

## **Penn Central Conference UEK Partnership Committee Report**

The Conference UEK Partnership Committee met five times during the past year. The UEK is the Union of Evangelical (Protestant) Churches in Germany. The Conference Committee is responsible for the partnerships with two of the UEK's regional churches (Landeskirchen), namely, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg-Silesian Upper Lusatia.

Currently Dietmar Plajer chairs the Committee. Ed Dickel is the Committee's vice-chair. Doug Macneal serves as secretary. Others who've served on the Committee the past year are John Payne, Robert Stoudt, Marja Coons-Torn, Pat Macneal, Robert and Nancy Musser, Sheresa Simpson-Rice, Dwight Hein, William Rader, Ron Heagy, Jane Eiker, Lyn Barrett, and Robert Hunsicker.

Conference Minister Marja Coons-Torn was one of the 20 ecumenical visitors who attended the 400th anniversary celebration of the First Synod of Reformed Church in the Rhineland that was held in the city of Duisburg from September 1 to 5, 2010. The theme for the celebration was, "Wir sind frei" (We Are Free).

"Being the Presence of Christ in the Neighborhood" was the theme for the theological colloquy that was held August 15 to 20, 2010, in the city of Brandenburg. Seven members of PCC churches participated in this, the seventh, in a series of colloquies sponsored by the PCC and the EKIBB that began in Berlin-Schwanenwerder in January, 1997. The Pennsylvania participants were hosted by EKIBB families during the weekends that preceded and followed the colloquy. Lyn Barrett chairs the committee that is making plans for the colloquy that will be held during the summer of 2012 in central Pennsylvania at a place to be announced.

Ten Days for Peace (die Friedensdekade) was observed in several PCC churches from November 7 to 17, 2010. The theme was, "Es ist Krieg. Entrüestet Euch!" (We are at war! Be outraged!)

The 33rd Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag, a nation-wide church conference, will be held June 1 to 5, 2011, in the city of Dresden. The theme will be, "... There Will Your Heart Be Also". Dwight Hein will represent the PCC.

Recent minutes of a meeting of the Partnership Committee of the Church in the Rhineland noted that there is no Theological Commission in the United Church of Christ. Members of the PCC Committee view this as a certain deficit. At the Committee's request Bill Rader drafted a Resolution that calls for the establishment of a UCC Theological Commission. The Committee unanimously approved the draft. The Resolution will be presented to the UCC General Synod when it meets in Florida in July, 2011.

Joerg and Janet Berchner, two pastors from Wandlitz in eastern Germany, are scheduled to arrive in central Pennsylvania June 6 for a ten week stay as ecumenical visitors. The Berchners will be hosted by St. Paul's Church in Selinsgrove, where Dietmar Plajer serves as pastor. They are scheduled to attend the PCC Annual Meeting, the UCC General Synod, the Summer Academy at Lancaster Seminary, and certain events at Hartman Center.

The EKiR Committee has proposed a "Partnership Agreement between the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ". That proposal is currently being considered by the PCC Committee along with a 2001 statement on "Ecumenical Partnership Guidelines" that was approved by the Committee in 2006.

Scheduled to attend the PCC's Annual Meeting in June at Selinsgrove are Christine Busch, the Ecumenical Officer of the EKiR, and Manfred Rekowsky, a member of the EKiR Leadership Council (Kirchenleitung) and former District Superintendent in Wuppertal.

March 28, 2011, in Lancaster, Robert Hunsicker