

For my report for the Fall Meeting Report Books for EOA and WRA, I decided to submit the report I wrote for both Councils. Some of it has already happened - the EOA CE retreat, and the WRA Church in the World Environmental Justice event. But I believe it is relevant for all of us to contemplate as we move into our future working closely together.

Also, you will notice the titles of the groups mentioned for WRA are not the traditional Department titles. We have been living into a model of interest groups rather than elected groups for several years. Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team, Resource Ministry Team, Youth Advisory Council, Let's Talk Faith, Congregational Growth and Vitality Ministry Team are groups built on passion and interest rather than elected members. May we continue to build on this model.

COUNCIL REPORT EOA and WRA September, 2011

1. OCWM is dead
2. Our Church's Wider Mission is alive and well.
3. WHAT?

Now I know this is a rather unusual way to begin my report to our councils as we begin the program year. Much has happened over the summer -- groups have met, youth have been impacted by youth@synod, youth and young adults have once again made a difference in KY -- but I'll get to those items for each association very briefly in a minute.

The Stewardship and Finance Ministry Teams of the associations have struggled with how we move into this new year with challenges to our churches and to you, our association councils. We've had many successful programs:

- OCWM thank you dinners around the associations
- Worship service created to lift up mission within the worship setting still being offered to our churches
- Workshops on Inspiring Generosity, Stewardship, Personal Giving, and more
- Individual consultations with churches
- Presentation of OCWM certificates
- Workshops on new resources like Stewards in the Household of God
- Creation and distribution of "Associations are like roads" brochures
- Power point created and shared at our association meetings on narrative budget and where our OCWM dollars are spent
- GPS (Giving Performance Survey) offered to churches -- you can't move forward if you don't know where you are

And yet, despite all of those efforts and so much more, our associations are still struggling with budgets and dollars. Now I still believe in the theology of abundance -- we have so much in the way of talent and outreach and ministry and yes, dollars, in our two associations. I won't give in to the scarcity mindset. Yet the old methods and models of financial support don't seem to be working. So I believe our councils need to be challenged to take on this ministry with us. The ministry of money.

Now I know these discussions can't take place in a vacuum -- there are deep and profound conversations that need to take place regarding the vitality of our churches, the outreach into our communities is our mission to put people in pews or to reach people where they are in their personal lives outside the church - often to people who will never support the church but who need our Gospel voice.

And so -- OCWM **is dead**. I believe this method of supporting the ministry of the wider church is no longer a viable method! But the main questions are: what is vital in the wider church that we should be

supporting and what is the best method to financially support those ministries and how can we be in covenant with one another.

And yet -- Our **Church's Wider Mission is alive and well**. So much mission and ministry is happening in the wider setting.

In both associations: youth and adults were impacted by their General Synod experience this summer - just ask them. Nearly 50 youth, young adults, and adults made a difference in the mountains of KY and were immersed in the culture and traditions of that special place. It's Your Turn: Youth Leaders Lock-In will happen January 27 – 28 at the Church House in Cleveland co-chaired by Sharon Nelson and Mary Karlovec. And we'll be offering a Jr. High retreat on March 3 and 4 with the theme of Let Justice Roll -- following the programming of the Ohio Conference Sr. High Fall Youth Event Nov. 18 – 20 at Pilgrim Hills. This year EOA/WRA will provide advisors (one male, one female) in order to encourage youth whose churches don't have adults to accompany them and who don't have many youth to be able to attend. Watch Synergy, Netweaver and Epistle for information on these and more wider church ministries and mission. Our Stewardship team will be sharing some ideas for continuing programming in both associations.

In EOA -- the Dept. of Church and Education will be having their planning retreat next week at Pilgrim Hills. We'll be having a conversation with Joyce Oyler, the Ohio Conference Director of Outdoor Ministries. And we'll be planning for the coming year -- including ideas for how our churches can use the resolution passed at General Synod (and created by our own Sharon Nelson) on being in covenant with our youth workers.

In WRA -- Church in the World is trying a new format. The third and last event for this year will be held on Sept. 29th at Old South Church in Kirtland. The theme is Environmental Justice and will include information on fracking, and other environmental issues.

Events are being scheduled for educators and youth leaders.

Members in Discernment are being nurtured through their seminary experience

Districts are being encouraged to be active support places for authorized ministers

WHAT? It's time for us to take a good look at how we support the mission of the wider church. If OCWM is dead -- and no longer supports that which we feel is important -- how do we raise funds to support those ministries. Our Stewardship Teams await your wisdom.

Blessings,

Margaret Mills
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EOA and WRA