

What is a Partnership? In the United Church of Christ, a Partnership is understood to be a special covenanted relationship between two church bodies for the purpose of strengthening faith and understanding and serving Jesus Christ.

What kinds of Partnerships exist? They may exist at the National, Conference, or local church level:

- At the National level, the UCC is Partnered with churches all over the world. All UCC mission work in foreign countries is done *only* at the invitation of the Partner Church, and *always* with their guidance.
- At the Conference level, the Connecticut Conference currently has two Partnerships. We are Partnered with the Mennonite Churches in Columbia. We are also Partnered with the Kyung-ki Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. (A Presbytery is similar in size and function to a UCC Conference.) This Partnership, begun in 1992, is now in its third term, and has included several exchanges of delegations consisting of clergy, lay people, and youth. Visits have been made for special meetings and events, and several special youth camps have been held.
- At the local church level, individual churches establish Partnerships with other local churches. These Partnered churches exchange information about themselves and their activities, and keep each other in prayer. They may also exchange gifts or send delegations (clergy and/or lay) to each other's church. These visits may be social or practical/mission-oriented in nature.

What is the basic purpose of a local church Partnership? A local church Partnership is a covenanted relationship between two churches. It is a commitment to build a relationship with each other, to learn about each other's culture, and to grow in faith.

How much does it cost? There is no cost to Partner with a Korean Church, nor is there any expectation that either Partner would make financial gifts to the other. Typical expenses associated with Partnerships would include postage for letters and packages, gifts presented when delegations visit, and hospitality when a delegation visits.

Partners keep the lines of communication open:

- Send greeting cards and small gifts at Christmastime or for other special events in their congregational life, e.g. the installation of a new pastor, new building construction, etc.
- Send photos of church members, photo directories, etc. Be sure to include an explanation of what is being sent to them.
- Use email to keep each other updated.
- Exchange individual email lists and match up individuals to create email-pals.
- Match up Sunday School classes or individual students to create email-pals.

Remember to be patient – mail may take awhile, and even email needs to be translated once it is received, and translated back again before a reply is sent.

Partners visit each other - Almost every year, the Korean Partnership Committee sponsors various opportunities to travel to South Korea to visit our Partner churches. Each April we send delegates to the Kyung-Ki Presbytery's annual meeting. Every four years (2002, 2006, 2010) the Connecticut Conference sponsors a Sacred Journey program, affording youths (Grades 9-12) the opportunity to visit their Partner churches. Every year or every two years, an adult group travels to Korea to visit their Partner churches. In addition to these conference-wide events, many Connecticut churches arrange for their own travel groups to visit their Partner churches in South Korea at various times during the year.

Although airfare is not inexpensive, our Partners are extremely gracious hosts, always providing us with a place to stay, meals, transportation, and plenty of activities during our visits. And most of them do speak some English! Your home church may be willing to hold fund-raising events to help defray costs, since as a visitor to Korea, you are also an ambassador from your church and from the Connecticut Conference. The return-on-investment from a first-hand visit cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Going to Korea, being there, meeting our friends, learning their ways of worship, learning their culture – these are the things that create lasting bonds of friendship and spiritual fraternity. A Partnership moves beyond the signed document only when people meet each other face-to-face.

Partners serve as hosts - Our Korean Partners travel to the United States more often than you might realize! Several Korean pastors attend the Connecticut Conference Annual Meeting each October. They send youths to visit us every four years (2004, 2008, 2012). And more recently, they have attended other special events, e.g. several Korean women attended the Women of the UCC conference in March 2002. Whenever our Partners visit, they need a place to stay, meals, someone to drive them to various activities throughout the state, someone to patiently work with them as they communicate with us (their English is much better than our Korean!).

Partners plan projects together - The Connecticut Conference is currently exploring possibilities for a joint-mission project with the Kyung-Ki Presbytery, and has hosted joint-discussions on various church-related issues. For individual churches, the next step beyond visiting and becoming friends is to work together as sisters and brothers in Christ. For example, your home church and your Partner church might share a passion for home-building, and might decide to work together (in Korea or in the U.S.) on a joint-mission project such as Habitat for Humanity.

Partners work hard to keep their Partnerships going - Whether through emails, gifts in the mail, visits, hosting, or projects, the most important thing is to keep the Partnership going. It takes time and effort to establish a Partnership separated by thousands of miles as well as language and cultural differences, but continued effort will inevitably draw your churches closer together. Be creative, and keep it going!

What about the language? Language can be a barrier, but in Korea, English is taught in the schools, and many people read and write some English. The Connecticut Conference has also developed some resources for translation that are available to local churches.

What does a church need to be a good Partner church? Faith – faith in Christ, in your church, in yourself, in your Partner church, in the Partnership itself – this is essential. Next comes patience - Partnerships require much time and energy. Endurance, flexibility, and humor are also useful qualities. Finally, you will need a willingness to be open to new ideas and new ways of looking at things; humility and a willingness to be taught new things; the ability to listen without judging, and speaking the truth in love.

How are Partnership visits set up? Local churches are free to set up their own visits (and several do so regularly). The Connecticut Conference Korean Partnership Committee and the Kyung-Ki Presbytery Overseas Mission Committee also coordinate several programs. In these programs, the participants (or their home churches) pay for their own airfare (est. \$1200 as of Fall 2002), and host churches provide all hospitality, including lodging, board, local transportation. When Koreans visit Connecticut, the Conference assists local host churches with some of the hospitality expenses, and always consults with local host churches regarding how many visitors they would like to host. On occasion, Connecticut churches who are not Partnered may have the opportunity to host Korean visitors as well.

How does the Connecticut Conference help? The Conference maintains the Korean Partnership Committee, which oversees the Korean Partnership. Local church members are welcome to join and participate in the work of the Committee. The Committee works with the Kyung-Ki Presbytery to connect Connecticut churches with Korean Partner churches. The Committee also plans special education programs where local churches can come together and share ideas. The Committee plans events each year involving delegations travelling between Korea and Connecticut. Speakers are available to local churches who are interested in learning more about the Korean Partnership.

How do we get started? Churches interested in establishing a Partnership with a Korean church should contact Rev. Linda Barnes 860-642-7887, Roger Babbitt 203-453-6554, or any member of the Korean Partnership Committee.

In order to match your church with a Korean church, we will need the following information:

- Name, address, and phone of your church
- Name, address, and phone of contact person for your church
- Size of your church congregation
- Church setting – urban, rural, suburban, etc.
- Special interests and concerns of your congregation and community (mission and otherwise)
- Groups that would be involved in the Partnership, e.g. church school, youth group, mission committee, women's group, adult bible study, choir, families, pastors, the entire congregation



Korean Partnership An Introduction and Guide

What is the Korean Partnership?

How does our Church become a Partner Church?

What do Partner Churches Do?

An introduction and guide to the Partnership between the churches of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC and the Kyung-Ki Presbytery of the PROK

