Agreement of Full Intercommunion

Between

Apostolic Old Catholic Mission (hereinafter referred to as "the AOCM" or "the Mission")

The Mission's civil legal administration is carried through Apostolic Old Catholic Mission NPC. Its legal and administrative home is in South Africa; its ecclesial, pastoral, sacramental and ecumenical life is international and is not territorially confined to one country.

Website:	https://apostolicoldcatholic.org
Email us:	hello@apostolicoldcatholic.org
Legal status:	Non-profit company (South Africa)
Registration number:	2025/038188/08
Registered office / post:	5 Rhodes Avenue Komga, Eastern Cape, 4950 South Africa

Christ at the Centre. Everyone at the Table.

And

Episcopal Anglican Community Serbia

(Hereinafter referred to as "the Partner Body" or "the Community")

Website:	https://anglican.rs
Email us:	ppetar.bm@gmail.com
Postal address:	Serbia

Preamble:
Walking in Christ's Unity

The Apostolic Old Catholic Mission (the “Mission”) and the Episcopal Anglican Community Serbia (the “Community”), together referred to as “the Parties”, enter into this Agreement of Full Intercommunion in Christian charity, mutual respect and fidelity to the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

Responding to the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, “that they all may be one” (John 17:21), we seek to make visible the communion we discern in Christ through prayer, sacramental fellowship, friendship and mutual care. We come together not because every difference has disappeared, but because we recognise a shared faith and a sincere calling to walk together.

Our relationship is to be lived through the ministries actually entrusted to us, with due regard for our circumstances, responsibilities and resources. Its purpose is to strengthen Christian witness and pastoral service, not to create unnecessary structures or obligations beyond our capacity.

Each Party remains independent and responsible for its own ecclesial life. This Agreement establishes neither a merger nor a transfer of jurisdiction. We enter it freely, seeking unity without requiring either Party to surrender its integrity.

This Agreement binds only the two Parties. It does not itself confer membership of, or recognition by, any wider communion or federation.

Part 1:
Our Foundational Unity in Christ

Full Intercommunion signifies mutual ecclesial recognition, shared sacramental life, recognition of duly verified ministry and a commitment to walk together in Christ. *It is communion, not uniformity.*

The Parties acknowledge that differences remain in some matters of teaching, discipline and pastoral practice. These are approached with honesty, humility and respect for conscience. Neither Party is required to adopt every theological opinion, devotion, custom or pastoral judgement of the other.

Each remains free to uphold its own convictions and authorised ministry, without being asked to renounce or conceal them. By entering this Agreement, the Parties affirm that the differences they acknowledge can be held within the common faith, welcome and sacramental fellowship expressly undertaken here.

Those acknowledged differences do not, of themselves, cancel the recognition or reciprocal welcome given in this Agreement. A difficulty affecting a particular shared act will be discussed beforehand and addressed through an arrangement consistent with both Parties' governing responsibilities and the communion promised here.

1. Shared Faith and Theological Foundation:

- The Parties affirm their common faith in the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They confess Jesus Christ as fully God and fully human, Lord and Saviour.

- They receive Holy Scripture as the inspired witness to God's saving revelation in Christ and as containing all things necessary to salvation, read within the living faith and Tradition of the Church. They receive the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as authoritative expressions of the Christian faith.

- They honour the faith, worship and witness of the ancient undivided Church, the historic episcopate and the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. Each retains its authorised liturgical expression of this received faith.

- The Parties affirm apostolic succession as the continuity of episcopal ministry through prayer and the physical laying on of hands, within the apostolic faith and sacramental life of the Church.

2. Mutual Acceptance of Ordained Ministry:

- Recognition under this Agreement rests upon examination of ordination and consecration records, succession, sacramental intention and relevant ecclesiastical standing. It does not rest upon titles, reputation or unsupported assertion alone.

- Recognition under this Agreement follows appropriate examination of the relevant ordination, consecration and apostolic succession records. Supporting documentation may be retained privately by each Party.

- Following the verification required by this Agreement, the Parties mutually recognise the duly ordained bishops, priests and deacons of each other whose orders fall within the scope of that recognition.

- Valid orders, good standing and permission to minister are distinct matters. Recognition does not itself confer faculties, office, incardination, membership or authority within the other Party. New claims of orders and material changes in standing require appropriate review.

- Ministry in the other Party's name requires its prior written permission and compliance with its applicable requirements. For the Mission, the Rector's written faculties or permission must identify the role, place, duration, rite or sacrament where relevant, supervision and safeguarding conditions.

3. Shared Sacramental Life and Eucharistic Celebration:

- The Parties recognise and celebrate the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders. They receive them as visible signs of God's invisible grace, entrusted by Christ to the Church.

- The Eucharist is a central expression of this communion. The Parties welcome one another, and those in their respective pastoral care who seek Christ and approach with reverence, to share in Holy Communion.

4. Shared Mission and Pastoral Focus:

- The Parties seek to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ through mercy, reconciliation, justice and care for those in spiritual or material need. They will speak of one another with charity and allow honest theological explanation without misrepresentation or personal attack.

- Their common witness is grounded in prayer, sacramental life and love of God and neighbour. The measure of this relationship is faithful service, not its scale, publicity or the prominence of its signatories.

Part 2:
Living Out Our Intercommunion:
Practicalities and Commitments

To nurture and strengthen this profound relationship, we commit to the following practical expressions of our unity:

1. Regular Meetings and Consistent Communication:

The Rector and the Community's authorised bishop or representative will maintain direct and open communication. They will arrange a conversation, in person, by telephone or online, and more often where helpful.

These conversations may be simple and informal, centred on prayer, pastoral encouragement and anything affecting the relationship. Significant decisions or concerns will be recorded. Where circumstances prevent a planned conversation, another will be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable.

2. Mutual Support and Collaborative Ministry:

The Parties will look for realistic opportunities to pray, learn and serve together, including shared worship, theological study, pastoral encouragement and works of charity. Cooperation will grow through what is useful and possible, rather than through an expectation of large programmes.

Specific projects, travel, expenses and responsibilities will be agreed beforehand. Neither Party acquires financial obligations or authority over the other merely through this Agreement.

3. Shared Sacramental Understanding and Practice:

They affirm the true presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist: after valid consecration, what is given and received is truly the Body and Blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine. This shared confession does not require identical terminology in explaining the mystery.

Sacraments within the agreed scope of this relationship are mutually recognised where the appropriate matter, form, minister, intention and recipient are present, as applicable to the sacrament concerned. The Mission's recognition of valid emergency Baptism is preserved.

Questions concerning a particular sacrament or minister will be examined carefully and fraternally, rather than resolved by general accusations or unnecessary repetition of sacraments or Holy Orders. Each Party retains its own sacramental discipline, exercised consistently with the commitments expressly made here.

4. Inclusion and Radical Welcome:

The Parties affirm that every person is created in the image of God and is to be received with Christian love, dignity and attentive pastoral care. They commit themselves to safe and hospitable ministry, responsible speech and compatible pastoral inclusion.

This welcome is to be expressed in the fellowship, sacramental sharing and mutual care undertaken here. Differences of conviction or local circumstance do not excuse contempt, humiliation, coercion or conduct that places another person at risk.

Each Party remains responsible for its own vocational discernment, pastoral decisions and internal discipline. Communion does not require identical policies, but neither Party is asked to weaken its own foundational commitments to the dignity and full participation of those whom it serves.

The Mission's commitments to inclusion and its pastoral responsibilities remain fully in force. The Community likewise retains its own governing responsibilities.

5. Ordination, Ministry, and Mutual Aid:

The Parties support serious spiritual, theological, pastoral and human formation. Each remains responsible for discerning, forming, examining and approving its own candidates, while welcoming appropriate shared learning and encouragement.

The Parties will support one another through prayer, counsel and such practical or sacramental assistance as they are able to offer. Where either needs episcopal assistance, including during a vacancy or incapacity, the other will respond fraternally to a request made through the requesting Party's proper procedures.

Assistance may include pastoral care, confirmation, ordination, participation in an episcopal consecration or help with continuity. The particular service, permissions and responsibilities will be agreed in writing beforehand. No bishop acquires a standing mandate to ordain, appoint, receive clergy or exercise oversight for the other Party.

Any ordination or consecration requires the candidate's proper discernment and approval, verification of the necessary records, and every authorisation required by the governing instruments concerned. Acts for the Mission must satisfy its statutory requirements, including the Rector's authority and the required Council consent. This Agreement is not itself an ordination mandate.

Assistance does not transfer permanent jurisdiction or establish dependency.

Where a complaint or vacancy requires outside help, any role in investigation, review or continuity is confined to the mandate lawfully given under the requesting Party's governing instruments.

6. Movement and Care of People (Lay, Clergy, and Congregants):

The Parties will support faithful and stable ministry, without pressure, improper solicitation or competing for clergy or those in one another's care.

Should a cleric seek transfer, the matter will be considered pastorally through the proper authorities, with accurate records of orders, standing, ministry history and any relevant restrictions or concerns. Transfer is not automatic and requires the receiving Party's approval and the formal arrangements required by the Parties' governing procedures.

Any application to the Mission remains subject to its Statutes, including section 8.3.6, its reception and orientation requirements, and the non-waivable requirements of safeguarding, documentation review and theological compatibility. This Agreement does not shorten or replace that process.

Questions involving conscience, safety, release or good standing will be addressed through the applicable procedures without coercion or concealment of material facts. No automatic entitlement to admission or a letter of release or good standing is created.

People are welcome to share in prayer, worship and Christian fellowship under this Agreement without being expected to change their pastoral belonging. Participation does not automatically transfer membership or responsibility for their care.

Should a person, or a community where one exists, seek a change of affiliation, the matter will be handled freely, transparently and pastorally through the appropriate procedures, without pressure or improper solicitation.

7. Welcome to the Table

Each retains responsibility for the ordinary liturgical and pastoral arrangements of its celebrations, with respect for conscience and the reciprocal welcome undertaken in this Agreement. Shared celebrations will be arranged in advance so that participation is clear, reverent and pastorally considerate.

The Mission continues to welcome all who seek Christ to the Lord's Table and to respect each person's conscience concerning reception. This Agreement does not narrow that practice.

Bishops and priests whose orders and standing have been verified may concelebrate with the prior written authorisation of both competent authorities, using a rite authorised for the occasion and observed as received. Participation does not transfer membership or jurisdiction, and no person is pressured to receive Communion or undertake a liturgical act against conscience.

8. Safeguarding and Ecclesiastical Independence

Each Party remains responsible for safeguarding, conduct, complaints, discipline and applicable civil obligations within its own ministry. For shared activities, the Parties will agree beforehand who is responsible, how concerns may be raised and which reporting procedures apply.

Ministers acting in the Mission's name must meet its safeguarding, screening, training and written-authorisation requirements. Neither friendship nor this Agreement waives those requirements. Appropriate safeguarding and reporting information will be shared securely where necessary and lawful.

No expectation of confidentiality, reconciliation or protection of reputation may be used to conceal abuse, obstruct a lawful investigation or delay necessary protective action or reporting. The Mission's safeguarding duties, including those concerning pastoral confidentiality and confession, remain unchanged.

A host may restrict or withdraw permission to minister in its name and take the protective action required within its responsibility. This does not confer general disciplinary authority over the other Party's clergy. Any separately requested investigative or advisory assistance must follow the governing procedures of the Party concerned.

9. Names and public representation

Public descriptions will present the relationship truthfully as Full Intercommunion between the two Parties, without implying merger, wider recognition, shared governance or faculties not granted. Neither Party will present the other as having adopted beliefs or policies beyond what has actually been agreed.

The use of either Party's name, seal, logo, certificates, official material or identity in publications, websites or fundraising requires its prior written permission. The Parties may agree a short description for repeated use. Joint announcements require both Parties' approval.

The wording, timing and extent of publicity may be agreed with sensitivity to local circumstances and personal safety. Neither Party is required to publicise every aspect of the other's internal life. Public restraint must remain truthful and must not contradict the substance of this Agreement or prevent either Party from explaining its own identity.

Photographs, personal information and pastoral stories require appropriate consent and care. Inaccurate affiliations or descriptions must be corrected promptly. Necessary safeguarding reports and factual protective clarifications do not depend upon joint publicity approval.

Part 3:
Administration and Preservation of Our Agreement

This agreement expresses the parties' sincere intention to sustain and deepen Full Intercommunion through prayer, honest review and accountable shared life. Its continuance depends on the trust, truth and safeguards required by the Mission's Statutes.

1. Duration and Review:

The Agreement enters into force on the date of the final authorised signature, following completion of the required verification, shared discernment, records and approvals.

The Agreement will be reviewed at intervals of no more than three years, and sooner following major leadership changes, safeguarding concerns, doctrinal changes, public scandal, dissolution, merger or significant changes in practice affecting the relationship.

Reviews will be proportionate and recorded. They may confirm the Agreement or lead to an agreed amendment, suspension or termination under the relevant provisions. A different level of relationship requires fresh discernment and a separately approved written agreement.

A lawful change of Rector or other authorised leadership does not itself terminate the Agreement. The relationship is between the Mission and the Community, not solely between the present signatories.

A major leadership change will prompt a timely review under this section. Successors will be given the Agreement and its records so that continuity is informed, lawful and pastoral.

2. Amendments:

Amendments must be agreed in writing, dated and approved through the process in section 6 of this Part. No amendment may override the Mission’s Statutes or bypass the approvals required by either Party.

A unilateral announcement, policy or internal decision does not amend the other Party’s obligations. A proposed change affecting the agreed basis of communion must be considered together.

3. Reconciliation and ordinary termination

Where difficulties arise, the Parties will first seek understanding through direct conversation, prayer and careful listening, where this can safely be done. They will distinguish a difference of conviction from misconduct, a practical limitation from rejection, and an allegation from an established finding.

Where helpful, they may invite a mutually acceptable and suitably independent adviser. Dialogue will not delay safeguarding, lawful reporting or necessary correction of misleading claims.

For an ordinary termination, either Party may give written notice opening a period of dialogue and discernment. If reconciliation is not achieved, the Party seeking withdrawal may confirm termination in writing.

Urgent protective action under section 5 of this Part remains available. The ending of the relationship will be communicated truthfully and charitably, with appropriate attention to any continuing pastoral responsibilities.

Termination does not retrospectively invalidate sacraments, ordinations or episcopal acts validly performed while the Agreement was in force. Outstanding safeguarding, reporting, records, financial, property and legal responsibilities continue where applicable.

4. Due diligence and governing responsibilities

Before final approval, the Parties will complete and record the examination needed for Full Intercommunion. For the Mission this follows section 5.4 and Schedule E of its Statutes and requires the highest confidence appropriate to this level of relationship.

The review covers actual pastoral, worshipping or ministry life; identity; governance and accountability; leadership and succession arrangements; doctrine; safeguarding and discipline; formation; financial integrity; public conduct; relevant history; and verified orders and apostolic succession. The process will be proportionate to each Party's actual size and form of ministry.

Each will share material information needed for an informed decision. Before signing, they will confirm that the differences acknowledged in the introduction to Part 1 can be held within the welcome, sacramental sharing and recognition undertaken here. Any material qualification affecting that communion must be resolved and accurately recorded before the Agreement takes effect.

During the relationship, material changes or concerns affecting this basis of confidence must be communicated promptly, with due regard for privacy, safeguarding and lawful disclosure.

Each Party retains its identity, doctrine, liturgy, governance, discipline, property, finances and pastoral responsibilities. This Agreement creates no superior ecclesiastical authority and gives neither Party power to govern, appoint or remove the other's leaders.

The Mission's duly adopted Statutes and Governance Principles and Ecclesiology and Doctrine remain authoritative for the Mission in their respective spheres. Its governance, inclusion, safeguarding, formation and ministry requirements are not amended or waived by this Agreement. The Community likewise retains its own governing instruments and responsibilities.

Neither Party's internal rules become the other's rules through this Agreement. If a material incompatibility arises, the Parties will seek a resolution before the affected provision or activity is implemented, using clarification, amendment, review or suspension as appropriate. Neither is authorised to act beyond its powers.

5. Urgent protective action

Where safeguarding, serious misconduct, public trust, sacramental integrity or another grave concern requires urgent action, either Party may immediately suspend the affected activity or the relationship, and may terminate it where warranted under its governing procedures.

Reasons will be recorded and communicated in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Each remains responsible for action within its own authority. Protective suspension is not, by itself, a finding of guilt or a declaration that the other's sacraments or orders are invalid.

Any restoration of suspended cooperation will be recorded and approved through the appropriate procedures.

6. Approval and records

This Agreement requires approval by the Rector of the Mission and by the Community's competent ecclesiastical authority, acting within their respective governing instruments.

A lawful change of Rector, Presiding Bishop, Archbishop, Ordinary, or other chief ecclesiastical officer shall not by itself terminate this Agreement.

However, a substantial change in doctrine, ecclesiastical identity, governance, apostolic succession, sacramental discipline, or canonical status may constitute grounds for formal review.

Signatories must hold the authority they claim. Civil directorship alone does not confer ecclesiastical authority for the Mission. Each Party's authority and approval will be identified in the administrative record below.

Where appropriate, the Parties may attach schedules recording:

- Schedule A — Verified Apostolic Succession and Holy Orders
- Schedule B — Competent Ecclesiastical Authorities and Contact Details
- Schedule C — Agreed Doctrinal and Sacramental Basis
- Schedule D — Safeguarding and Reporting Contacts

These schedules may be updated by mutual written agreement without altering the fundamental theological provisions of this Agreement, unless the proposed change itself affects those provisions.

The administrative record will be completed before signature, including the next review date and the addresses for formal notices. Routine contact details may be updated by written notification. Changes to recognition, substantive commitments or the agreed doctrinal and sacramental basis require mutual written approval under this section.

Supporting records may be confidential where appropriate, but they must remain consistent with this Agreement and must not conceal a limitation contradicting the communion publicly professed.

This record forms part of the Agreement. Complete it jointly before signing. It may identify separately held documents rather than reproduce sensitive information.

It is entered into freely and prayerfully as an expression of Christian fraternity, sacramental communion and mutual support.

Neither Party surrenders its legitimate ecclesiastical independence. Together they seek to honour Christ's prayer for unity while remaining faithful to the responsibilities entrusted to each.

Having completed the required discernment, verification, records and approvals, the authorised representatives sign this Agreement freely and prayerfully, seeking to live the unity entrusted to them in Christ.

For the Apostolic Old Catholic Mission:

+ Ashley

The Right Reverend Ashley R. Deutschmann
Rector (Bishop-Rector)

Date and place: 7 SEPTEMBER 2026
SOFIA, BULGARIA

Official seal:

For the Episcopal Anglican Community Serbia:

+ Petar Petrovic

Bishop Petar Petrovic

Date and place: 7 September 2026,
Belgrade, Serbia

Official seal:

"That they all may be one."
John 17:21