Spanish Language Ministries Group

The Spanish Language Ministries Group is a collaboration of all of the worshipping communities in the ECCT which have Latino/Hispanic ministries. We have, for the past six years, been on the cutting edge of “doing church differently,” presaging the Ministry Networks envisioned by TREC-CT. We exist in order to mutually support one another, to share resources, to encourage collaborations and partnerships of all kinds in service to our common mission, to lift up our Spanish-speaking and culturally Latino/Hispanic brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ, and to be mutually accountable in our use of resources. We ourselves are a resource to others who are part of God’s Mission in Spanish—not only within the ECCT, but throughout the Episcopal Church.

Here are some of the highlights of 2016 for our group:

- February meeting with The Rev. Anthony Guillen (officer for Latino/Hispanic Ministries in TEC) and his Council of Advice (a group of dynamic leaders from all over the United States working in Latino/Hispanic ministry.) Council members were able to bring us up to date on their activities, and they learned about what God is doing here in Connecticut. We shared a meal and had some wonderful networking.

- The installation at Christ Church Cathedral of The Very Rev. Miguelina Howell as the first ever Latina Dean of the Episcopal Church. The gathering of leaders not only from the United States, but also from abroad infused us all with the Spirit on this joyful occasion.

- Our group gave a workshop at Spring Training for God’s Mission in April, aimed at those who might want to become hospitable to Latino/Hispanic worshippers and neighbors. We had 9 participants from Lime Rock, West Haven, East Windsor, and other locations. We shared our stories of how Latino/Hispanic ministry works in Connecticut in a wide variety of situations.

- The CCC-Trinity Lime Rock Experiment. Christ Church Cathedral took a bus full of their congregants to spend a Sunday morning in April with Trinity Lime Rock.
The Cathedral demonstrated bilingual worship, complete with music! Members of our group facilitated a de-briefing after this experimental visitation. We hope that similar events will occur in the future to encourage and support those interested in reaching out to their Latino/Hispanic neighbors.

- **Ministry Network Convocation.** Several of us attended the event – many there to represent other Networks as well as ours. (Shows how collaboration can become a way of life.) Subsequently, The Rev. Dana Campbell, our Convener, was chosen to be one of the nine Ministry Network members of the new Mission Council.

- **Nuevo Amanacer (New Dawn) Conference at Kanuga, August 29-Sept. 2.** Nine of us from Connecticut attended: four lay attendees, three clergy attendees, and two clergy who were workshop Presenters. Our own Miguelina Howell presided over a wonderful Eucharist with the nearly 500 attendees. It was an important networking opportunity, as we established new connections with those within Province I and renewed our friendships with the members of the Council of Advice. A highlight of each day was the chance to eat meals with Latino/Hispanic Episcopalians from all over the country.

- **Transitions.** Of the ten worshipping communities which have actively participated in this group, three have had clergy transitions (St. John’s in Waterbury, St. Mark’s in New Britain, and St. Paul’s & St. James’ in New Haven.) However, in this kind of change our parishes mirrored the ECCT in general during 2016.

- **New bilingual leaders being discerned and raised up.** Our Group, having realized the difficulty which worshipping communities have in finding bilingual and culturally competent clergy leadership, has been working together with the ECCT Commission on Ministry (COM) to bring more Spanish speakers into the discernment process for Holy Orders. Nine lay people completed a yearlong discernment process and seven of them are being recommended to become Postulants. The discernment process utilized several clergy members of our Group as the leaders of its bilingual study program. COM will be working to
integrate those who will prepare for the Diaconate into current training programs, while those headed for Priesthood are already enrolled in online Seminary courses of study from Mexico and Madrid.

- Lay leadership training. In 2015 our Group created and led a Spanish version of the Spring Training for God’s Mission event which proved quite successful. Subsequently, members of our group met with the planning team for the 2016 Spring Training day, hoping to combine our efforts to make it accessible to both Spanish and English speakers. Unfortunately, this attempt did not yield the same results that our 2015 event achieved, so we will be trying other ways to gather our Spanish speaking lay folk in 2017 for training opportunities in Spanish.

- Financial Accountability. Since 2012 our member parishes have applied for ECCT funding together in a single Block Grant. This year we worked with Canon Louis Fuertes in developing a new grant application for our parishes seeking funding through the 2017 ECCT Budget. We have also set in place some new supports for our most financially challenged parishes, planning visitations with their Vestries—somewhat along the lines of the MRI visits. We hope to use our own knowledge and understanding of the unique situations and challenges of our parishes in helping them work towards sustainability.

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Dana L. Campbell, Convener

San Pablo y San Lucas, Bridgeport
St. John’s, Bridgeport
Christ Church, Ansonia
St. Paul & St. James, New Haven
Todos los Santos, Meriden

Iglesia Betania, Stamford
Buen Pastor, Hartford
Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford
St. John’s, Waterbury
San Marcos, New Britain