

## Ecumenical Relations Mission Team Report – Spring 2021

“All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name.” Psalm 86:9 NIV

The Ecumenical Relations Mission Team (ERMT) is delighted to share in the joyful labors of both the Penn Northeast (PNEC) and Pennsylvania Southeast Conferences (PSEC). We benefit from the active support and participation of both Conferences. At the same time, we recognize the work in which we are involved is on behalf of those who believe in and share the ministry of the congregations of both Conferences.

Our work revolves around maintaining and expanding upon the connections between people from our conference churches with Christian persons around the world. This involves strengthening relations with members of churches in nations and regions with historic connections to the United Church of Christ and our predecessor bodies. In recent years, we also have made new partnerships with churches that have cultural and theological ties to UCC churches within our Conference boundaries. We are working to embody the motto of the United Church of Christ “That they all may be one” (John 17:21) by strengthening our connection to Christians in other countries and other denominations. We invite all of the members of our Conferences to pray for our partner churches and their members. We also invite all of the members of the PNEC and PSEC to consider ways you would like to personally support and become part of the ERMT’s work and mission.

In the past, members of our team have had the opportunity to travel to the places our partner churches are located. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has put a hold on travel. Over the past year, we have spent time learning from and with our partners through ZOOM meetings, emails and phone calls.

We have Kirchengemeinschaft (a special church fellowship) with German partners, specifically the Anhalt District Church of the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEK) of Germany. This region is in part of the area that was formerly East Germany. We participate in the larger UCC (USA) and UEK (Germany).

We have a partnership with the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba.

We support the work of the Amigos de Guatemala. There is a report from the work of the Amigos elsewhere in these documents.

We work to support the Shared Ministry Congregations between the Eastern Pennsylvania UCC and Lutheran congregations. This groups meets and encourages the work of Shared Ministry Churches and Pastors.

We have a formal partnership between the Church of South India, Medak Diocese.

We have a Japan Mission Partnership with UCC Missionaries Jeffrey Mensendiek cooperating with the PNEC and Martha Mensendiek with the PSEC. Every year, members of our churches participate in a yearly Christmas Card Exchange with UCC Churches in Japan.

Our Team meets quarterly, and works to facilitate the work of constituent working groups which engage their work between Team meetings. Our meetings over the past year have been held over ZOOM, and this will continue to be our meeting method until we are no longer concerned about the pandemic. For more information on the work of the various subcommittee please contact the chair, or members of the Team as listed at the end of this report.

On 2021, we hope to strengthen our connections with our partner churches in Germany, India, Guatemala, Japan, and Cuba, as well and our Lutheran Ecumenical partners.

We are indebted to Rev. Homer Royer who fearlessly led our team as our chair for three years. We pray for his ministry work, for him, and for his family.

Our committee members are Bonnie Bates, Bill Worley, Darryl Cruz, Judith Fryer, Jerel Gade, Karen Heim, Roger Heim, Martha Kriebel, Charles Kuthuru, Russ Mittman, Frank Schaffer, David Charles Smith, Chandra Soans, Linda Lenhart, Ashley Snyder, Amelie Sell, Chair.