

SYNERGY

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

Volume 5 Issue 6
July 2011

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Evangelism: Transforming Congregations—Engaging Communities

This national conference is designed for churches of all sizes so that any participant can return having learned something that can be put into action in his or her home church. Some of the workshops include:

- ◆ Evangelism is possible in the smaller church
- ◆ Stewardship from a faith perspective
- ◆ Offering Christ: The Heart of Youth Ministry
- ◆ Worship Theology and the Arts

The conference will take place November 2-5 at Fellowship Chapel, 707 W. Outer Drive, Detroit, Michigan. Early bird registration until July 31 is \$90 per person, \$70 per person with 5 or more from one church. Transportation will be provided free of charge from the Hilton Garden Inn, 26000 American Drive, Southfield Michigan to Fellowship Chapel.

For more information, visit www.ucc.org/evangelism/E.vents or contact Charlene J. Smith (216-736-3815) or Karmel Gravely (216-736-3873).



Disaster Response

It's been an active spring for tornadoes, floods and other disasters and many of us have been looking for ways to help. One of the ways the UCC Disaster Response Team ministers to people struck by natural disasters is to provide them with Clean-Up Kits. If you'd like to help, please supply exactly what is requested. For more information, boxes and shipping instructions visit www.ocucc.org/disaster/Disaster.htm or contact Jim Ditzler (330-262-3242 or jditzler@ssnet.com) or George Siddall (513-228-0515 or gtsiddall@juno.com).

Cleaning Kit

Place all items in the bucket listed below

A large container of Clorox Cleanup disinfectant cleaner (not Clorox bleach)	A scrub brush
A metal wire cleaning brush like those found with painting supplies (not a grill brush)	A pair of rubber gloves
A large, heavy duty sponge	Some plastic trash bags
A common household bucket that will fit in a 12"x12"x12" box	A personal note

Holy Moments

A Reflection by Joan Ishibashi, WRA Minister of Lay School & Credentialing

I have recently begun working at the Western Reserve Association half-time, but I continue in ministry full-time, and each day is a blessing.

Since 2004, I have been licensed by the State Medical Board of Ohio to practice massage therapy. This has turned into a deeply spiritual practice and ministry, something I never expected. I have been doing medical massage at the Cleveland Clinic Center for Integrative Medicine and am humbled by the many extraordinary people I meet.

Often when people ask me what I do and I mention massage therapy, they immediately point to their shoulders and ask for a shoulder rub. Or they will crook a skeptical eyebrow and ask me why I would do that kind of work, not understanding the therapeutic, healing aspects of this sacred work.

When people come to me for treatment, they put their trust in me. Today I treated patients with fibromyalgia, rotator cuff injury, broken spinous processes, low back pain, and cystic fibrosis. The time we spend together is holy and each person has a story to tell. One patient is facing death and trying to prepare her children for life without her. Another patient suffered childhood sexual abuse and is hoping for a glimmer of normalcy and peace. Another is faced with the prospect of living with chronic pain and looking for ways to cope.



I turn myself over to God at the beginning of every session and ask that healing energy will flow through me. At the end of every session, I give thanks for the patient and for the presence of the healing Spirit. I do this with every patient I encounter. I do this in all my work with the Western Reserve Association.

The medical and spiritual realms in ages past were one and the same, concerned with the health of the entire person, the entire community. Jesus was a healer in so many different ways. How far we have strayed from this truth! But we are now seeing the convergence again as we seek to live healthy lives and understand that we cannot separate the physiological from the spiritual.

Are you seeking healing and wholeness? Seek the holy. I turn to the book of James in *Da Jesus Book*, the New Testament in Hawaiian Pidgin. No matter what the language, an encounter with God through word and deed is a holy moment.

“Anybody ova dea by you guys get trouble? Good dey pray! Anybody feel good inside? Good dey sing to God! Anybody sick? Good dey aks da older church leadas fo come by dem, pray fo dem, an put olive oil on top dem, an use da Boss Jesus name wen dey do all dat, cuz dey his guys.”

Welcome to Our New Support Staff Member

Please welcome Cheryl McGraw as our new Communications and Administrative Support staff member at the EOA/WRA Support Center. Cheryl grew up in Akron and was a member of Williard UCC most of her life. At Williard she served in several capacities including deacon, elder, Sunday School teacher and organist/choir director. She is currently a member of Bethany UCC in Cuyahoga Falls where she is active on the Mission Committee and with Bethany Kitchen.

A graduate of The University of Akron with a BA in Mass Media-Communication, Cheryl worked for several years in Communications before moving into the field of Wide Area Networking. Her hobbies include genealogy and working with stained glass.

Cheryl's parents Richard and Millie live in Green, OH; brother David lives with his family in Wadsworth, OH and brother Jeff lives with his wife in Fairfield, OH. And let's not forget Cheryl's beloved Yorkie, Gryphon, who lives in Cuyahoga Falls!

As a side note...please bear with us while we provision and activate access for Cheryl including such things as an email address. We'll let you know when that work is done. Until then, you can email her at jamesf@eoaucc.org.

Youth Page

-Margaret Mills, Minister for Stewardship, Education

Youth Calendar

Date	Event
June 28 – July 7, 2011	Youth@Synod. EO/WRA and open to the Ohio Conference. <u>Registration is closed.</u> Twelve youth, young adults and adults will travel to Tampa for the national youth@synod event.
July 30 - August 6, 2011	Kentucky Happening: Work and Mission Immersion. EO/WRA and open to the Ohio Conference. We are nearing 50 participants, but there's still room for more! Contact Margaret Mills for information at 440-487-2549 or mmills@wraucc.org.
October 6, 2011	EO/WRA Educators/Youth Leaders Gathering at Gerry's House. Watch for details to follow, but save the date.
November 18 - 20, 2011	Ohio Conference Senior High Fall Youth Event. Held at Pilgrim Hills and using Justice LED resources. The theme is <i>Let Justice Roll</i> based on Amos 5:24 - "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Musicians: Andra Moran and Stephen Daniel King.
January 27 - 28, 2012	It's Your Turn: Youth Leaders Lock-In. EO/WRA and open to the Ohio Conference. This year we'll be back at the Radisson and the National UCC Church House in Cleveland. Program begins after supper on Friday and ends at 3PM on Saturday. Save the date!
March 3 - 4, 2012	EO/WRA Junior High Retreat at Pilgrim Hills. Yes, it's Saturday from 10AM to Sunday 11:30AM. The theme will follow the Fall Youth Event <i>Let Justice Roll</i> and the Amos 5:24 scripture.
March 16 - 17, 2012	Ohio Conference Educators and Youth Leaders Gathering. This will be held at Temple Hills.

If you have events you would like to advertise on our Youth Page, please send them to Margaret at mmills@wraucc.org.

Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators: **G.L.A.U.C.E.** For Educators and Youth Leaders

You are invited to the annual GLAUCE event to be held October 11 – 13, 2011 at Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park, Angola, Indiana. The theme is *The DNA of an Inclusive Church*. The goal is to explore the integration of hospitality in the teaching ministry. How can we impact the local church to understand its role as teaching ministry? How do we assimilate and deepen the relationships of adults, youth, and children into congregational life? Scripture focus is Hebrews 13:1–2, 8: *Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

The keynote speaker is Steve Clapp, President of Christian Community, Inc. Workshops offered include Faith Practices 101; Confirmation Conundrums; Justice LED; Milestones; Personal Care Boundaries; Belonging: Getting People Connected and Helping Them Stay That Way. All this plus the chance to share and fellowship with others in our Great Lakes region should encourage you to participate. For more information, contact Marilyn Freeman at pilgrimce@ameritech.net.

On Monday, July 18th we'll attend *Trumpet in the Land*, Ohio's premier and longest running outdoor theatre production. It brings to life the tragic but inspiring story of David Zeisberger and his Christian Indian followers as they struggled to preserve their peaceful settlement despite the growing violence of the Revolutionary War. There are some intriguing questions for us when we watch all sides praying to the Great Spirit for help believing they are in the right. Written by Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Paul Green, *Trumpet in the Land* is set in the very hills once traveled by those portrayed in the show and handpicked by the author. For more information on the production, go to www.trumpetintheland.com.

The production starts at 8:30PM and costs \$12.00. If you'd like a backstage tour, that is \$4.00 and begins at 6:30PM. Some attendees are planning to dine together and will meet at St. John's UCC in Dover at 5:00PM and even plan to stay overnight at the Comfort Inn in Dover and take Tuesday off to enjoy Amish Country and tour the Warther Museum. If enough people are interested, Comfort Inn will give a group rate. Please let us know of your interest by contacting Margaret Mills at mmills@wraucc.org or Belinda Lentz at belinda@doverstjohns.org.

Moderator's Musings: EOA

-Sandra Hutchinson, EOA Moderator

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (1 Peter 1:3)

At times it is hard to feel hopeful when challenges press in upon us; when we are tempted to resist change. In EOA and WRA we are pressing forward not because we think it is a good idea to share in the ministry of Christ's church together but because the Easter message and the excitement of Pentecost compels us to do so. Ann Weems' poem "Come Unto Me" reminds us what we do matters and that life and hope abounds in and through us.

When the journey gets too hard, when we feel depleted,
when our compassion turns to complaining,
when our efforts toward justice and mercy
seem to get us nowhere,
It's time to remember the humility part—
that it is God who has made us and not we ourselves;
that the saving of the world or even one part of it
is not on our shoulders.
It is then we can come unto him, and he will give us rest.
With rest we'll remember what it is we are about.



God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. Let all the people say "Amen!"

Hog Time

-Reflection by Lillian Daniel

2 Peter 3:8 "But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like one day."

There's a folksy story about a busy young man who came up behind a poor farmer who was taking his hog to market. The market was a few miles away, and as the young man walked briskly, he got closer to the slow-moving farmer and caught sight of the spectacle. The farmer was picking up this enormous hog, carrying it about twenty feet, and then dropping it in exhaustion. Then the farmer would wipe the sweat from his brow, take a few minutes to catch his breath and pick the hog up again. When the young man caught up with the farmer he had to comment. "That is the most inefficient way to get a hog to market I've ever seen. The market's half an hour away but this is going to take you all day. Why don't you just let the hog walk?" To which the farmer replied, "Shucks, son. Time ain't nothing to a hog!" Which one had it together, the hurrying young man or the farmer? It all depends on how you define and value time. Who are you in that story? Are you the rushing young man, full of concerns for efficiency? Or are you the old farmer, going about things your own way without much sense? Or how about this, what if you're the hog? What if all of us are the hogs? And God's the



old farmer. God picks us up, carries us a little way on the journey and then puts us down for a rest. Then God picks us up and carries us a little further, and stops, giving us small increments on the journey, one piece at a time, in the hope that we might stop focusing on where we are going, and instead notice where we are. After all, time ain't nothing to a hog. Prayer God, you are greater than time and space. Thank you for carrying me through this temporal world, and help me to adjust to your schedule, rather than expecting you to adjust to mine. Amen.

150th and 200th Anniversary Celebrations

It is always an exciting time in the life of a church when a major milestone such as an anniversary is celebrated. It's a time to reflect on the history and accomplishments of the church, take a look at where the church focus is today and then take time to look forward with a new fervency to what role the church will play as it heads into the future. There are four churches within the Western Reserve and Eastern Ohio Associations celebrating their 150th or 200th anniversaries this year. The churches are listed below with information about the various activities planned, so mark your calendars and join them in their celebrations!

Congregational UCC of Windham (9003 N. Main St.) will celebrate its Bicentennial Anniversary on Sunday, July 24th. It will be a time of homecoming. Hopes are that many of the current and past members and many friends will attend. Worship service will be at 11AM with a group photo taken after the service. A catered dinner will be provided at 12:30PM in the Brick Chapel and there will be a time for visiting and sharing memories. Displays of old pictures and historical items will be available for viewing in the Lecture Room and a service of rededication will be held at 3PM in the sanctuary. Reservations may be mailed to Congregational UCC, PO Box 402, Windham, OH 44288 or email Nancy Thompson at mamathompson53@gmail.com.

St. Jacob UCC in Leetonia (5219 St. Jacob-Logtown Rd.) began its celebration with a special hymn sing on May 1st. They will celebrate with various smaller events leading up to the Anniversary Celebration. On Sunday, July 24th members and guests will meet at 10:30AM for the 200th Anniversary Homecoming Worship Celebration. Following the worship service there will be a chicken BBQ (cost \$9). For reservations (needed for the BBQ only) call the church office at 330-424-3087.

Dover Congregational UCC in Westlake (2239 Dover Center Rd.) has a celebration planned for September 17th and 18th and will include a dinner Saturday night and worship celebration Sunday morning followed by a picnic. More information will be provided in the coming months.

Zion UCC in Steubenville (139 North Fifth St.) plans an Anniversary Homecoming Celebration for October 30th. Still in the planning stages, there will be more information in the coming months.

2011 Anniversaries of Ordination

Congratulations on attaining these milestones in your ministries!

Eastern Ohio Association

5 years

Sharon K. Alberson
Gary Friend

10 years

Tom Gerstenlauer
Jacquie McMillen
Bonnie Montgomery
Norman Slack
Matthew Wooster

20 years

David Cleaver-Bartholomew
Mark W. Frey

25 years

Eli Klingensmith
Elaine Tullis

30 years

Steven D. Clifford
Daniel Doty
Neal Sadler
John Schluep
Jeffrey Shultz
Carl P. Wallace

35 years

Randall L. Gehres
David Loar

40 years

Jim Cunningham
Gene Kraus
James A. Nelson

50 years

Roy V. Wagner

55 years

William A. Boyer
John Bruce

65 years

Richard W. Ingle
Paul Kiewit

70 years

Robert B. Frey

Western Reserve Association

5 years

Stephen Adams
Karen Farthing

10 years

Eric Bentrout
Elizabeth Terrill

20 years

Mary Schaller Blaufuss
Mary Joseph
Mary Kay Krejci
Sally Wile

25 years

Lucille Abernathy
Felix Carrion
Stephanie Haines
Joan Ishibashi
Mark Suriano

30 years

Ronald Dauphin

35 years

Wayne Brass
Dan DeWeese
Patricia J. Hough
Thomas Marlin

40 years

Leah Matthews
Johnathan F. Moody

50 years

Thomas Dipko
John Sykes
Roy Wagner

Go Tell It on the Mountain

United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network 2011 Annual Meeting

-Machelle Miller, Office Manager, EOAWRA Support Center

I was given the opportunity to attend the United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network the last weekend of April. The theme, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, was very appropriate as support staff members from all over the United States gathered in the mountains of New Hampshire sur-

rounding her time to answer all the many questions we had. It was, in my opinion, time very well spent.

While I realize that not all churches can afford to let their support staff travel out of state to these national support staff meetings, I would like to suggest some opportunities that are a

little closer to home to our support staff employees. Both are coming up in the next few months and offer two entirely different learning experiences.

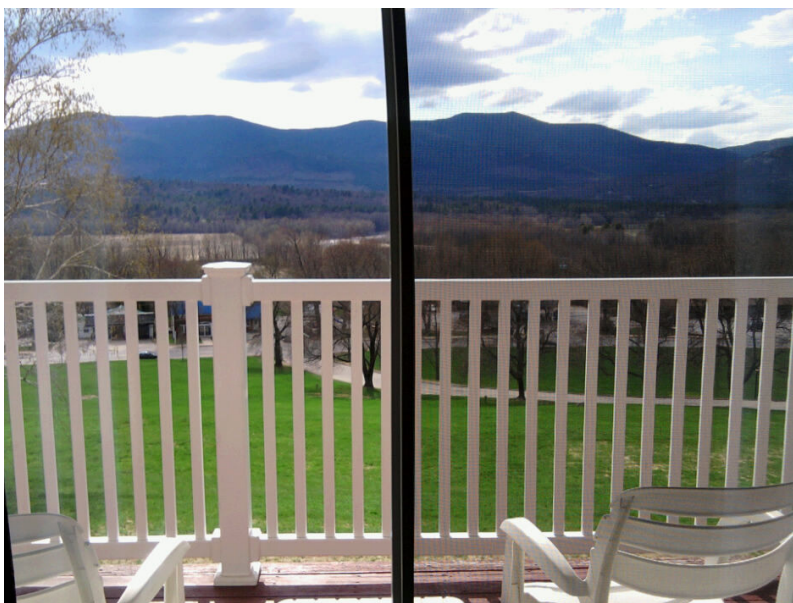
The second annual **Ohio Conference**

UCCOSSN event will be held **Monday, October 10th** in Westerville with a theme of *Let Our Light Shine*. Planning is currently underway so watch your mailboxes for more information in the near future.

A special Support Staff Day for the support staff of the **Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations** will be held on **Friday, August 5th** at Zion UCC in North Canton. The theme of the day will be *Stress ... Recognizing It, Understanding It, and How to Relieve It*. We'll have a great speaker on the subject as well as an afternoon of stress relief stations. Watch your mail for your invitation that will include complete details and registration informa-

tion. Last but not least...support staff is anyone, volunteer or paid staff, that works regularly in the church office who is not an authorized minister. That includes church secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers, bookkeepers and office assistants. Mark your calendars now for these exciting events planned just for you!

A reminder to ministers and council/consistory officers. It's a great way to honor your support staff by allowing them to attend one or both of these events as a paid work day and to pay their fee for the event(s) which is usually \$15 to \$20 dollars and includes lunch. It's a real bargain for a day of educational training and business networking for your staff. They are definitely worth it!!



rounded by breathtaking scenery. We shared in times of worship, times of learning, times of networking, and yes, times of fun and fellowship with new friends and not-so-new friends.

Workshops covered topics such as *Demystifying Social Media, Dealing With Difficult People, Develop a Newsletter, Boundaries Are For Everyone, Clergy, Laity, Even Conference Staffs!* and *Recognizing the Invisible Barriers*. My favorite was the workshop on *Parish Life and Leadership*. In a little over an hour, I received much valuable information on the Search and Call process and the changes that are in the works relating to this line of work. Hats off to presenter Christy Trudo for tak-

Objectives of UCCOSSN

- ◆ To create a network of UCC Office Support Staff in all settings throughout the denomination.
- ◆ To raise the level of professionalism of UCC Office Support Staff
- ◆ To foster dignity and respect for all UCC Office Support Staff
- ◆ To provide continuing education opportunities for UCC Office Support Staff
- ◆ To provide opportunities for fellowship and sharing among "peers"
- ◆ To raise the awareness of local churches, associations, conferences, seminaries, national ministries including UCC related bodies, regarding the vital role and contributions of the UCC Office Support Staff
- ◆ To advocate for fair compensation and benefits for all UCC Office Support Staff

Rev. Charles W. Kline

Rev. Charles W. Kline died on Good Friday, April 22, 2011. He was pastor of Strongsville United Church of Christ from 1968 to 1996. His wife Lois and grandson Kristopher preceded him in death. He is survived by daughters Susan J. (Mo) Sila and Sally (Joe) Doychak, sister Carol Host and grandchildren Melanie and Mark. Memorial donations may be made to Strongsville Meals On Wheels C/O Altenheim, 18627 Shurmer Rd. Strongsville, OH 44136

**“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all, but whatever I have placed in
God’s hands, that I still possess.”**

-Martin Luther



Churches in Transition

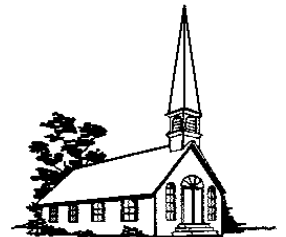
(* reflects churches who are receiving profiles)

Eastern Ohio Association

- Atwater Congregational UCC (Atwater)
- *Bethel UCC (Beloit)
- Edinburg UCC (Ravenna)
- *First Congregational UCC (Hudson) AP
- *Grace UCC (Canton) *Part Time*
- Grace UCC (Uniontown)
- Richville UCC (Navarre)
- *St. John UCC (Bolivar) *Part Time*
- St. Paul (Port Washington)
- *St. Paul’s UCC (East Canton)
- St. Peter’s UCC (Apple Creek)
- Suffield UCC (Suffield)
- * Trinity UCC (Canal Fulton)
- * Zion UCC (Hannibal)/Immanuel UCC (Clarington)

Western Reserve Association

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



Vital Signs



EOA Vital Signs

As of May 2011

Total actual income for operations	\$208,673.89
Total actual expense from operations	\$243,513.29
Difference	\$34,839.40

WRA Vital Signs

As of May 2011

Total actual income for operations	\$255,613.39
Total actual expense from operations	\$299,027.44
Difference	\$43,414.05

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

Coming Events!

Widening the Welcome 2: Inclusion for All. September 29 - October 1, 2011 at the Doubletree Hotel, Columbus. There will be education about mental illness and disabilities, ways to promote awareness and accessibility in your church and more. Keynote speakers will be Thomas Reynolds, Carolyn Thompson, Christine Guth and J. Bennett Guess. Visit www.wideningthewelcome.com for more information.

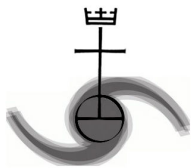
Found and Forgiven - The Musical. Come to this inspiring musical Saturday, November 5th at 3:00PM and 7:00PM at Trinity UCC, 915 N. Main St., Akron, OH. It's a musical by our own Rev. Sharon Alberson based on the story of the Prodigal Son. The event is sponsored by the Urban Ministry Group of the Eastern Ohio Association. Tickets are \$10 Adults, \$5 Children 10 and under; \$5 Spaghetti Dinner (4:30-6:30pm).



WRA Fall Meeting. The fall meeting for WRA clergy and delegates will take place on Saturday, November 5 at Faith United Church of Christ, 575 Richmond Road in Richmond Heights. Northeast Ohio's Connie Schultz, Pulitzer prize-winning author and columnist for the *Plain Dealer*, will give the keynote address.



EOA Periodic Support Consultation. On Wednesday, August 10 from 10AM to 2PM, Christ UCC at 301 N. Main St. in Orville will host *Circle of Sound: A Contemplative Retreat*. Rev. Anissa Bacon will instruct and guide the group in prayer and provide time to reflect on the experience with one another. This workshop satisfies the requirements of a Periodic Support Consultation which all authorized ministers are required to attend once every three years. Cost is \$5.00. Please watch your mail for the registration form.



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