

Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work
January 22, 2019, 1pm ET
Zoom meeting

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: Eugene Sutton; David Simmons; Jaime Briceno; Sharon Alexander; Walter Baer; Scott Hayashi; Kate Bellam; Bill Franklin, chair; Denise Yarborough, Vice Chair; Lucinda Mosher, Technology Officer; Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Secretary; Margaret Rose; Richard Mammana; Chuck Robertson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Luz Montes

OPENING AND AGENDA: The meeting opened in prayer by the chair, Bill Franklin, at 1:04 ET. Scott Hayashi moved that we then approve the draft agenda, Denise seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously following a review by the chair. The chair also explained the establishment of an agenda committee that will determine future meeting agendas.

INTRODUCTIONS AND TECH ADVICE:

For ease of communication, it was determined that we would refer to one another by first name and not be concerned about title.

Officers introduced themselves. For this triennium, the officers are Bill Franklin (Chair). Denise Yarborough (Vice Chair), Marisa Tabizon Thompson (Secretary), and Lucinda Mosher (Technical Officer)

Regarding technology, at this time all meetings are intended to happen by virtual means. Zoom is the program of choice for most, if not all, meetings. If you have trouble with Zoom, call the help number included on the email confirmation first. If that does not work, call Lucinda on her cell phone. Brian Murray at the General Convention Office is good source of general assistance. Additionally, more information can be made available by power point if needed.

Brief introductions of committee members and staff liaisons followed the discussion on technology, which included why we were drawn to this work.

GOALS AND HOPES FOR THE TASK FORCE:

From Margaret, Richard, Chuck/Staff –

- There is no official body to consider, vet, and respond to things like the World Council of Churches statements.
- TEC needs a group to be experts in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, activities, and commitments to determine what does and does not go to General Convention or other places.
- Debate about if this should be a task force or commission; regardless, there are tasks to do so we start this way.
- To attend to Ministry Beyond the Church (overseen by Chuck), which includes Global Partnerships, Interreligious dialogue, Government Relations, and Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)

Need to look at specific things such as:

- Official TEC language around Israeli-US relations
- UMC discussion, legislation, education (money is available but on hold until they meet)
- Bavarian-Lutheran Conversations

- Church of Sweden
- Church of South India in North America
- International Anglican Oriental Orthodox statement related to liturgy
- And more

Specific 2019 goals for the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations are focused on the unity and Christian love in our ecumenical conversations and the Way of Love as the source of common ground in Interreligious dialogue. Three specific areas of work will be the UMC-TERC dialogue, to strengthen interfaith work in dioceses, and the intersection of ecumenical work and public policy in areas such as climate change. A full slide show to more develop these goals is available on the extranet.

From Sharon/SCGSCC (Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution, and Canons):
This task force used to be a standing commission but was dissolved in 2015 when structure was pared down. This area was not reassigned so a gap developed, leaving us with questions such as:

- What does full communion mean?
- How do we manage Title IV issues when a non-TEC pastor is serving in a TEC parish?
- And more

Additionally, there is a call to add structure and process to agreements with other churches and in work in this arena,

More details on these goals and hopes are found in a document on the extranet.

From Denise, Vice Chair:

Looking for how to organize this work and next steps, and a body to respond, advise, or act when needed.

**Suggests we start by determining areas on which we wish to focus and finding a budget to meet in person.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF GOALS AND FURTHER ORGANIZING:

Desire to work together as one team – staff and task force

Need to form subcommittees or specialty groups to prioritize the work

Note to remember Europe and Province 9 in our discussions

Consider the role of justice in our plans and hopes

Think about Lambeth 2020 – is there a need for a proactive or reactive response?

How to bring the work of TEC and the presiding bishop to the local level?

Is there a framework for local parishes to use towards local ecumenical efforts, such as liturgy guidelines and required permissions?

Four possible plenary/subcommittee groups:

1. Interreligious work
 2. Full Communion efforts (UMC, ELCA, etc)
 3. Non-full communion work (RC, Orthodox, etc)
 4. Nuts and bolts (liturgy, government, justice, etc)
- (May also want to just mirror the four areas of “Ministry Beyond the Church”)

ORGANIZING/IN THE INTERIM/FOR NEXT TIME:

Please add notes and reflections from this meeting to the extranet. Of particular interest are priorities identified, meeting schedules and organization, and subcommittee/specialty group interest topic(s). The idea of large group meetings every other month and plenary/subcommittee meetings on the off months is favorable. The need to find a way to gather in person was reiterated; any ideas of when/how?

CLOSING PRAYER: Offered by Bill Franklin at 2:17pm ET

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

EMM – Episcopal Migration Ministries

EDEIO – Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Religious Officers

Methodist-Episcopal dialogue and resources: <http://umc-tec.org>

Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the USA (ARCUSA): <http://archusa.church>

Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee: <http://lutheran-episcopal.org>

Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee: <http://moravian-episcopal.org>