

SYNERGY

The Newsletter of the *Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations*

Synergy: "The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects."

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April 2011

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You are invited to...

The EOA/WRA Spring Gathering

Saturday, May 7th, 2011

This year's theme is "**Community and Unity**", and the day's activities include:



- Breakfast and fellowship
- Interesting displays
- Bible study and reflection
- Building connections with friends, old and new
- Sharing of local church successes and challenges (by church size)
- Lively worship

Come to Trinity UCC, Canton (3909 Blackburn Rd. NW, Canton, 44718) for a time of worship, reflection, and fellowship. Breakfast and sign-in begin at 8:30 am, and we'll conclude by noon. Registration is now available online. Cost: \$10, if registered by April 22nd; \$15 after April 22nd.

SEE INSERT FOR DETAILS!

2011 OHIO CONFERENCE ANNUAL GATHERING: June 10-11 at Heidelberg University at Tiffin. Take time away from the everyday to worship, learn, laugh, connect, recharge. Rev. Anthony Robinson is keynote and worship leader. www.ocucc.org

GENERAL SYNOD 2011: Imagine What's Possible with 3,500 of your UCC friends in Tampa, Florida! Come to the Twenty-eighth General Synod, July 1-5, go to www.ucc.org/synod for information including how to register and get housing.

JAPAN UPDATES: UCC and Global Ministries staff are monitoring the situation in Japan and seeking contact with partners and mission personnel across the impacted region. Updated information on the UCC's response can be found at: www.ucc.org/disaster



...AND THE PICTURES ON THIS PAGE ARE?

By Margaret Mills, Minister for Youth and Stewardship (EOA / WRA)

60 EOA/WRA Jr. Highs and adult advisors gathered at Pilgrim Hills on March 4



– 5 for a retreat on the theme AmazinGrace - which was the theme of the Ohio Conference Sr. High Fall Youth Event last November. After attaching pontoons to cars, building arks, and slogging through the flooded countryside -- we all arrived safely at Pilgrim Hills....2 detours, 1 alternate route, and various GPS adventures later. And yes, we played the AmazinGrace game OUTSIDE in the mud and drizzle. Thanks to all adults who participated as leaders and to our outstanding youth

who played the game good naturedly. Thanks also to Zak Mills who humors his mother by playing mandolin to Matilda the Gorilla. I especially want to thank the planning team: Dan Yetter, Belinda Lentz, Lindsey Robison, Marilyn Freeman, and Tricia McCurdy....and Bree Lee, one of the original creators of the game. SAVE THE DATES -- next year we'll be following the theme of the Sr. High Fall Youth Event LET JUSTICE ROLL at the Jr. High retreat on March 3 – 4, 2012.



At Templd Hills -- 16 educators and Partners in Education from around the Ohio Conference gathered to have conversation with Rev. Brenda Grauer and Rev. Mark Suriano on the emerging and emergent church and how we fit as part of the traditional church. It was truly a time of retreat as we got to know one another on Friday night, shared ideas and programs, discussed the emerging church, and generally had a relaxing

time. This has been a yearly gathering and we plan to continue with this event next March 16 – 17, 2012.



As we move into the future in our two associations - working more closely with shared staffing – we look to events such as these to help us negotiate the unknown. You see, these events and others like them have been practicing shared programs and staffing for several years. Rich Plant invited WRA to participate in the Jr. High/Confirmation retreats as I first began on EOA's staff. The educators have worked together for the past 7 years with combined educators and youth leaders gatherings - even playing Whirly Ball together. And if I had pictures of the two Stewardship and Finance Ministry Teams together at their afternoon retreat last week, I'd have put those on this page as well. We've been quietly having a great time sharing ideas and events between the two associations. I see even greater times in the years ahead.

Blessings,

Margaret

Pictures by Belinda Lentz and Shirley Weyrauch



Date	2011 YOUTH CALENDAR
April 9	EOA/WRA Faith Practices Workshop - St. John's UCC, Dover 9:00am—12:15pm
April 14	EOA/WRA Youth Leaders' Gathering - 10:00am to Noon with lunch together out in a great restaurant - Richfield United Church of Christ
May 7	EOA/WRA Spring Gathering – Trinity United Church of Christ, Canton
May 15—21	EOA/WRA Young Adult KY Work Camp - watch Netweaver and Epistle for more information
June 8 – 9	Ohio Conference JUSTICE LED TRAINING – Heidelberg University, Tiffin
June 10 – 11	Ohio Conference Annual Gathering
June 28 – July 7	EOA/WRA OPEN TO OHIO CONFERENCE Youth@Synod — it's getting close and it's time to let me know of interest. See related article.
July 30 – Aug. 6	EOA/WRA OPEN TO OHIO CONFERENCE Kentucky Happening - Work and Mission Immersion!
November 18 – 20	Ohio Conference Sr. High Fall Youth Event - Pilgrim Hills – Theme: "Let Justice Roll" Scripture: Amos 5: 24 "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Using Justice LED resources. Invited musician – Bryan Sirchio

For more information on any of the above, contact Margaret at mmills@wraucc.org or millsm92445@gmail.com

YOUTH@SYNOD Again there will be a program for youth at the 28th General Synod of the United Church of Christ in Tampa, FL. EOA/WRA will be taking a group of youth and young adults to Synod and to the youth@synod program. While the official youth@synod event is for Sr. High youth, EOA/WRA will be offering the opportunity for young adults to join the program by traveling together, staying together, and sharing the synod experience together. We'll be leaving the Cleveland area EARLY on Tuesday, June 28th and returning LATE on Thursday, July 7th. It's now time to let me know if you have an interest!! Please contact Margaret for a packet of information at mmills@wraucc.org or millsm92445@gmail.com or 440-487-2549. The cost will be around \$600.00.



TIME TO SIGN UP FOR SUMMER CAMP! 2011 Camp Registration is available now online at www.ocucc.org. Go to the Camp page and look to the right of the page for details.

YOUTH LEADER'S AND EDUCATOR'S EVENT: Thursday, April 14th at Richfield United Church of Christ. We'll gather from 10:00am-Noon for a time of catching up with colleagues, sharing resources, and conversation. We'll wrap up around noon and go to lunch for those who would like to. If you're planning on attending please email Brandy Bring at brandy@firstchurchoberlin.org.



BEYOND FORGIVENESS

By Rev. Joan Ishibashi

As we continue our Lenten journey, I wanted to point out a resource to you. It can complement your reflection during this time, but is not limited to Lent.



Atonement is a word we don't often use in our churches, although it is one of the core beliefs in our Christian tradition. Award-winning author, TV host and friend of the Western Reserve Association, Phil Cousineau, wanted to explore the concept of atonement and its power in real life situations. His new book, *Beyond Forgiveness, Reflections on Atonement: Healing the Past, Making Amends and Restoring Balance in Our Lives and World*, is a series of articles by people who have experienced the power of atonement and grace. It moves beyond a theological construct to a transformative moment, or way of living. Arun Gandhi writes about his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi. Azim Khamisa writes about reconciling with the man who murdered his son. These are just two thought provoking and inspiring stories from this book.

Phil has posted a companion website to the book, as well as a website with a study guide which can be used in an adult study group, or individual study. You can find these at www.beyondforgiveness.org and www.reflectionsonatonement.com/resources

Phil has given a number of workshops in N.E. Ohio and the Western Reserve Association. He will be returning later this year; we are currently working on the details of his visit. In the meantime, please check out his latest publication. For more information, contact Joan Ishibashi at jishibashi@wraucc.org.

OLD SOUTH UCC PRESENTS: *Evolution and Intelligent Design*

Dr. Simon Fitzpatrick, professor at John Carroll University, will lead this informative discussion in the *In the Public Square* series on Wednesday, April 27, 7-9pm at Old South United Church of Christ in Kirtland. This discussion is open to everyone and is free of charge.



For a very long time, the only explanation that was taken seriously by philosophers and scientists for the complexity and diversity of life on Earth was the thesis that it was the product of intelligent design. Then came Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, which provided an entirely natural explanation for the origins and development of biological organisms that required no role for a designer. Today, Darwin's theory is widely regarded as the most successful and strongly confirmed theory in all of science. However, not everyone is convinced. In particular, proponents of a new version of the intelligent design thesis have claimed that there are many features of the biological world that cannot be explained by Darwin's theory and must instead be the product of intelligent design. This discussion will provide an overview of the basics of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection and the evidence for it. It will survey the central arguments of the modern Intelligent Design movement and describe how biologists and philosophers of science have sought to rebut these arguments. Suggested (but by no means required) background reading list is available on the church web site www.oldsouthchurch.org.

Dr Simon Fitzpatrick is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at John Carroll University. He specializes in the philosophy of science, philosophy of mind and philosophy of biology. He was educated in the UK, receiving his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Sheffield and an MA and BA from the University of Nottingham.

Everyone is invited to this evening of education and discussion on April 27 when Dr. Simon Fitzpatrick presents *Evolution and Intelligent Design* at Old South UCC, 9802 Chillicothe Road, Kirtland. For more information, visit the church web site at www.oldsouthchurch.org or contact the church at 440-256-3329.

CHURCHES LIVING GREEN

Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights has implemented goals with their Green Initiative:



- Waste Reduction: Take recycling weekly to city collection sites.
- Utility Reduction: For electricity, they use CFL & LED light bulbs and motion sensors in high traffic areas for a savings of \$905 per year.
- Water consumption reduction: Water saving toilets for a savings of \$500 per year.
- Sustainability practice in church life: use cloth napkins, kids glasses.
- Have classes in Earth Stewardship, to help members learn how to live sustainably and save on utilities.
- And plant a community garden, with opportunities to learn about organic gardening.

What is your church doing to “Live Green?” Contact Rev. Joan Ishibashi at jishibashi@wraucc.org and share your ideas in coming issues of *Synergy*.



VITAL SIGNS



EOA Vital Signs

As of February 28, 2011:

Total actual income for operations:
\$66,358.68

Total actual expense from operations:
\$87,485.16

Difference: (\$21,126.48)

WRA Vital Signs

As of February 28, 2011:

Total actual income for operations:
\$69,783.05

Total actual expense from operations:
\$100,041.72

Difference (\$30,258.67)

*We wish to thank you for your continued giving to **Our Churches Wider Mission!***

Churches in Transition:

(* reflects churches who are receiving profiles)

Eastern Ohio Association

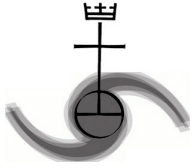
- St. Peter’s UCC (Applecreek)
- Atwater Congregational UCC (Atwater)
- * Bethel UCC (Beloit)
- * St. John UCC (Bolivar) *Part Time*
- Trinity UCC (Canal Fulton)
- *Grace UCC (Canton) *Part Time*
- St. Paul’s UCC (East Canton)
- * Zion UCC (Hannibal)/Immanuel UCC (Clarington)
- First Congregational UCC (Hudson) AP



- Richville UCC (Navarre)
- St. Paul (Port Washington)
- Edinburg UCC (Ravenna)
- Stow Community Church (Stow)
- Suffield UCC (Suffield)
- Grace UCC (Uniontown)

Western Reserve Association

- * Bainbridge Community UCC (Bainbridge)
- *First Congregational UCC (Berea)
- *Burton Congregational UCC (Burton)
- Pilgrim Christian Church (Chardon)
- West Park UCC (Cleveland)
- Claridon First Congregational UCC (Huntsburg)
- *First Congregational (Lorain) *Part Time*
- Community UCC (Shaker Hts.)
- Community UCC (Solon)
- Strongsville UCC (Strongsville)
- Dover Congregational UCC (Westlake)
- Fellowship UCC (Wickliffe) *Part Time*



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Visit us online!

Eastern Ohio Association - www.eoaucc.org

Western Reserve Association - www.wraucc.org

Ohio Conference - www.ocucc.org

HOW TO DEVELOP TIPPERS INTO TITHERS

"Just in time training for these difficult economic times"



A workshop for church teams of a pastor and at least three members of finance and stewardship Saturday, April 16, 2011 - 9 am to noon.

At the Ohio Conference Office Board Room, 6161 Busch Blvd., Columbus, OH 43229. Led by Paul Nickerson, Associate Conference Minister, Evangelism, Vitality and New Church Starts in Massachusetts Conference.

This workshop will help church teams learn:

- Principles of giving
- Re-thinking motives for giving
- Re-thinking the stewardship letter
- Helping people grow in their giving

Cost: \$150 per church team (unlimited number), which includes all materials and a copy of "How To Increase Giving in Your Church." Sponsored by the Ohio Conference and the Church Development Team. Go to www.ocucc.org **and look on the right hand column** to download flyer and mail-in form.

CUE SEMINARIES: Chicago Theological Seminary is excited to offer a Master of Arts in Religious Leadership degree program beginning Fall of 2011. The two-year degree is designed to prepare women and men for service in a range of religious, faith-based, community and advocacy settings with concentrations in: Interfaith Engagement, Social Transformation, Spirituality and Pastoral Care, and Word and Worship. We encourage all those interested in pursuing lay ministry or strengthening the theological dimensions of their work to learn more: www.ctschicago.edu/marl