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Submission deadline for the next issue is Wednesday, February 22.

NEW THIS ISSUE



Plymouth Church UCC (2860 Coventry Rd, Shaker Heights) presents *American Choral Music* on Sunday, March 4 at 3PM. Frank Bianchi, Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus and Baldwin-Wallace Men's Chorus, will lead the choirs of Fairmount Presbyterian, First Baptist and Plymouth Churches. See the attached flier for more details.

Irshad Manji, an internationally acclaimed spokesperson for human rights and religious liberty, will speak at the City Club of Cleveland, Friday, March 2nd at noon. Her topic at the City Club is *America and Islam: Challenges Ahead*. Tickets \$30 (members \$18); call City Club 216-621-0082. For further information about this event you can call William Green at 216-548-5939. For more information about Professor Manji, please visit www.irshadmanji.com.

The Avon Lake United Church of Christ is offering a free, five-week class for family members and friends of those who live with mental illness. The class begins Wednesday, February 29, and concludes Wednesday, March 28. The class meets from 7-8PM each evening. While the class is free, pre-registration is required. Please call the church office (440-933-3241) or email: pastor@thealucc.org to register or for more information.

The Eastern Ohio Association is seeking an Interim Associate Minister. In the remaining months before a General Minister is called to serve the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations, the Interim Associate Minister will work collegially with the staff team with Acting Association Minister, Richard Plant, as team leader. Deadline for application is March 11. Please visit www.eoaucc.org or www.wraucc.org to see the job description.

The theme for the EOA/WRA Spring Meeting is *Planting New Seeds-Shovel Ready?* and will be held Saturday, May 5 at Middleburg Heights Community United Church of Christ, 7165 Big Creek Pkwy in Middleburg Heights. Join us for breakfast at 9AM, a hymn sing at 10:15AM and worship and study with Dr. Clinton McCann at 10:30AM. Displays will be available for your browsing pleasure. Registration is only \$15. We'll let you know when more information is being sent and posted online. Mark your calendar now!



Quick Links

Central Southeast Ohio Association
www.ocucc.org/cse/csea.htm

Eastern Ohio Association
www.eoaucc.org

Northwest Ohio Association
www.nwoa.org

Ohio Conference
www.ocucc.org

Southwest Ohio Northern Kentucky Association
www.sonkaucc.org

The United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org

Western Reserve Association
www.wraucc.org

Gerry's House Library
www.librarything.com/profile/gerryshouse

Weekly Seeds: A Free Bible Study
www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/weekly-seeds/

Your Life, Better
www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/your-life-better/

The Parish Paper: How to Manage Change Resistance. Please see the attached document. *The Parish Paper* is a wonderful resource to which the Ohio Conference has subscribed on behalf of all Ohio UCC churches. With the Conference subscription, we in local churches and the association have permission from the copyright holder to use the material per copyright restrictions. Each issue stands alone as a topic of interest and importance to being a living and growing congregation. Please distribute only in its unaltered entirety.

REMINDERS

The Annual Teeter Totter Marathon is being held at Middleburg Heights Community United Church of Christ (7165 Big Creek Pkwy, Middleburg Heights) on February 17th-19th. This 35+ year event raises funds for outreach while the youth "ride the boards" outside for 48 consecutive hours. Area youth are invited to come and participate. For more information contact Jane Lennon at 440-842-7743.

Immigration and border issues is the topic for discussion on Saturday, February 18. The WRA Church in the World group will be gathering and are inviting all interested persons to join in our time together. Edie Rasell, Minister for Economic Justice in the national setting of the UCC, will be sharing information on the wider church's role in the issue of immigration. Margaret Mills will be giving a brief overview of her sabbatical on border issues, local church involvement, what does it have to do with me?, and more. We will have a local church participant on how the issue has impacted a community here in northeast Ohio. It should be a rich and important time. Plan to join us from 9:30AM to 11:30AM at Church House, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland. For more information, contact Margaret Mills at 440-487-2549 or mmills@wraucc.org.



The Amici String Quartet, which includes Cleveland Orchestra members Mihi Hashizume, Takako Masame, violins; Lynne Ramsey, viola and Ralph Curry, violoncello will perform at The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ on Sunday, Feb. 19 at 3PM. The program will feature string quartets by Schubert (Quartettsatz in C minor, D. 703), Shostakovich (String Quartet No. 7 in F sharp minor, Op.108), and Mendelssohn (String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op.13). The concert, sponsored by Family Promise of Lorain County, is free and open to the public. Donations to benefit homeless families through Family Promise are welcomed at the concert. The First

Church in Oberlin, U.C.C. is located at 106 N. Main St. (corner of Main/SR58 and Lorain/SR511). For more information contact the Concert Committee Chair: Carol.Longsworth@oberlin.edu

Don't forget! Your yearbook form data is due to be entered online and copies sent to the Support Center by Friday, February 24. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl McGraw at 330-453-8178 x100 or cherylm@eoaucc.org.

Please plan to lift up theological education and the UCC Seminaries during worship on February 26 (or any Sunday that fits the worship schedule for your congregation). Liturgical resources are available on the CUE (Chicago, United, Eden) Seminaries Website: www.cueseminaries.org. If you would like worship bulletins, offering envelopes, or a 5-minute DVD about Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries that can be shown during worship, please contact CUE Seminaries Director, Kiely Todd Roska, kiely@cueseminaries.org or (651) 255-6121.

Food for Thought



For the Institutionalized

"Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord."

Excerpt from Psalm 102:12-28

Reflection by Quinn G. Caldwell (Stillspeaking Devotional)

Sooner or later, every churchy person gets sick of the church. They get burned out and wonder whether this is all worth it. If you ask, you will find out that the problem is not with God or faith, but with the church as an institution. It's not God that wore them out, it's being asked to serve on another committee. It's not following the Gospel that did it, it's being the only one that ever mows the lawn. It's too many events, too much email, too many evening meetings.

Many find themselves longing for New Testament times, back when we were a movement instead of an institution. One guy said to me that he would much prefer to have lived under Roman persecution, because dying in the arena for your faith felt meaningful—unlike the church meeting he had that night.

Institutions are a pain. They take lots of work and lots of maintenance. They can suck the life out of you, fast.

Movements are more fun. They are exciting, engaging, enlivening. They also tend not to last.

The reason you know anything about the faith is that once upon a time, somebody in the Jesus movement realized they needed to set up a system to pass the faith on to the future. They poured themselves into the resulting institution. They did it not for their own

poared themselves into the resulting institution. They did it not for their own gratification, but so that YOU would find out the truths they lived by. They measured "what was worth it" not only by their own sense of fulfillment, but by their hopes for you.

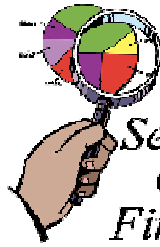
I'm not saying every committee meeting the church has ever held mattered; most of them didn't. I'm saying that all institutions are annoying, AND that the church is the one that brought your faith to you. So when you're feeling ground down by yours, right after you refuse to chair another task force, but before you decide to quit forever, just remember this: the work you're doing is at least as much for your grandkids as it is for you.

Prayer

God, save us from committee meetings. And even when I can't see it, grant that the work I do today might introduce you to future generations tomorrow. Amen.

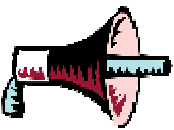
Let Justice Roll: the theme for the Junior High/Middle School Retreat at Pilgrim Hills on Saturday, March 3 from 10:00AM to Sunday, March 4 at 11:30AM. Keynote speakers and musicians include Andra Moran and Stephen Daniel King. The theme and format are following that of the Ohio Conference Sr. High Fall Youth Event. There will be small groups, free time, games, worship, and music. The cost is \$80 per person which includes all meals, snacks, lodging and program. For information contact Margaret Mills at 440-487-2549 or mmills@wraucc.org. Registration forms will be on the web site by Monday, Feb. 6th. Financial Assistance Requested. This retreat has some exciting things happening but we want to make it possible for all youth interested to be able to attend. Many churches aren't able to assist their youth in these events. If any of you out there have a desire to help fund this event to bring the cost down, we would be most grateful. Please contact Margaret Mills for information.

First Congregational UCC (41 E Jefferson St, Jefferson, OH) will host a half-day workshop called "Making Friends of Church Numbers" presented by the UCC Cornerstone Fund. The workshop will be March 10, 2012 from 9AM to 1PM with lunch provided. It is FREE and open to anyone involved in church finances in area UCC churches who would find it helpful: pastors, office managers, financial secretaries, treasurers, trustee chairs, moderators, consistory chairs, etc. RSVP the church office (440-576-4531) by March 5 with the number of people attending. For more details on the seminar, please visit cornerstonefund.org/learn/seminars.



Seminar on Church Finances

Day with God & Self, Sat., March 10, 9:30AM to 5PM. An opportunity to retreat from the noise and stress of the everyday. The day includes worship, an introduction to a spiritual discipline and plenty of time for silently experiencing God in the atmosphere of The Prettyman Center at Pilgrim Hills camp. Cost is \$30 for the day. Add \$40 if you would like to come the night before. You can register online at www.ocucc.org or call the Ohio Conference at 800-282-0740. For more information call Janet Burkhart at 330-682-3791.



Announcing!

A Periodic Support Consultation, "Pastoral Leadership in Anxious Times", will be held Tuesday, April 24 at Fairlawn West UCC (2095 W Market St, Akron). Authorized ministers who attend will have an opportunity to reflect with one another on what it means to lead anxious systems, how to practice self-care and to share experiences. This workshop satisfies the requirements of a Periodic Support Consultation which all authorized ministers are required to attend once every three years. Please see the attached flier and registration form. Deadline for registration is Wednesday, April 16.

Bainbridge Community United Church of Christ seeks a talented and motivated Choir Director to build, lead and inspire both our senior and junior choirs. We offer the opportunity for a committed musician to help shape and develop all aspects of our music program. This position is part time, with the candidate being available for Sunday morning worship, and an evening rehearsal, currently scheduled on Thursday. The Candidate will also be available for special services throughout the year. Send your resume to Bainbridge Community United Church of Christ, 17751 Chillicothe Rd, Chagrin Falls OH 44023 Attention Inner Church Committee, or e-mail to: bainbridgecommunity@gmail.com



CHOIR DIRECTOR



Acts 20:28, NIV

Be shepherds of the church of God ...

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