



CHURCHES UNITING IN CHRIST

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Press Release

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Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) Gathers in Plenary

St. Louis, MO January 2, 2008 - For the first time since its inauguration in January, 2002, Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) will gather delegates from the member communions in a Plenary meeting January 11-14, 2008, in St. Louis at the Sheraton St. Louis City Center. Significantly, each communion will bring a delegation that includes the Head of Communion, the Ecumenical Officer, and the communion's representatives to the three CUIC task forces: Local and Regional, Ministry, and Racial Justice.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, will present the opening address on Friday, January 11, at 1:30 pm. Dr. Rodney Sadler, assistant professor of Bible at Union-Presbyterian School for Christian Education in Charlotte, NC, will lead the delegates in Bible study several times each day. Dr. Billie Mayo, St. Louis, will serve as facilitator for the Plenary.

The purpose of the Plenary is to rekindle and refocus the CUIC relationship and to identify how the member churches will go into the future. Each task force will make a presentation, and much time will be spent in small group dialogue. The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb, CUIC president, said, "This is important work. It will be done as we worship and pray, as we gather around the tables for conversation and food, as we encounter one another in the hallways of the hotel, and as we listen to the challenges of others. Hopefully, we are ready for a creative and forward looking time."

To honor one hallmark of the CUIC relationship, the "provision for celebration of the Eucharist together with intentional regularity," the delegates will participate in a service of Eucharist each day of the Plenary. The preacher and the chief celebrant in each service will be the Heads of Communion.

On Friday evening, January 11, at 7:00 pm, the opening Eucharist service will be hosted by Lane Tabernacle Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, 910 N. Newstead, St. Louis, where The Rev. James Morris is pastor. The chief celebrant for this service will be Bishop William Graves, senior bishop of the CME Church. The preacher will be Bishop Paul A. G. Stewart, Sr. presiding bishop of the Third Episcopal District of the CME Church, which includes St. Louis. Others participating in the service will be Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, presiding bishop of the Tenth Episcopal District, and Bishop Ronald M. Cunningham, presiding bishop of the Eighth Episcopal District and the CME Ecumenical Officer.

The service of Eucharist on Saturday, January 12, at 5:00 pm will follow the Reformed tradition. The Rev. John Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will be the preacher, and the

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Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church USA, and the Rev. Michael Livingston, Executive Director of the International Council of Community Churches, will be co-celebrants.

The service of Eucharist on Sunday, January 13, at 2:30 pm will follow the Methodist tradition. The chief celebrant will be the Rev. Dr. William Oden, Ecumenical Officer of the UMC Council of Bishops, and the Rev. Dr. Timothy James, Associate General Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be the preacher.

The service of Eucharist on Monday, January 14, at 11:00 am will follow the Anglican tradition. Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, will be the chief celebrant, and the Rev. David Wickmann, President of the Provincial Elders Conference of the Moravian Church Northern Province, will be the preacher.

The services on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday will be held at the Sheraton St. Louis City Center. The service at Lane Tabernacle on Friday will be preceded by a dinner at 5:30 pm. Cost of the dinner is \$25.00; reservations are required. Contact the CUIC office at 314-252-3160.

CUIC member communions include: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Moravian Church (Northern Province), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a Partner in Mission and Dialogue, and the Roman Catholic Church is an official observer.

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