

INTERCULTURAL & MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES WORKING GROUP

Annual Report 2019

The Intercultural and Multicultural Ministries (IMM) Working Group believes that the cultural, linguistical and ethnic diversity of our communities is a blessing from God and it celebrates the joys and challenges of congregational ministry in the multicultural contexts of New Jersey. The IMM Working Group seeks to encourage conversations on culture, ethnicity, congregational life, liturgical practices and resources, and pastoral leadership, particularly as they intersect with other issues, such as language, immigration, LGBTQIA+ rights, poverty, and climate justice.

The IMM Working Group's discussions include specific challenges that immigrant congregations, congregations of color and congregations with mixed ethnic groups face in a predominately white Association. It also looks at the ways that they can impact on the institutional life of the New Jersey Association. The IMM Working Group is developing ways to work collaboratively with the Church Vitality Working Group and Social Justice Task Force which share its commitment to support local congregations and clergy to better serve the needs of God's people.

The Working Group is grateful to have had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop during the fall semi-annual Association meeting, held at St. Paul's Church in Milltown. Under the theme of "just and inclusive love", meeting participants were invited to reflect upon various civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights milestones of the 20th century, and to consider ways in which these struggles continue to unfold today. The national setting of the United Church of Christ also continues to provide valuable resources for thinking about multiculturalism; Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer's recent letter on white privilege is a great example of this, and can be accessed at:
http://www.ucc.org/commentary_dorhauer_privilege_comes_with_power_use_it_to_make_a_difference_04202018

The meetings of the IMM Working Group are open to any member of the New Jersey Association, and it is also available to serve as a resource for individuals or congregations.

Faithfully yours,
Rev. James DeBoer
Rev. Ruth Harvey
Rev. Hyo-Jung Kim
Rev. Damáris Ortega