

Ecumenical Relations Mission Team Report

The Ecumenical Relations Mission Team brings greetings to the Penn Northeast Conference and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ, 2019 Spring Meetings!

When we are in worship on a Sunday morning or taking part in a congregational committee meeting during the week, it can become too easy to imagine that “the way we do it” is the way everybody does it. The body of Christ extends far beyond the borders of our local communities and country. As we interact with others of faith from different places, we learn different (and also similar) ways of expressing faith and being church with ecumenical partners. Further, we contribute to the coming together of the world’s people in ways that other agencies and institutions cannot.

The Ecumenical Relations Mission Team assists our Conferences and their memberships through encouraging commitments to faith relationships near and far.

The following report shares general work of the team, which meets quarterly. Each of the Constituent working groups conducts their own work between the Team’s meetings. For more information on the work of the various subcommittees please contact the chair, or members of the team. The ERMT has continued its work for and on behalf of our two Conferences through and beyond the merger discussions of the past year.

In 2018 the team grew more strongly into the coordinating nature of its design. The ERMT is a Coordinating Committee supporting a wonderful variety of ecumenical relationships within the boundaries of our conferences, and beyond. The team encourages congregations of our Conferences to participate in ecumenical relationships in local settings and also to seek out ways to engage persons of faith beyond the local setting as well.

During the year the work of the team followed five historic relationships of our conferences, and entered into a dramatic new partnership. These six are listed below:

- 1) Anhalt District Church in the former East Germany
- 2) Japan Mission Partnership, with UCC Missionaries Jeffrey Mensendiek cooperating with PNEC and Martha Mensendiek with PSEC
- 3) Cuban partnership
- 4) Amigos de Guatemala
- 5) Shared Ministry Congregations between Eastern PA UCC and Lutheran congregations
- 6) Church of South India, Medak Diocese

General Comments from the past year. The Team:

- Had a full complement of meetings for the year
- Welcomed its first member who came not from a constituent working group

- Received Greetings from the Berlin Mission
- Encouraged the Christmas Cards to Japan program
- Received the wonderful news of the completion of the Amigos De Guatemala facility
- Celebrated the attendance of two of our number to the Berlin Colloquy on the importance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr in Germany
- Signed an important agreement opening a partnership with the Medak diocese of the Church of South India, and its Bishop, Solomon Raj

Plans for the coming year include:

- Representatives of our Conferences traveling to the Kirchentag (similar to our General Synod only on a much larger scale) in Dortmund, Germany in June, 2019
- Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall
- Trips to Puerto Rico scheduled for Spring 2019
- Dedication of the Amigos De Guatemala Medical Facility in Monte Margarita, Guatemala
- Enhanced participation with our partners in Southern India
- Continued support of the Christmas outreach to congregations in the Tohoku/Sendai/Fukushima region of Japan
- Upholding the historic Shared Ministry among Eastern PA UCC and Lutheran congregations

Committee members:

Bonnie Bates
 Bill Worley
 Darryl Cruz
 Judith Fryer
 Jerel Gade
 Karen Heim
 Roger Heim
 Martha Kriebel
 Jane Kropa
 Bob Krug
 Charles Kuthuru
 Russ Mittman
 Cheryl Moore
 Frank Schaffer
 David Charles Smith
 John Snyder-Samuels
 Chandra Soans
 Bob Stewart
 Linda Lenhart, Secretary
 Homer Royer, Chair

