

Minister for Credentialing and Lay School  
Report to the Western Reserve Association  
Fall Meeting, November 5, 2011

This has been a year of transition. Mabelle Miller and I have been working on shifting much of the administrative work of the Western Reserve Association from our Lakewood office to the Support Center in North Canton. She has now received the authorized minister files and Lay School Files and has been handling much of the record keeping functions.

#### Lay School

Gene McAfee has taken on the responsibility of the Dean and Ellen Palmer Marsey is Chair of the Lay School steering committee. Together they are working with Eastern Ohio Association Partners in Ministry to strengthen both programs through mutual collaboration. Brian Burke has taken an active role in representing the committee and WRA in denominational conversations on licensed ministry training programs across the UCC. With the General Synod pronouncement on multiple paths to ministry, the role of local ministry training programs will become more critical in the future training of authorized ministers, and there is a concern for some standards and standardization.

#### Credentialing

The Credentialing working group has decided to have periodic support consultations for ordained pastors at least twice yearly, and make it a group event, rather than individual meetings. We have not been able to find enough volunteers to do the individual meetings, so this way of holding the consultations is proving to be more effective, and more useful to clergy as they have an opportunity to meet their WRA colleagues.

#### Interim Ministry

The Interim Ministers Group continues to meet faithfully on a monthly basis at Gerry's House. This group has been a source of support for each other, and a good way to network as we seek ways to support our local churches with interim ministers. There have been more churches seeking pastoral leadership this year than the previous year, so there has also been an increased need for interim ministers. Northeast Ohio is blessed with a number of trained interim pastors, something that other regions of the UCC don't have.

As Mabelle and I have been working on transitioning much of the administrative work to the Support Center, and I have been working with the committed leadership in WRA, I know that I am leaving matters in more capable hands than my own. I will complete my work with WRA at the end of this year and am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a faithful and amazing group of individuals. You are a blessing.

Joan Chiaki Ishibashi