are nontransferable. The representative of the EKD and its foundations is the Propst.
- (12) The Evangelical German-Speaking Congregation (EGSC), the support for which is one of the founding purposes of the Evangelical Jerusalem Foundation, is closely connected to this Foundation. It is one of the congregations abroad contractually connected with the EKD. The EGSC has a membership consisting of German speaking Lutheran, Reformed, United and other evangelical Christians. The Propst is a pastor of the EGSC and the chairperson of its congregation council.
- (13) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) is a legally and administratively autonomous Lutheran church and is the local expression of the worldwide Lutheran communion. It provides diversified ministries and is an integral part of the ecumenical network of churches in the Holy Land. The seat of the Bishop is in Jerusalem.
- (14) One of the congregations of the ELCJHL has its location at the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem.
- (15) The EKD provides support for the services of the ELCJHL, its spiritual life, the church's schools, its diaconal and educational ministries as well as its work of reconciliation, especially through the EKD member churches and agencies. The EKD supports the training and continuing education of theologians and other students through scholarship programs.
- (16) The ELCJHL acknowledges the services of the EKD, its foundations and the Evangelical German speaking congregation in Jerusalem and supports them in their ecumenical endeavours.

- (17) As a member of the Coordination Committee for Cooperation between the ELCJHL and Her Overseas Partners (COCOP), the EKD understands itself as a partner of the ELCJHL in witness and service and cooperates closely with the other members of COCOP. Usually the EKD is represented by its Middle East desk. The EKD will encourage its member churches that are not members of COCOP to inform the church council of the ELCJHL about support or exchange programs for ministries of the ELCJHL, in order to allow for an internal adjustment of priorities.
- (18) The property rights of the Evangelical Jerusalem foundation regarding the land , the church house “Propstei” and the Church of the Redeemer are administered in Jerusalem by the Propst. Financial contributions by ELCJHL and EGSC as users of the building complex and the Church of the Redeemer are to be discussed with the parties concerned and decided by the Evangelical Jerusalem Foundation.
- (19) In the church house “Propstei” of the Redeemer-Church are located:
 - a) the office of the Propst, and the administration of the EKD-related foundations as well as the Evangelical German Speaking Congregation,
 - b) the office of the Bishop of the ELCJHL, the headquarters and other administrative offices of the ELCJHL as well as the Arab Speaking Lutheran Congregation with its pastor.
- (20) The shared use of the church and the office-building is in line with the founding purpose of the Evangelical Jerusalem foundation. A joint house committee has been established to deal with administrative and organizational issues of the church house “Propstei” according to its “Terms of Reference and Cooperation”.

V. Pastoral Cooperation

- (21) As brothers in Christ and as close partners in daily life and service sharing the same facilities in Jerusalem, the Bishop of the ELCJHL and the Propst cooperate and accompany each other as they serve the proclamation of the gospel and the witness of their churches in the Holy Land.
- (22) The Bishop and the Propst carry out their distinct ministries each within the policies, authorities, and protocols of their church structures. While cooperating with each other wherever possible, the Bishop and the Propst operate independently in their ministries.
- (23) In addition to the worship services held by the Arab speaking congregation, the English speaking congregation, and the German speaking congregation, the congregations of the Church of the Redeemer also celebrate international multilingual services. The Bishop and the pastor of the Arab speaking congregation, the Propst and the second pastor of the German Speaking congregation, and the pastor of the English speaking congregation are responsible for planning and leading such services.

VI. Further Agreements

- (24) Individual arrangements between the Evangelical Jerusalem Foundation and the ELCJHL about the use of the church house “Propstei” may be laid out in supplementary protocols.
- (25) Regulations for the use of the Church of the Redeemer can be worked out by the Evangelical Jerusalem Foundation on behalf of the EKD with the EGSC and the ELCJHL with its congregation.

Place, Date

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Bishop Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Huber
Evangelical Church in Germany
Chairperson of the Council

Bishop Dr. Munib Younan
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan
and the Holy Land

Witness

Bishop Dr. Johannes Friedrich
Foundations of the EKD

Dr. Ishmael Noko
Lutheran World Federation

Propst Dr. Uwe Gräbe
German Speaking Congregation of the
Church Redeemer in Jerusalem

Rev. Ibrahim Azar
Arab Speaking Congregation of the
ELCJHL in Jerusalem