

CUIC Notes

May, 2006

NEW LEADERSHIP ELECTED FOR CHURCHES UNITING IN CHRIST

Rev. Patrice Rosner Begins June 5 in St. Louis

March 18, 2006 – Meeting in Charlotte, N.C., upon the invitation of Bishop George W. C. Walker, Sr., Senior Bishop of the AME Zion Church, the Coordinating Council of Churches Uniting in Christ elected a new Director and new officers to lead this major ecumenical initiative involving nine denominations in the U.S. into the future.

The Rev. Patrice L. Rosner, Associate General Secretary for the Education and Leadership Ministries Commission of the National Council of Churches in the USA, was elected as the new Director of CUIC, to begin her work on June 5, 2006. As Director, she will serve as the primary staff to CUIC, with responsibilities to help the member communions in living out their relationship in seeking full communion in mission, service, worship and ministry. She will coordinate the work of CUIC, interpret its vision, and give leadership to shaping opportunities for a visible witness of the churches in the world, especially in relation to overcoming racism.

The Rev. Rosner brings a strong background of ecumenical experience to this new position, especially in the areas of Christian education and leadership development. In her work with the National Council of Churches these past six years, she has coordinated thirteen program committees involving more than 22 communions and agencies. She has given leadership in the areas of dismantling systemic institutional racism, preparing Bible study curriculum, developing programs for a variety of age levels and settings and continuing education for pastors and lay leaders, and ecumenical formation of youth and young adults.

In accepting her call to this position, the Rev. Rosner, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) said, "It both humbles me and excites me to be called to give leadership to CUIC, an initiative so rich with possibilities for living into the vision of seeking full visible unity in Christ. With these communions I hold a fervent hope that in this next year, through prayer, discernment, and dialogue with one another, the CUIC partners will come to consensus in their proposal for the mutual recognition and mutual reconciliation of ordained ministries. The communions have so many gifts to give to and receive from one another."

"At the same time, I firmly believe it is critical for the future of CUIC for its vision to be manifested in the life of congregations and in regional contexts and to be directed toward fulfilling its mission-mandate of overcoming racism and white privilege both within its own structure, in the life of the churches, and in society," Rosner added.

Other significant actions taken during this meeting of the Coordinating Council include:

- election of new officers for CUIC: as president, the Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb, pastor of a Disciples congregation in St. Louis; as Vice President, Bishop Ronald Cunningham, Ecumenical Officer for the C.M.E. Church; as secretary, Mr. Abraham Wright, a lay person in the International Council of Community Churches and teacher in Beltsville, MD; and as treasurer, Mr. James Tse, an Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and accountant in New York;
- approval of a revised time-line in the process for the Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries that will now include the hosting of a special consultation on the issues of the "Historic Episkope" in early October 2006;
- decision to move forward in preparing a letter to be signed by all CUIC heads of communion on the critical issue of the Voting Rights Act in late October 2006; and,
- approval of the relocation of the CUIC office from Cleveland, Ohio, to St. Louis, Missouri in June.

A highlight of this meeting was in joining with a "packed house" at the Little Rock AME Zion Church in Charlotte, the Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Pastor, on Tuesday evening, March 14, for a celebration of the Eucharist and preaching by Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr., current vice president of CUIC, on the topic "When Jesus and the Church Are Divided."

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Dipko, who has been serving as the interim Director of CUIC since last November, was

thanked for his leadership during this time of transition – especially in bringing together a deep passion for the unity of the Church and racial justice with his experience in organizational acumen and institutional development.

Assuming the role of president for CUIC over the next two years, Dr. Webb expressed thanks to the Rev. C. Dana Krutz for his leadership as president the past years. She concluded the meeting stating, “The next 12 months promises to be the time in which Churches Uniting in Christ will begin to live into the commitments and possibility we have been envisioning for years. Many pieces are being put in place for just such an occurrence.”

When the Church and the Lord are Divided

Mark 6:30-44

A Sermon Preached at Little Rock African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Charlotte, North Carolina
Coordinating Council, Churches Uniting in Christ
March 14, 2006

The Rt. Reverend E. Earl McCloud, Jr.
Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Church

This is a familiar story. You have either told this story or you have heard it told. Some of you have taught this story in Sunday school or church school or you have heard it taught.

What is most remembered about the story is a little boy; some have called him a lad, who has two fish and five loaves. We even came up with another cliché from this story which says, “Little becomes much, when you place it in the master’s hand.” We may not believe the second story, but most of us are guilty of having recited the cliché.

This is a very difficult sermon for me, because my heart is troubled by much of the work that has been done here or that needs to be done before we leave. I have discovered, however, that not only does the Lord do miracles with fish and bread, the Lord does miracles with the minds and hearts of people.

From reading verse 35 of this text in the new international version of the Bible, it says, “by this time, it was late in the day.” There is an indication that the day is almost gone. Verse 35 lets us know that the apostles have been at this task for a while.

This reminds me of COCU and CUIC, as often called by Bishop Cunningham, that for us it’s getting late in the day. We have been at this task for more than thirty years now, and I am concerned about our report. What are we doing? Where are we going? How do we plan to get there? At least for the apostles in this text, they are excited about their work. They want Jesus to know what they have been doing.

No matter what we do or say, there are some major differences in the black church in America and the white church. We often say that Sunday mornings in America at church time is the most racist time in our lives, but we celebrate. So for these moments that are mine, to say this word for the Lord, permit me to draw your attention to this little story and make just a two or three points.

I. In the text, Mark records that the apostles are at the meeting place, excited about their teachings and the accomplishments of that day. Not only were they excited, they were encouraged and elated. They were seeing the fruits of their labors. Jesus comes to them and says, come off by yourselves, let’s take some rest.

It is a good thing, every once in a while to rest. Go off by yourself. Relax and refresh. You will discover that things look different when you are rested. Tasks seem less difficult when you are rested. Problems are more approachable when you are not tired. People are more tolerable when you are rested.

Jesus says to his apostles let’s go off to ourselves and get some rest. Some versions of the holy scripture say they get in a boat and head off to a remote place. May I suggest to those of you who are not familiar with remote places, Jesus did not intend to go to visit the Desperate Housewives or to participate in the American Idol show.

Notice if you will, that the people are excited about what’s going on, in the presence of Jesus and his apostles. They are so excited, that they see where Jesus is going and, the text says, they get ahead of Jesus which suggests to me, they get to the place where Jesus is going before Jesus gets there. They need Jesus so much they are in this remote place waiting on him to fix their needs.

Maybe I ought tell you that a remote place is not the Charlotte University Place Hilton Hotel.

A remote place is not 475 Riverside Drive in New York City.

Can I tell you that a remote place is not the United Methodist Retreat Center in North Atlanta.

The text says they went off to a remote place.

I have discovered that when people really need the Lord,

When people really want to be with the Lord,

When people really want to hear the message of the Lord,

They will go to some remote places.

Grandmothers used to call those places their prayer closets.

Slaves called those places “down by the river.”

Choirs used to sing about those places, “I want to go, where Jesus is.”

Anywhere Jesus is is a better place than where I am.
So Jesus takes his disciples off to a remote place.

Permit me to tabernacle in this remote place for another brief moment. I am not convinced yet, that we are all familiar with remote places.

Remote places do not have cell phones and fax machines.
Remote places do not have wireless connections.
Remote places do not have carpet on the floor.
Jesus wanted to take them to another place.

Langston Hughes wrote about remote places in his poem when he said, "Life for me ain't been no crystal stair, there have been some rough places. Sometimes the benches had splinters in them."

Sometimes when I throw up both my hands and holler, it's because I've been in some remote places.

Nobody but you Lord, could have brought me from where you brought me.
Nobody but you Lord, could have blessed me like you blessed me.
Nobody but you Lord, can deliver me
Nobody but you Lord, can save me.

II. Let me rush now, lest I keep you too long. While Jesus is in this remote place, with his apostles and all the people who have been following that day, something special happens. The apostles said, it's late in the day.....pronounce the benediction and let these people go so they can get some supper.

Jesus said, you feed them.

Notice if you will that the apostles are ready to send the people away and Jesus says, you feed them.

You missed that, so I need to run that past you again.
The apostles said, give the benediction so these people can go get some supper.
The apostles are saying, send them away.
Jesus is saying, you feed them.

Something is wrong when Jesus says, "come"...And when the church says, "go."

Can I tell you that the Lord wants the church to be pregnant with possibilities
and the church is taking birth control pills.
This is not about pregnancy, it's about birth.
The apostles said, it's going to cost a fortune to feed this crowd supper.
Jesus said, have them sit down.
Remember if you will that John may have said it best when he said, you must be born again.
God is ready to bless us, but we are still trying to describe our blessing.

Garry Wills, in his book "What Jesus Meant," makes some pretty bold claims about why the church today is so different from the church Jesus established. Wills says, in the days of Jesus, when you read through the gospel, that's exactly the opposite of what Jesus said.

Jesus said, "it's all a matter of how your heart is."

When you really study the ministry of Jesus, you will discover that Jesus broke every possible religious rule of his time.

He broke the Sabbath.
He consorted with unclean people.
Everything that could offend external religion, Jesus did.
We must do like Jesus did rather than trying to interpret what Jesus did.

We are hanging out in the wrong places. If we want to save sinners, we need to hang out with more sinners.

If we want to eradicate poverty, we have to experience poverty in places other than pictures on the television.

If you want to see what it feels like to be the minority, we've got to stop trying to be on top all the time.

The church today talks the talk, but it has not learned to walk the walk.

It's time now for white Christians to march.

Black America has marched too long,

Suffered too much,

Sacrificed too many days,

Lost too much blood

Had too many funerals.

If we want to experience what Jesus suggests within Churches Uniting in Christ, we've got to take the Jesus test.

There is a story told about a woman who bought a new vacuum cleaner and was excited about using it for the first time. She got it home, took it out of the box. Read all of the instructions and familiarized herself with all of the features of her new vacuum cleaner and was ready. She installed a new bag into the cleaner to catch the trash and was ready to go.

The story said, she went over her house. Each room, inch by inch. After she had finished, she noticed that the floors did not look quite as good as she expected them to look. So she decided that something must have been wrong, so she went over the floors again. The floors still did not look quite as good as she hoped they would and now she was angry.

She was ready to take the vacuum cleaner back. She decided to call the store first and complain to the salesperson who reviewed everything with her. They discovered that she had never plugged her vacuum cleaner into the electrical outlet.

It would be a sad thing for Churches Uniting in Christ to go another thirty years and discover we are not plugged into the Lord. It would be sad if we had to change our name again, only to discover that we are still not plugged into the Lord. It would be sad if we elected another executive director and still not be plugged into the Lord. It would be sad if we continue our concerns about who serves communion and we are not plugged into the Lord.

A Prayer for Unity

Gerald Moede – General Secretary COCU (1974-1988)

Gracious and Good God: We thank you for your patience and presence with us during these long years of work toward unity. Our earnest desire has been to manifest the oneness you have given us, and which you expect of us.

Forgive us where we have fallen short in accomplishing this task, where our perceptions or ambitions have prevented us from understanding and obeying your will.

We ask strength and insight as we attempt to complete this journey toward unity in Churches Uniting in Christ. Remind us that this pilgrimage toward unity is a response to your will that we be visibly one, as Jesus prayed. We acknowledge that all of us have been given gifts in worship, ministry, and mission, even in our separation. Your Church will be a more authentic witness in mission to the world as we share these enrichments with each other.

Jesus asked that his followers be peacemakers, so we intend that our efforts be aimed at making peace everywhere, especially in the Church. May our strivings be directed by the goal of reconciliation, which he made possible in his work among us.

We pray this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, who grants and provides our unity in Him. Amen.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb

Churches Uniting in Christ is at a precious moment in ecumenical history. For over 45 years leaders of nine American communions have given their best thoughtfulness, study, prayer, and perseverance to find the means of drawing these churches together so a common witness may be strengthened.

Key to this process has been recognizing and reconciling the ministries of all nine communions. The seventh draft of a document addressing this issue has now been in the hands of the member and partner churches for some months. Each church developed a process of feedback. Within days the Ministry Task Force (led by the Rev. A. Guy Waldrop) of Churches Uniting in Christ will begin to receive the reports of the member communions.

The Ministry Task Force will then begin what is hoped to be their last re-write! A final document to be presented for vote by the member communions is promised within months but not later than January 2007. We are oh-so-close to something we have yearned for in decades.

In October a Consultation on Episkope will be another step in the process of our own education and development. The diverse forms of ministerial oversight have been stumbling blocks within our discussions about the reconciliation of ministries. The landmark shift in discussions now centers on the reality that there is unity in the concept of episkope and a new appreciation and acceptance of the variety of forms that it takes and has taken. The Consultation promises to sort through these issues and provide some rich resources for our communions to use as we study and vote on The Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ministries.

While the Ministry Task Force is diligent in its work, the other two Task Forces of CUIC are meeting and generating greater united witness among us. The Racial Justice Task Force, now led by acting Chair, the Rev. Dr. Taylor T. Thompson, will continue to seek ways for our nine churches and partner communions to work together in dismantling systemic racism. Heads of all nine communions will be meeting together in New York on October 24, 2006 to call for the reinstatement of the Voting Rights Act and the possibility of making it permanent. There are a myriad of other ways we will find to work together, rather than each of us attempting to 're-invent the wheel' to combat racism and other justice issues and vicious ills in American society.

The Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force, led by the Rev. Katherine Reeves until last month and now Chaired by the Rev. Rebecca J. Tollefson, is trying to invigorate communities to start CUIC cadres. There are some wonderful success stories around the country and the Task Force is using those as incentives for other cities and regions. At a recent meeting in Louisville, the Task

Force re-prioritized its work. A separate article summarizes this progress.

When the shift was made from COCU to CUIC, we envisioned a move from a consulting group to active ministry teams. Those teams (Task Forces) are now energized and beginning to see results. This year, I believe, we will be celebrating major accomplishments in all three arenas.

Our Interim Director, the Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Dipko, has oiled the wheels well! His gifts of administration, vision, and pastoral care set the stage for a meeting of the Coordinating Council two months ago where every church had representatives (the first such incidence in several years). He has also prepared the way for our new Director, the Rev. Patrice Rosner, to continue the development and energizing of the Task Forces.

We are in a precious and exciting moment in the American ecumenical movement!

MINISTRY TASK FORCE

The Rev. A. Guy Waldrop, Chairperson

Following the inauguration of CUIC on January 20, 2002 the Coordinating Council appointed a Ministry Task Force to lead the nine partner churches “to move toward the day when ordained ministers are mutually recognized and reconciled in a relationship of full communion.”

The Ministry Task Force has now worked for three years using the foundational documents of CUIC (the *COCU Consensus* and *Churches in Covenant Communion* as well as the World Council of Churches Faith and Order text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*) as guides to write “Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ministries”. The assignment to the Ministry Task Force by the nine member communions was to build on the forty years of common agreements about ministry and the various gifts of each church.

In June 2005 the Ministry Task Force sent the seventh draft of the “Ministry Document” to each of the nine member communions and the two partner communions for discussion and feedback. For ten months the CUIC churches have studied the “Document” and held feedback sessions with lay leaders, ministers, scholars and denominational officers. Each communion was asked to send its summary report to the Ministry Task Force by mid-May, 2006.

In addition to the responses of the nine communions, the Ministry Task Force asked one of its members, the Rev. Rollin Russell, to lead inter-communion study and discussion groups on the “Ministry Document”. He led nine gatherings hosted by seminaries, council of churches or other ecumenical groups in places like Greensboro, NC; Denver, CO; Louisville, KY; St. Louis, MO, Kansas City, MO; Duke, NC, and Minneapolis, MN. Dan Krutz also led a session in Lafayette, LA. The reports from each communion and the inter-communion reports will be reviewed by the Ministry Task Force in June to discern the primary reported affirmations and concerns from the churches. If revisions need to be made to the “Ministry Document” the drafting team will go to work and present another draft to the Ministry Task Force in November 2006.

Upon the recommendation of the Episcopal Church/Presbyterian Church (USA) Bilateral, CUIC will hold a Consultation on Episkope in St. Louis October 2-4, 2006. The purpose is to help our churches understand the different expression of historic and corporate episkope, the different gifts of ministry which CUIC churches bring, the historic and contemporary implications of the historic episcopate for racial justice, and the relationship between the historic episcopate and apostolic succession. The insights from this “Consultation” will also be considered by the Ministry Task Force and may influence the next edition of the “Ministry Document”.

The next edition of the “Ministry Document” will be sent to the CUIC member and partner communions early in 2007. At this time each member communion will be asked to vote to approve the “Document” by its highest legislative authority by the end of 2010.

Introducing New Chair of the Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force

The Rev. Rebecca J. Tollefson, Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches since 1997, has been named the Chairperson of the Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force of the Churches Uniting in Christ. Rev. Tollefson is an Iowa native and graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She served for 10 years in the parish ministry, and from 1987 to 1991 was the Director of the Commission on Faith and Order of the Minnesota Council of Churches. She joined the PC (U.S.A) national staff in 1991, first as Associate for Women Employed by the Church,

and then as an Associate working primarily with placement of clergy and lay professionals. She has been a member of the Local and Regional Task Force of CUIIC since 2002.

Rebecca serves in various capacities in the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.), such as the Co-Moderator of the Justice for Women Committee; a member of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley's Justice for Women Committee; and as a consultant/educator on clergy sexual misconduct of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley. She has served the church in many ways: as worship coordinator for the PC (U.S.A.) General Assembly in 2002; as board member of the Coalition on Religion in Appalachia; as an Alternate Delegate to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting in Accra, Ghana, 2004; as Bible study leader for Presbyterian Women's Churchwide Coordinating Team; as a member of the National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff.

Her commitment to ecumenism and her administrative capabilities have served her well as the Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches, where she works tirelessly to bring the 18 member denominations and 28 judicatories together in more creative and vital ways.

The Voting Rights Act: Why Support It?

**The Rev. Dr. Taylor T. Thompson, Chair
Racial Justice Task Force**

The call to Churches Uniting In Christ is to share in the conscience-raising of our nation, so that every American will have the God given right to vote. The following paragraph, from National Council of Churches resources sets the context and the related news release explains the urgency of making the Voting Rights Act permanent.

"The Voting Rights Act, adopted initially in 1965 and extended in 1970, 1975, and 1982, is generally considered the most successful piece of civil rights legislation ever adopted by the United States Congress. The Act codifies and effectuates the 15th Amendment's permanent guarantee that, throughout the nation, no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color. In addition, the Act contains several special provisions that impose even more stringent requirements in certain jurisdictions throughout the country. However, the Voting Rights Act, as amended, expires in 2007."

Adopted at a time when African Americans were substantially disfranchised in many Southern states, the Act employed measures to restore the right to vote that intruded in matters previously reserved to the individual states. Today, we realize that the Act speaks to the rights of African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics and other minorities.

CUIIC is appreciative of the United States House and Senate Judiciary Committees for the introduction of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 (H.R. 9/S. 2703), which will renew and restore expiring provisions of the law that have protected the fundamental rights of all Americans to vote for decades. At a meeting of the Heads of Communion of member and partner churches of CUIIC on October 24, 2006 in New York, a pastoral letter supporting the extension of this legislation will be presented for their signatures. Advocacy for the Voting Rights Act is one expression of the CUIIC's "Call to Commitment and Action to Combat Racism," approved by the Eighteenth Plenary of the Consultation on Church Union in 1999.

NCC urges Congress to renew Voting Rights Act of 1965

Washington, May 5, 2006 – The National Council of Churches USA applauds the House and Senate Judiciary Committees for the introduction of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 (H.R. 9/S. 2703), which will renew and restore expiring provisions of the law that has protected the fundamental rights of all Americans to vote for decades.

In the spirit of Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, three Christian women of deep and abiding faith who worked tirelessly to guarantee that no American would have their civil or human rights violated; we strongly urge Members of Congress to pass this legislation without delay.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was groundbreaking legislation that is considered the most effective civil rights legislation in our history. It represents for us a moment when American democracy was at its best and every citizen was finally allowed to fully participate in our society regardless of the color of their skin.

As Christians, principles of justice and righteousness are foundational principles of our faith. We believe that all people have human worth and dignity. Discriminating against people through policies or practices that deny them their right to vote is unjust and immoral. Although strides have been made to eliminate discrimination, disparity and

inequality continue to plague our society, especially for racial, ethnic and language minorities. This is not the time for Congress to begin to dilute voting rights when we know that discriminatory practices persist in hindering Americans trying to cast their ballots. By promptly passing this legislation, Congress will insure the protection of one of the most basic rights of a free, democratic society—the right to vote.

Parting words from Bobbi Perkins-White, office manager:

Being a part of the CUIC staff for the past three years has been a real privilege for me. I remember being in college and reading an exciting story in Time magazine about a proposal to unite major Protestant denominations. Over the years following I was a sideline supporter of the effort without knowing much of the details. As an elder delegate in 2001 to the 113th General Assembly (PCUSA) I voted on the proposal to form a new vision called Churches Uniting in Christ. Little did I know then the part I was to play. I was only vaguely aware that the office was located in Cleveland until the spring of 2003 when I found myself in need of a new job and saw the ad in the local paper for an administrative assistant for CUIC. I knew at that moment that was my job.

While I think I have always possessed an ecumenical spirit, I have very much enjoyed meeting and learning from people who know so much more about it than I do. Becoming better acquainted with other communions has been a real blessing. I have tried to become a tireless advocate in my Congregation and Presbytery for doing things ecumenically whenever possible.

Blessings to all as we continue in the important work of ecumenism.

THANK YOU AND FAREWELL

The Rev. Thomas E. Dipko, Ph.D.

Entering the stream of Churches Uniting in Christ last November was as close to white-water rafting as I have come in many years! The privileges and demands of serving as Interim Director are not for the faint of heart. Whatever progress we have made in these seven months is surely a gift of the Holy Spirit and the consequence of the dedicated leadership of the Coordinating Council, the Task Forces, the Ecumenical Officers of our communions and Bobbi White, our devoted and faithful Administrative Assistant in the CUIC office.

During this season of transition we held a grand meeting of the Coordinating Council in Charlotte, NC, and meetings of both the Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force (Louisville) and the Ministry Task Force (Baltimore). The next meeting of the Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force will be held August 27-29, 2006 in Kansas City, KA. Our Racial Justice Task Force is now reorganized and has set its next meeting for September 11-12, 2006 at a site yet to be selected. For further information about the very active life of our Task Forces, please read the related articles in this issue of CUIC Notes and review our web site www.cuicinfo.org.

At the time of the publication of this issue, five of our nine member communions have submitted their official responses to the Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ministries text. This material has been forwarded to all members of the Ministry Task Force and will be studied with great care during its meeting in Baltimore (June 1-2, 2006). A summary of inter-communion study group responses has also been distributed to the Task Force. A drafting team will do further work on the text in time for an additional meeting of the Task Force November 1-3, 2006.

In addition to our Task Forces, a new Planning Committee has been at work since April preparing for a Consultation on Episkope to be held October 2-5, 2006 in St. Louis. We are in debt to the Rev. Dr. Mark Wilhelm, ELCA, for his willingness to serve as Chair of this group. The Consultation was proposed by the Episcopal Church - Presbyterian Church (USA) Bilateral, recommended by our Ministry Task Force and approved by the Coordinating Council. Participants will include the Bilateral Working Group, the Task Force on Ministry, the Coordinating Council, the Ecumenical Officers of member and partner communions and invited scholars. The papers presented will be published following the event.

The office of CUIC at Church House (UCC) in Cleveland will close on Wednesday, May 31, 2006. The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb, President of CUIC, will preach at a closing worship service in the Amistad Chapel on that day. The United Church of Christ will be thanked for its gracious and generous hospitality during the last four years. The new phone number, when it is available, will be published on our web site. The Rev. Patrice Rosner, our new Director, will begin her ministry on Monday, June 5, 2006 in our relocated office on the campus of Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

Thank you for inviting me to serve as Interim Director and for supporting me in the endeavors we have shared in common. It is my prayer that God will continue to bless Churches Uniting in Christ with lavish grace as the member and partner churches seek ways to invite into their lives the full communion that remains the vision of the COCU-

CUIC movement as it approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2010.

CUIC NOTES is a publication of Churches Uniting in Christ
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