

Partnership Agreement of the New York Conference, United Church of Christ and the Church Deanery of Berlin City Center, Protestant Church Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz

The shape of the Church is universal. Communion with one another has always been an important feature for Christians all over the world, regardless of their origin. The rapid development of communication in the past decades enables people to keep in touch and intensify relationships between countries and across considerable distances.

We the United Church of Christ New York Conference and the Church Deanery of Berlin City Center rejoice in the faith we share and are happy to witness to the following insights:

That we are members of the holy, universal and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ

That we as members of Christ's communion, are called to proclaim God's message to the world

That our situation—as churches in secularized western societies, inspired by congregations in rural or metropolitan areas—our histories and our structures are different but still comparable. We don't just learn from each other, but are faced with similar challenges and possibilities.

We pledge to form a bond of devotion, partnership, and of, as it were, two siblings within the framework of the contract between the United Church of Christ – New York Conference and the Protestant Church Deanery of Berlin City Center for the period of six years from the date of the signature.

We agree on the fact that the Mission Jesus Christ sent us to fulfill is to share his Message and to work for social justice, as every human being is made in the image of God.

According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who says: "Christian communion is one of the greatest gifts God bestows us," communion is an expression of what is possible if we communicate with each other. New experiences are gained through encountering other contexts, which have much in common with one's own, but remain different. New insights spring from looking at our environment with "new eyes." Similarly, encounters with Christians from other countries pave the way to new knowledge and understanding.

AGREEMENT

We pledge to:

Establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar counseling on important questions of faith and order, life, and work.

Encourage consultations between members of our churches, to exchange knowledge, ideas, and information regarding theological and pastoral issues.

In order to implement this agreement into the life of our churches, we pledge to:

- Above all, maintain a communion in prayer. As churches and as individuals, we commit to pray for one another. Our friends of the partnership will be informed about particularly important matters for the intercessions.
- Sustain an exchange on the everyday life in our churches. Information regarding the partnership and pertinent links will be posted on the respective websites.
- Promote the exchange of pastors, church staff, and parishioners with regard to common possibilities for education and ongoing education, retreats, and congregational life.
- Promote the exchange of volunteers between the United Church of Christ New York Conference and the Church Deanery of Berlin City Center.

Addendum:

Details on how this agreement can be applied and kept in the six years to come will be explained in the addendum.

After six years, we will decide whether the partnership can be continued in the present manner.

Church Deanery of Berlin City Center

Date

New York Conference

Date