7. Report of Christian Churches Together in the USA

At the October annual convocation of Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT), representatives from the member communions immersed themselves in the past and present of Montgomery, Ala., once a major center for the slave trade.

For its commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved people in what became the United States, the CCT group engaged in three days of learning and experience. The time together included a visit to the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and the related National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which memorializes the more than 4,400 African Americans who were lynched between 1877 and 1950.

The group also took a spiritual pilgrimage through parts of Montgomery significant to the slave trade, including the riverfront; Commerce St., where enslaved people were marched to auction; and Court Square, where they were sold. A number of historical markers, installed by Equal Justice Initiative, describe aspects of the slave trade and also tell the story of Rosa Parks. The walk culminated at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. was pastor.

The convocation included a screening of Emanuel and conversation with people associated with the making of the documentary about the massacre at Emanuel AME Church; panel discussions on race; and worship services led by each of the five “families” of CCT. Those families are Catholic, Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Black, Historic Protestant, and Orthodox.

CCT says its uniqueness is that it brings together Christian traditions that historically have stayed apart from each other. At a time when conversation across divides has become even more difficult, the members of CCT have been able to learn from each other through theological conversation on the topics of hunger and poverty, racism, immigration, and criminal justice.

Wendy McFadden represented the Church of the Brethren at the convocation.

David Steele, general secretary