

Churches Uniting in Christ

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2024



Welcome to the first Churches Uniting in Christ newsletter for 2024. It is designed to help you share with your communions and neighbors about what's going on with CUIC. Please forward this to your regional, diocesan, conference or synodal leadership!



Why CUIC?

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 union church in the USA that would bring the Protestant churches into one, merged church. This idea sparked the formation of COCU (The Consultation on Church Union), who worked together on the possibility of the idea of one, united Protestant church. Eventually, the vision began to transform. Our churches chose to remain separate denominations but to continue our relationships with each other in a new form of ecumenical union, and CUIC was born. In 2002 our denominations pledged to live more closely together in expressing our unity in Christ and in struggling against the scourge of racism. We do this through triannual plenaries and continually working task forces among the following member communions:

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



The following persons are serving as officers and task force leaders for the 2023-2026 term:

President, Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst, UMC, jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org

Vice President, Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, AME, jeffreynleath@aol.com

Treasurer, Ruling Elder Juliet Owuor, PCUSA, Juliet.owuor7@gmail.com

Secretary, Rev. Rock R. Fremont, Jr., UCC, rock@mayallbeone.org

Young Adult Task Force: Rev. Tiffanie Thompson, CME, tiffanie.renee.t@gmail.com and
Mr. Tavis Tinsley, UMC, tavistinsley@gmail.com

Racial Justice Task Force: Ms. Jacqui Dupont-Walker, AME, jdupontwalker@gmail.com

Education Task Force: Rev. Mark Pettis, UCC, Pettism@ucc.org

Relationships Task Force: Rev. Maria Tjeltveit, TEC, revmariat@gmail.com and
Rev. Betsy Miller, Moravian, betsy@mcnp.org

Anniversary Task Force: Rev. Dr. Ray Jordan, UCC, revray@estdallasucc.org

NOW IS THE TIME TO SELECT THE TASK FORCE YOU WANT TO BE A PART OF!!!!

Simply contact the task force chair for information using the above email addresses. (Any member of any of the ten CUIIC churches is welcome to serve on a task force.)



First Quarterly CUIC Dialogue:

Thank you to Rev. Dr. Ray Jordan of the UCC who led our first CUIC quarterly dialogue in November of 2023. A recording of his teaching time, about the 60th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and about speaking truth to power is now available on the CUIC website. Go to <https://www.churchesuniting.org>.



2024 Goals:

At the 2023 plenary officers were elected, task forces were named, and goals were set. Now, CUIC members are working on those goals for the next two years. The goals are:

1. To have a **quarterly online gathering** for all interested persons. The Coordinating Council will meet for 30 minutes prior to the online gathering for business needs. Then, during the gathering a 15-minute presentation will be made by a task force, then there will be 30 minutes in breakout groups to discuss more deeply the topic presented.
2. To offer **quarterly communications** that will share the topic of the upcoming zoom and will share about the finances of CUIC, with the hope of being able to recommend a paid staff person by 2026.

(continued...)

3. To revive the **task force ministries** and to commit to the following:

a. **Racial Justice Task Force:**

- i. Create a mission statement,
- ii. Claim a definition of racism for CUIC use, and
- iii. Organize and offer a racial audit to all CUIC churches.

b. **Young Adult Task Force:**

- i. Create a mission statement that makes this task force unique from the racial justice task force, and
- ii. Create their own project and goals for the triennium.

c. **Education Task Force:**

- i. Organize and pilot a “CUIC Institute for Ecumenism,” and
- ii. Review the pilot and make recommendations.

d. **Relationships Task Force:**

- i. Map the current bi-lateral relationships, and
- ii. Collect a library of all the written agreements that accompany those relationships.

e. **Anniversary Task Force:**

- i. Prepare for CUIC’s 25th anniversary in 2027 to be celebrated at 2026 plenary, and
- ii. Update the CUIC communion liturgy for use at the celebration.

2024 CUIC Dates of Note:

Our Quarterly Zoom dates have been set. Please hold the following evenings on your calendars:

February 6

May 14

August 6

November 19

Our in-person Coordinating Council meeting will be held in conjunction with the Christian Churches Together gathering in October. More information will be coming about that soon.



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

One thing all CUIC churches can be doing together is celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which happens every January 18-25 across the world (although some churches in the southern hemisphere choose to celebrate The Week around Pentecost instead). The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity liturgy is created by a joint working group of representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. In 2024 the theme comes from Luke 10:27: "You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbor as yourself." It was selected by Christians in Burkina Faso and is shared with the rest of the world. Resources, including the liturgy, bulletin inserts, sermon notes, and a link to an ecumenical service to be held on January 24th at 12:00 noon eastern time at the Interchurch Center Chapel in NY can be found at <https://geii.org>. The United Methodist Church also welcomes you to a half-hour time of prayer using the liturgy on January 23rd at noon eastern time. To receive a link to participate in this time of prayer for unity, please email lmcharles@umc-cob.org.

2024 Finances and Budget:

Thank you to Ruling Elder Juliet Owuor and Mr. James Tse of the PCUSA for continuing to handle the CUIC finances. As of the end of November 2023, CUIC had \$174,143.62 in the bank. Our end-of-the-year reports for 2023 are still being created and will be shared in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, please make sure your communion is planning on making a contribution in 2024. We are trying to work toward hiring administrative assistance.

This Quarter's Zoom:

This quarter's zoom gathering will be held on **February 6, 2024**. The Young Adult Task Force will present our topic for discussion. All members in our CUIC congregations are invited. Here's the Zoom Link, which you may share with persons who want to participate:

<https://umc-cob-org.zoom.us/j/2355970910?omn=84327203357>

Meeting ID: 235 597 0910

And, here's the evening's schedule:

On February 6th:

The officers will meet from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. (eastern time)

The Coordinating Council will meet from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.

All members of all CUIC churches are invited to the discussion meeting from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.



2024 CUIC Needs:

1. Persons actively serving on the task forces,
2. Young adult Christians participating in the CUIC Institute on Ecumenism,
3. Every member church making a financial contribution,
4. Every member church having up to three representatives on the Coordinating Council, including: an Advisor, a voting Delegate, and a Young Adult Delegate.

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>.

Informational 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 jhawxhurst@umc-cob.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.

Giving:

CUIC would like to be able to hire a staff person in 2026. So, we need all CUIC churches to make sure annual donations are being made. 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

If you have questions, you may also be in contact with our Treasurer,
Ruling Elder Juliet Owuor at Juliet.owuor7@gmail.com

Contact:

The Churches Uniting in Christ Website is located at: <https://www.churchesuniting.org>

You may email: contact@churchesuniting.org

or contact Dr. Hawxhurst directly at: jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org