



2008 PW Global Exchange to Central and Eastern Europe

Joined and Knit Together in Love

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16, NRSV)

Presbyterian Women will focus on how the changing political climate of Central and Eastern Europe has affected women, the Church and the Roma¹ people by

- hearing the cries of our sisters and responding with compassion,
- working for the end of all forms of violence,
- advocating for the rights of women and children,
- supporting our global partners and
- allowing ourselves to be transformed by partnership experiences.

¹ The Roma people are itinerant ethnic groups in Europe, previously referred to in North America as Gypsies.

Background

Recovering from the effects of more than 70 years of communism, the people of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine are struggling to adjust to new economic, political and societal realities. The people of these countries must deal with rapid changes in education, health care, environmental issues and social equality.

The churches of Central and Eastern Europe are working to renew a sense of cooperation, mission, servant-leadership and lay involvement. Ministry to the Roma is a central mission in the region. Churches are developing faith communities for the Roma, while addressing the issues of discrimination, poverty and social separation.

Local issues

Czech Republic – Emerging from a long period in which religion has been a source of controversy and enmity, our Czech partners feel a need to move toward grace and healing.

Hungary – The problems of migrants, refugees and the trafficking of women and children are major concerns in Hungary. Our partners there are working to support the spiritual and community life of people who have lost their homeland.

Ukraine – In Ukraine, a nation of the former Soviet Union, multiple churches are reemerging after almost 75 years of state-sponsored atheism. Our mission partners are working to encourage cooperation between denominations and to build healthy connections with sister churches abroad.