

HISPANIC-LATINO COMMITTEE

This year has seen tremendous growth in the awareness of persons and churches of the need for us as an Annual Conference to provide ministry to, with, and by our Hispanic/Latino neighbors.

Our mission as a committee is to **connect** churches and Hispanic/Latino communities, to **equip** churches and districts to respond to the needs of Hispanic/Latino persons, to **develop** places for worship, fellowship, radical hospitality and extravagant generosity, and to provide opportunities to **grow** in discipleship as individuals and communities.

The most exciting accomplishment this year has been the establishment of *Iglesia Metodista Unida Esperanza*, an Hispanic mission located in the former Arrington UMC building. Under the leadership of District Superintendent Charles Johnson, with the assistance of a number of churches in the Greenville District and the Office of Congregational Development, this vision has become a reality.

This summer a student from South Carolina with a passion for Hispanic ministry who is currently attending Duke Divinity School will serve as an intern at Mt. Hebron UMC. She will be working to help this congregation in the Columbia District develop a plan for ministry in their community. She will also be working with our Conference Congregational Specialist and coordinator to the Hispanic/Latino Ministry, Sonia Brum Ortigoza. Funding for this internship comes through the Office of Connectional Ministries.

At the request of this committee, the Committee on Equitable Compensation has developed a formula for supporting those persons working in Hispanic/Latino congregations. This comes in recognition of the fact that such ministries are missional in nature, and may take longer than usual to become self-sustaining.

The Committee has developed an Emergency Response Fund out of its own budget to provide humanitarian assistance to Hispanic/Latino persons in South Carolina who are in crisis, to provide food, clothing, and shelter on a short-term basis. Requests for use of this fund should be made through the District Office where the crisis situation has occurred.

We are currently developing a series of Strategic Planning Sessions to be held across the Conference during the next year. These sessions will provide assistance for pastors and local congregations to set priorities and leave with a concrete plan for engaging in ministry with Hispanic/Latino persons in their communities.

As you can see, the work of ministry among our Hispanic/Latino neighbors involves many more people than those who serve on this committee. It involves the cooperation of the entire network of committees and personnel who serve this Annual Conference. It is dependent upon the pastors and congregations who feel called to this ministry, and who are willing to give freely of themselves to build bridges of friendship and love.

Thank you for your continued support in making this ministry a priority of our Annual Conference.

Reverend Mary V. Teasley, Chairperson