



National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! This letter comes with greetings from the 35 member communions of the National Council of Churches—and with an invitation.

The National Council of Churches is probably best known for its sponsorship of Bible translation (the RSV and NRSV) and for its work on behalf of justice and peace. The Council, however, is much more than such activities, important as they are. It is, in the words of its Constitution, “a community of communions,” a fellowship whose very existence offers a sign of hope in a world so often fragmented by competing interests and fearful of differences. In this community of communions, Orthodox and Quakers sit together. In this community of communions, churches with roots in Africa, Asia, and Europe talk and work together. In this community of communions, gifts of the Spirit are shared in order that the body of Christ might be built up in love.

There are still real theological differences among us, differences significant enough that some of our member churches cannot yet break bread together at the table of our Lord. But we do affirm that all of us, in some mysterious way, belong to Christ; and this allows us to pray with and for one another.

This letter is an invitation to engage in such prayer in your own setting. Attached is a list of the National Council’s member churches, churches to which your own communion is related in the covenant of the Council. **We urge you to contact congregations/parishes from these other communions in your neighborhood (especially ones with which you may not have had much previous contact) in order to organize a time of fellowship and prayer together this spring.** The work of Christian unity requires leadership. Our fervent hope is that you will give such leadership in your local setting.

We are writing to you in the season of Lent, but the weeks leading up to Pentecost would also be a most appropriate time to celebrate our common commitment to Jesus Christ and to join in the universal Christian language—the language of prayer. Resources for this time of prayer together, including prayers for peace in our troubled world, will soon be available on the National Council of Churches website (www.nccusa.org), where you can also inform us of your participation. In addition, our churches have a rich store of resources that could be used in such gatherings.

May God bless you and your community as we move toward our annual celebrations of the resurrection of our Lord. May the Holy Spirit move among us all with the reconciling power made manifest on that first Easter morning.

Rev. Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
President