

Report of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

Throughout 2021, the National Council of Churches in the USA (NCC) focused significant attention on the intersecting themes of racism, the coronavirus pandemic, and threats to American democracy.

In January, in partnership with the Washington Interfaith Staff Community, the NCC held a prayer service for members of Congress, their staffs, and all who work at and protect the US Capitol building, bearing witness to the trauma and destruction caused by the attack early last year.

The NCC hosted “Words of Comfort, Prayers for the People,” a February event to grieve and lament the tragic milestone of 500,000 deaths due to COVID-19. Prayers were also offered for those struggling with economic loss, first responders, and essential workers. The event closed on a note of hope for vaccine distribution and wholeness within our communities. This was followed in March by a webinar about vaccines and the role faith groups play in keeping communities safe.

After prayerful consideration, the governing board in April adopted a policy statement on “The Dangers of Christian Nationalism in the United States,” stating that the contemporary Christian nationalist movement is of great concern to the NCC and all Americans committed to justice and peace. The board also adopted a “Resolution Against Asian Pacific Islander Hate.”

Throughout the summer, the council sponsored multiple dialogue series addressing key NCC themes. An extended and sacred conversation about white privilege helped attendees to move toward the beloved community. Faith leaders presented workshops about spiritual practices and their role in sustaining the work for justice. The NCC faithfully addressed unfolding events, such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the treatment of Haitians at the US border, voting rights protections, and the Build Back Better Act and H.R. 40.

At its October meeting, the governing board approved the NRSVue, an updated edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The council had commissioned the Society of Biblical Literature to carry out the project. The board also, for the first time, elected all women as officers; three of the four are women of color.

With the theme “In New Wineskins: From Pandemics to Possibilities to Promises,” the annual Christian Unity Gathering in October expressed hope in God’s promises for the year ahead.

David Steele, general secretary

Nathan Hosler, proxy