

# Churches Uniting in Christ

## Quarterly Newsletter

November 2023



Welcome to the new Churches Uniting in Christ quarterly newsletter. It is designed to help you share with your communions and neighbors about what's going on with CUIC. Please feel free to share this as you deem appropriate.



## History:

Churches Uniting in Christ began as an idea in 1960 when Presbyterian leader Rev. Eugene Carson Blake preached a sermon at the Episcopal Grace Cathedral. The sermon suggested creating a united Protestant church in the USA that would visibly and organically bring the Protestant churches into one, unified church. This idea sparked the formation of COCU (The Consultation on Church Union), who worked together on the possibilities of the idea for 40 years. Eventually, the vision began to transform, and the communions chose to remain separate denominations but to continue their relationships with each other in a new form of ecumenical union, and CUIC was born. In 2002 the denominations pledged to live more closely together in expressing their unity in Christ and in struggling against the scourge of racism. This vision continues today among the following member communions:

African Methodist Episcopal Church: [www.ame-church.com](http://www.ame-church.com)

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: [www.amez.org](http://www.amez.org)

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church: [www.thecmechurch.org](http://www.thecmechurch.org)  
The Episcopal Church: [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)  
International Council of Community Churches: <http://www.iccnw.org/>  
Moravian Church (Northern Province): [www.mcnp.org](http://www.mcnp.org)  
Presbyterian church (USA): [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)  
United Church of Christ: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)  
The United Methodist Church: [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) or [www.unitedmethodistbishops.org](http://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org)



The CUIC church leaders and representatives gather in plenary every three years. At their most recent plenary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania the vision continued. New people were brought into the movement, racism in our US history was addressed, and the following persons were elected as officers for the 2023-2026 term:

Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst, President, UMC  
Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Vice President, AME  
Ruling Elder Juliet Owuor, Treasurer, PCUSA  
Rev. Rock R. Fremont, Jr., Secretary, UCC



The following persons have been named as task force leaders:

Young Adult Task Force: Rev. Tiffanie Thompson (CME)

Racial Justice Task Force: Ms. Jacqui Dupont-Walker (AME)

Education Task Force: Rev. Mart Pettis (UCC)

Relationships Task Force: Rev. Maria Tjeltveit (EC) and Rev. Betsy Miller (Moravian)

Anniversary Task Force: Rev. Ray Jordan (UCC)

Members of CUIC member communions are welcome to join task forces. Simply contact the task force chair for information.



## Contact:

The Churches Uniting in Christ Website is located at:

<https://www.churchesuniting.org>

You may email: [contact@churchesuniting.org](mailto:contact@churchesuniting.org)

You may also contact Dr. Hawxhurst directly at:

[jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org](mailto:jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org) or at

344 Reed Lane

Simpsonville, KY 40067

## Giving:

To make a donation to CUIC, please contact:

Churches Uniting in Christ

c/o James Tse, Presbytery of New York City

475 Riverside Drive

Suite 1270

New York NY 10115

## News:

### The 2023 Plenary:

Leaders from all ten CUIC churches gathered together in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in early June of 2023 for their triennial plenary. Over fifty representatives from across the US spent together in worship, discernment, prayer and fellowship over three days of engagement and witness.

A community worship service was held at Mother Bethel AME Church, after walking there from Historic St. George's UM Church, in remembrance of the forced exit of Black members led by Richard Allen and others. The Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler of Mother Bethel welcomed the worshippers. Bishop Jeffrey Leath of the AME Church offered a sermon calling CUIC to say "good morning" to a new time of dedication to the vision of racial equity that is foundational to the commitment of the member churches of CUIC. Bishop Teresa Snorton, a former President of the ecumenical group, officiated at the Eucharistic table.

Much of the plenary time was dedicated to the development of new goals for CUIC. The Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm of the United Methodist Church lead the participants in a World Café process, in which three marks of commitment among the churches were reaffirmed. Goals focusing on racial equity, welcome, and theological dialogue were proposed. These were studied by the Coordinating Council and used to set priorities for the next three years.

The group also met for a day at Old First Reformed Church, and it was from this building an historic Prayer Walk was launched. The participants walked together to six different sites in the city. At each site they noted the history regularly taught in the US school system and contrasted it with the history of enslaved Black Persons who were associated with the site, then they took time to pray together, asking for forgiveness, remembrance, and transformation.

Business was also conducted. Outgoing President Abraham Wright directed conversations on several projects of CUIC. Bishop Jefferson Snorton presented information on online resources that were created to help local congregations commemorate Christian holidays through the lens of racial inequity. These videos, litanies and Bible studies are now located on the group's website: [www.churchesuniting.org](http://www.churchesuniting.org), under the "teaching and preaching" tab. Rev. Mark Pettis presented plans for the ecumenical training program for young adults, which will begin in a few months. Rev. Rock Fremont and Rev. Christian Choi presented a new archiving plan in cooperation with Princeton Seminary. Mr. Wright was thanked for his leadership, and new officers were elected. For the next three years Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst will serve as President. Bishop Jeffrey Leath will serve as Vice President. Rev. Rock Fremont will serve as Secretary. And, Ms. Juliet Owuor will serve as the Treasurer, with bookkeeping help from Mr. James Tse.

Participants left with a renewed commitment to stay together. Ms. Martinique Mix of the CME Church encouraged the group to "break, so that we can bend together," and as they departed amidst hugs and congratulations, it was clear that the Churches Uniting in Christ intend to make that happen.

## NEXT QUARTERLY DIALOGUE GATHERING:

The next CUIC quarterly dialogue zoom will take place on **November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. eastern time**. Persons from all CUIC member communions are invited to come, hear about a topic specific to our anti-racism work, and share your views in small group breakout rooms.

## Teaching and Preaching:

CUIC members have compiled an excellent online archive of sermons, litanies, prayers and other resources that look at both racism and unity in the church. The resources are centered around holidays celebrated in the Christian Church. To preview them go to:

<https://www.churchesuniting.org/teaching-and-preaching>.

## Resources:

If you would like to share with your communion more about the CUIC story and what CUIC is doing now, we can provide you with both a basic information sheet and a PowerPoint presentation. To obtain either email [contact@churchesuniting.org](mailto:contact@churchesuniting.org).

## CUIC Institute for Ecumenism:

A new model of teaching young adults about the Ecumenical Movement in the USA has been developed by CUIC members and will be piloted in 2024. It includes online training sessions from leaders of the CUIC churches and one in-person gathering. There will be no cost to participate, but there are only 2 slots per communion available. If you are aged 24 to 35 and are interested, please contact Rev. Mark Pettis at [pettism@ucc.org](mailto:pettism@ucc.org).

## Task Force Work:

The CUIC churches have named five task forces for the work of this triennium. They are: Racial Justice, Young Adults, Education, Relationships, and Anniversary. If you are a member of a CUIC

Church and would like to participate in a task force, email [contact@churchesuniting.org](mailto:contact@churchesuniting.org) for more detailed information.

## Churches Uniting in Christ 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:

CUIC will be 25 years old in 2027, and we will be celebrating at our 2026 gathering. If you are interested in helping with that celebration, email [contact@churchesuniting.org](mailto:contact@churchesuniting.org) for more detailed information on how you can get involved.