

Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work  
March 3, 2020  
Zoom meeting

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: David Simmons; Jaime Briceño; Sharon Alexander; Kate Bellam; Luz Montes; Bill Franklin, chair; Denise Yarbrough, Vice Chair; Lucinda Mosher, Technology Officer; Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Secretary; Margaret Rose; Richard Mammana; Chuck Robertson; Eugene Sutton; Hank Jaennel, TEC intern

MEMBERS ABSENT: Walter Baer; Scott Hayashi

OPENING: The meeting was opened in a prayer at 2:05pm EST by Margaret Rose. She offered three notes to start our call together.

1. We are coming together in this work to build bridges, not walls, to open doors and not close gates.
2. The Holy people of the day are Charles and John Wesley, fitting as we discuss the ways denominations relate. The collect for this day is:  
*Lord God, you inspired your servants John and Charles Wesley with burning zeal for the sanctification of souls, and endowed them with eloquence in speech and song: Kindle in your Church, we entreat you, such fervor, that those whose faith has cooled may be warmed, and those who have not known Christ may turn to him and be saved; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*
3. In recognition of the death of Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, a Nicaraguan RC priest who died this week, a prayer/poem from his volume *Pluriverse*.  
*And the galaxy was taking the shape of a flower  
the way it looks now on a starry night.  
Our flesh and our bones come from other stars  
and perhaps even from other galaxies,  
we are universal, and after death we will help to form other stars  
and other galaxies.  
We come from the stars, and to them we shall return.*

MINUTES AND AGENDA: The December 2, 2019, minutes were approved as submitted by a unanimous vote.

#### STAFF UPDATES:

Richard, Chuck, Margaret –

- The hottest topic on the table right now is Lambeth 2020. Chuck Robertson led the group through a PowerPoint on some of the related issues and happenings, including a list of five things to watch for in 2020. There is still great discussion about the full inclusion of LGBTQI bishops and spouses; he noted that Lambeth invitations are made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which includes spouse invitations. In general, the guiding mantra for Lambeth is: “Our unity lies not in our thinking alike, but in our acting together.”
- Margaret Rose spoke to the 30,000-foot view of the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs. Ecumenical relations and increasing expansion of Interreligious work is in large part about the Public Engagement and Witness of the Episcopal church in the world and with partners: highlighting the work with related UN entities and the United Nations Commission on the Status

of Women Meeting etc. The re-entry of Cuba into the Episcopal Church is an interesting model for our work as the context there has been ecumenically focused for a long time.

- Highlights of work in the first months of the year were offered to Executive Council and are available on the extranet.
- Richard Mammana and Eugene Sutton commented on two dialogue meetings that have occurred since December 2019. The Roman Catholic/ARC-TEC discussion is centering on “Walking Together on the Way.” Two major areas of discussion are reconciliation around gender differences and the tension between specific, historical pieces and the reality of the people in the pews. The Presbyterian-TEC dialogue focused on working toward interim Eucharistic sharing (which already exists for TEC clergy in the PCUSA setting, but not the other way around).

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

### 1. General Convention, structure, and governance (David Simmons, chair):

- We are waiting on the Methodists before continuing with TEC General Convention planning and strategizing. Once a clearer picture emerges, there is a desire to do any pre-work possible for the Blue Book inclusions. The UMC has five plans on the table for their upcoming General Assembly. It is expected that the issue of full communion with TEC will be on their consent agenda, regardless.
- Re: UMC – There is a need to do some pre-assessment work with TEC bishops before General Convention. Strategizing will be critical to continue on this path. Some of this is the differences around understanding of human sexuality. Eugene Sutton proposed that there is great unrest because people are often reacting to an idea, something learned in seminary, rather than an actuality, which leads to an obscuring of the real issues and differences. We are talking about ‘gay marriage’, for example, and ignoring the issues of racism, classism, and sexism that are present under each layer of discussion.
- EDEIO, the independent organization of bishop-appointed ecumenical interreligious officers from throughout the denomination is taking on the issues local and provincial work and connections.
- Discussions are happening on the subject of the historic episcopate in our ecumenical relationships. We love it in TEC, but is it the gift of the dead mouse?
- Sharon Alexander articulated that we will need to spend time on resolutions AND explanations when we meet in May.

### 2. Theology (Denise Yarbrough, chair):

- The statement on TEC-Jewish relationships has not been updated since 1988. This committee planned to do some new drafts but is first looking at the Church of England document, “God’s Unfailing Word.” It is long but quite theologically sound and may be useful as a guide to create something brief for congregational use.  
[https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/christian\\_jewish\\_guidelines\\_1988.pdf](https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/christian_jewish_guidelines_1988.pdf)
- The 2009 Ecumenical Interreligious Statement by TEC needs something. The options under consideration are updating the document or scrapping it and starting over. Two areas to include are indigenous people relationships and multiple religious belonging (spiritual fluidity). It is: *Toward our Mutual Flourishing: The Theological statement on Interreligious Relations of the Episcopal Church*  
[https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/tomf\\_booklet\\_5.5\\_x\\_8.5\\_v10.pdf](https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/tomf_booklet_5.5_x_8.5_v10.pdf)
- It was noted that the term “Anti-Semitism” is viewed as problematic. Anti-Jewish bigotry or antisemitism would be more accurate and should be applied in TEC documents.

3. Anglican Communion, the Convocation of Churches in Europe, & related (Eugene Sutton, chair) and
4. United Methodist Church and other bi-lateral discussions (Scott Hayashi):
  - The dialogue discussions were woven into the different sections of this meeting. The only additional note is that the TEC-UMC work in the Diocese of Utah, led by Scott Hayashi, has yielded good results.

#### ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION/IN-PERSON MEETING:

The in-person meeting is fast approaching. The schedule will run from 6p on Thursday, May 14, 2020, to noon on Saturday, May 16, 2020, at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. A call to meeting will come from Patrick Haizel around March 9. This group brainstormed about what should be included in the time together and developed the following list:

- Full group/plenary discussion about overall plan and path as well as specific issues. Should a UMC rep be included here?
- General Convention work, including strategizing and blue book language
- Time for breakout groups/subcommittees
- Specific discussion on the practical application of this work in congregations and other ministry settings. Get to the grass roots of the ecumenical and interfaith activities and possibilities
- Bishop education on ecumenical affairs and relationships
- How to streamline partnering with other churches/denominations and leaders to speak out on issues
- Bring Rebecca Blachly in via Zoom to talk statements/media/PR

There will not be another Zoom meeting before we gather in May. Everyone is asked to watch the extranet for preparation.

#### CLOSING PRAYERS:

Specific prayer request were articulated for postponed UN Status on Women conference, those affected in Tennessee, and Bishop Lane on the passing of his wife. Denise Yarborough then led the following closing prayer: "May You Live to See Your World Fulfilled"

*May you live to see your world fulfilled.*

*May your destiny be for worlds to come.*

*May you trust in generations past and yet to be.*

*May your eyes shine with the light of holy words*

*And your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.*

*May your lips ever speak wisdom,*

*Your fulfillment be in justice*

*Even as you ever yearn to listen to the words of*

*The Holy Ancient One of old.*

*May your heart be filled with intuition*

*And your words be filled with insight.*

*May songs of praise be upon your tongue,*

*Your vision straight before you.*

*Even as you even yearn to listen to the words of*

*The Holy Ancient One of old.*

(From, Thomas Ryan, *Interreligious Prayer: A Christian Guide*, (Paulist Press, New York 2008), p.55. The original text is from the Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17(a) translated by Lawrence Kushner.)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53pm Eastern Time by Bill Franklin, Chair.

Committee assignments/Requests:

General Convention

David Simmons, Chair

Sharon Alexander

Marisa Tabizon Thompson

Theology

Denise Yarbrough, Chair

Lucinda Mosher

Marisa Tabizon Thompson

UMC/Bilateral Work

Sharon Alexander

David Simmons

Denise Yarbrough

Scott Hayashi, Chair

Kate Bellam

Walter Baer

Anglican Communion and Europe

Lucinda Mosher

Walter Baer

Eugene Sutton, Chair

Jaime Briceño

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND REFERENCES:

Hungarian Reformed Church in America:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian\\_Reformed\\_Church\\_in\\_America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_Reformed_Church_in_America)

<http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/nanassy1922.pdf>

Anglican/Presbyterian Dialogue: [http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/presbyterian\\_episcopal1896.pdf](http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/presbyterian_episcopal1896.pdf)

*Toward Our Mutual Flourishing* by Lucinda Mosher:

<https://www.peterlang.com/abstract/title/22143?rskey=CGbcNL&result=2>

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>

CUIC: Churches Uniting in Christ