

History of UCC/EKU Partnership in the Pacific Northwest Conference 1981 to 2010

1981 The 13th United Church of Christ General Synod voted to establish Kirchengemeinschaft (full communion) with the Evangelical Church of the Union in East and West Germany.

1982 Two from WNI and eight other UCC delegates at a peace dialogue with German delegates in Iserlohn, West Germany, called churches to break down “enemy images.”

1984 Two WNI delegates participated in a peace dialogue with German delegates in Washington, D. C. We hosted two of the German delegates in WNI churches.

1985 Four WNI delegates and four from Maine participated in the national exchange for conferences. They visited churches in East and West Germany, reported back to Conference churches, and helped several establish sister churches.

1986 The UCC/EKU Committee hosted eight West and four East German visitors, for a month in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Conference. They visited more than 20 WNI churches, sharing about the ECU and learning about UCC and ecumenical ministries.

1987 The UCC/EKU Partnership Committee was formed after the Annual Meeting voted to establish a partnership with the Berlin Brandenburg West church district. In the fall, a Berlin church official visited to propose ways to develop the partnership.

1988 The Committee encouraged the Veradale and Shalom UCC three-week Youth Friendship Trip to West Berlin, East and West Germany—as a pilot project for youth/adult exchanges—and recruited six participants for a German-American Young Adult Seminar in East and West Germany.

1989 The Committee prepared a display and a workshop (reports from the youth and young adults) at Annual Meeting, made plans to host Berlin youth and adults in 1990, sent conference churches copies of the German Ten Days of Peace worship resources.

The Conference facilitated three short-term, single-congregation stays of theological students from West Germany.

1990 We hosted 10 youth/young adults/adults from Berlin/Brandenburg visiting in the Conference from June 23 to July 7. Youth attended aqua camp at N-Sid-Sen and young adults engaged in a dialogue on peace and justice and native American issues in the Bellingham area.

Walter Sylten visited the conference for the Annual Meeting and visited several churches.

Bob Harrison took a group of young adults to the Rhineland for a study

We provided worship resources for the 10 days of peace in November and Dick Arnold toured an East German pastor around the state. Dick visited Germany for six weeks.

1991 We recruited adults to visit Berlin from Sept. 23 to Oct 7 to learn about the developments in the church and society with the unification of the two German states.

Bob Harrison organized with other western conferences a visit in Bellingham for young adults from the Rhineland.

We seek to develop the partnership by bringing people together in dialogue on church life and on peace and justice issues to bridge the East and West blocs and to develop a sense of our connectedness and our common faith.

1992 In October, a delegation of eight from East Germany visited churches in Cheney, Spokane, Richland, and Western Washington. Their program included a women forum on “Working

Toward Justice,” visits to ecumenical ministries, a farm in Tekoa, the Yakama Cultural Center and Coeur d’Alene Desmet Mission, participation in a “Rethinking Columbus” quincentennial walk with Native Americans, learning about the human rights responses to the Aryan Nations in North Idaho, meeting with 12-step programs and Seattle ministries. We learned about the changing role of the church in East Germany as the society unifies and needs to overcome internal walls between people of differing experiences for decades.

1993 At the annual meeting workshop, 1991 delegates to Berlin-Brandenburg shared about their experiences and the church’s ministry, just three years after the Berlin Wall fell.

- Twelve Conference churches used resources from “Full Communion Training” of the United Church Board for World Ministries to engage in study
- The committee helped recruit young adults for a seminar on the Columbus quincentennial in Trier, Germany, through the UCBWM.

1994 Nazareth Parish group of eight youth and their advisors (14) visited Aug 13 to 20 in Spokane, Cheney, Newport after a week at N-Sid-Sen. Events included worship at four churches, participation in the Coming of the Black Robe at Cataldo, a hike in Dishman Hills, visiting the synagogue, Martin Luther King Center, and joining a Habitat for Humanity work day. Because of difficulties encountered in the group expecting to come and do their own touring instead of our programming, we developed guidelines for global partnerships, which we shared with the national UCC. We suggested limiting the size of groups to eight (because of transportation and hosting issues), clarifying expectations and assumptions (such as the focus on church life and justice issues).

The Global Partnership Committee arranged for Lloyd Van Vactor, retired missionary in the Philippines and United Church Board for World Ministries staff, to lead a pre-event for the 1994 Annual Meeting and a workshop on global partnership as an extension of world mission.

1995 The partnerships of the Washington North Idaho Conference with the Berlin Brandenburg Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Union in Germany and with the South Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea are covenantal relationships for building global understanding through short- or long-term face-to-face encounters for learning, sharing, and growing in awareness of the issues of our societies and our churches. Local churches are encouraged to establish partnership relationships with other local congregations based on contact facilitated by these exchanges.

1998 We hosted a Western Regional Youth Event at Pacific Lutheran University focusing on inviting global partners from the western UCC conferences to a global ecumenical dialogue - looking at how to inspire transformative relationships across borders and what it means to have global partners. June Grubb was a key organizer.

1998-99 Ten years after the Berlin Wall fell, a delegation of nine from our conference visited partners in Germany from Sept. 24 to Oct. 4. Participants discussed the common struggle of churches to have vision of God’s call for them in their communities. At Spremberg, they found a congregation responding to people displaced as their villages are swallowed up by the expansion of strip mines. Participants were impressed by the perseverance of some of the German church people under Nazism, then under Soviet influence and now under the capitalist market economy. Mary Olney, a member of the committee who has been to Korea and Germany sees possibility in linking these two nations with history of divisions.

1999 Randy Hyvonen, conference minister, and his wife Karen traveled with a group of nine—Bob and Marge Grunewald, Medora Moburg, Bob Porter, Mary Olney and two others—visited Brandenburg East Sept. 24 to Oct. 4, hosted by the ECU-UEK partnership chair Uwe Dittmer. Isabel Egglin of Plymouth helped with orientation. Uwe was retiring.

2000 Tobias Krueger came at the request of Uwe to work at Pilgrim Firs and N-Sid-Sen during the summer.

2001 In July, partnership members in the Seattle area hosted 14 visitors from Berlin-Wlmersdorf with Supt. Roland Herpick, his wife, son, two other youth, their mothers, several lay men and women and men clergy, including Katharina Plehn Martins, who was a contact with Berlin West. The focus was urban mission—visiting Tent City, Plymouth, it's House of Healing, All Pilgrims (discussed O&A) and the German UCC. They visited the Olympic Rain Forest, stayed in Forks and visited the Makah Reservation.

2002 In January, seven PNC pastors attended a colloquium in Berlin with pastors from Penn Central and Berlin, focusing on Marcus Borg's Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time. Participants were Randy Hyvonen, Steve Erickson, Dan Stern, Mimi Land, Peggy Jo Skill and one other. Also Irmgard Mantz of Wlmersdorf did a sabbatical in Seattle to learn about day care. She stayed with Kathleen Morgan and Ann Lev and connected with University Congregational UCC. She was at Annual Meeting.

2004 The conference hosted a delegation from Germany, including a visit to Pilgrim Firs, around the Olympic Peninsula and a salmon dinner at the tribal headquarters in Northwestern Washington. (Dick Weaver)

2005 Dick helped recruit participants for a 10-day June trip to Berlin/Brandenburg focused on the "Decade to Overcome Violence" and what it means in our societies.

2005 Tammy Bell and Randy Hyvonen were the conference's representatives, Tammy representing the PNC and Randy representing the national UCC Partnership Committee to the 25th anniversary

of the UCC's national partnership with the ECU-UEK.

2006 Germany invited three to five clergy to attend a clergy colloquy with home stays Aug. 13 to 18 through the Penn Central Conference. The delegates were Stephen Eriksen, Paul Quinton Smith, and Darrell Berg. The theme was "Christianity and Islam: The Claims Both Have to Absolute Truth," discussing practical and theological issues.

2007 We proposed a PROK-UEK-PNC colloquy on reunification. Cathy Barker and Dick Weaver promoted it because of ties to both partners. The partners had no interest. In evaluating the partnership, some Germans said they had visited the U.S. and were interested in clergy dialogue or partnering on mission projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America or the Pacific.

2008 Changes in our Global Ministries committee and conference minister meant loss of our official connection. Mary Stamp and Medora Moburg agreed to seek reconconnections.

Uwe Dittmer said his leaving and Randy leaving left us without a clear contact person. Dick Weaver, past Global Ministries chair, said enthusiasm waned partly because of inconvenient dates and lack of advanced notice to recruit. It may have seemed less urgent to travel to Germany, as before the Wall fell, when it seemed we were doing something for freedom. He felt recent visits became nice trips, listening to panel discussions and meant for people who love workings of the wider church and folks specifically interested in Germany.

Dick thinks it's important for the conference minister to be support the partnership or it's hard to promote in the conference. There needs to be compelling interest and specific reasons for a conference minister to take the time away