

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."

Volume 5 Issue 5

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OHIO CONFERENCE ANNUAL GATHERING

June 10-11, 2011

Worship, Connect, Recharge, Learn, Grow, Laugh!

This year's Annual Gathering offers many learning opportunities for clergy, lay leaders and members of your congregation! It will be held at Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio.



Anthony Robinson, UCC minister, author and coach, will be the keynote speaker. He will also lead a Church Professionals Day on Friday entitled "Leading Change and Living to Tell the Story," as well as an evening workshop entitled "Church Vitality Basics for Lay Leaders. Take time away from the everyday to worship, learn, laugh, connect & recharge.

Friday evening workshops include: General Synod Issues, Talking about money in church, Ecumenism, Difficult Conversations, Developing Justice Leadership, Social Networking, Global Mission and more!

To find out more about the Ohio Conference Annual Gathering, visit the website at www.ocucc.org. Online and paper registration forms are available there!

SEARCH PROCESS UPDATE



The process for searching for a new General Minister for the EOA and WRA is underway!

A joint Personnel Committee has been meeting to flesh out a job description for the position. That committee consists of Steve Gehlert, Maureen Webber and Dave Carnell from EOA and Charles Brown, Michelle Hintz and Jackie Cassara from WRA. They have had input from the Strategic Planning Task Force as they have worked on the job description, and Conference Minister, Bob Molsberry, has also been part of the conversation.

The joint Search Committee is scheduled to meet for the first time on June 1. The members of that are Kate Huey, Bob Gross, Veronica Jefferson, Brandy Bring, and Mark Suriano from WRA. Steve Gehlert, Rich Miller, David Brown, Anne McKarns and Glen Shedlock are EOA members, with Bobbi Montenegro representing the Strategic Planning Task Force. Bob Molsberry is also meeting with them.

Please hold all of these people in prayer as they are engaged in this very important work and ministry on behalf of our Associations.

HOLY CHAOS

A Reflection by Rev. Donna Brooks, WRA Interim Association Minister

Spring is my favorite time of the year. We get a chance to enjoy the outdoors, to clean up our yards of all the debris left over the winter, and to experience the joy of new life bursting out all around us! A sacred place for me is our back yard. It is alive with nature! Spring is the time when we see Mallard ducks and Canada geese leading fluffy little ones around the pond, and when we close our eyes, we can hear the insects and birds and the sound of the trees rustling in warm breezes. With eyes open again, we might catch sight of a cottontail rabbit, or an opossum, a muskrat or squirrel all busy with springtime joy. Our yard is a sacred place, but it is definitely not a tamed, ordered or controlled place. Things are happening in bursts of activity, and new life is evident everywhere. This “joyous chaos” of spring activity reminds me of what it must have been like during those first century days and weeks following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We get to look carefully at those days during the weeks from Easter to Pentecost, which I have heard has been called a time of “Holy Chaos”! What a term! But think about what it was like for those Greek Christians we hear about in Acts 17 who were extremely religious but who just could not get a handle on what Paul was telling them. Paul proclaimed the resurrection, and what chaos ensued then among the people! Some believed, others broke into cheers, others scoffed, and still others ran from this information. It was truly holy chaos then, yet the faith and the Good News of the resurrection spread during that time like fire carried by the wind.



Remember also the day of Pentecost, when the gathered peoples in Jerusalem were infused with the Holy Spirit! People from all over the known world shouted with joy in languages they had never before understood. Some folks were so boggled by all of this that they could only ascribe it to too much wine! Yet the church was born in those days of spirit filled joy, that very time of “Holy Chaos”. I believe this has profound implications for us today.

Our world is often described as chaotic, with people being pulled in many directions. Yet there is such beauty in the midst of all of this. We are diverse and multicultural....a true rainbow of God’s love! Is it not possible that the diversity, the complexities and the opportunities that our world presents to us are but another reflection of “Holy Chaos?” I would like to think that the Word of the Risen Christ and the Wind of the Holy Spirit is sweeping across our world, calling each of us to burst forth with joy into new life in Christ and in service to one another!

May we each be open to the winds of the Spirit and may we, like the early Christians, spread the Good News!

Peace and Blessings to you all,

Rev. Donna Brooks

REV. JOAN ISHIBASHI is now half-time at the Western Reserve Association, working primarily with credentialing, interim ministry and the Lay School. You can reach her primarily on Wednesdays and Fridays. She is now working half-time with Carolyn Willis at the Ohio Conference office in Columbus as their bookkeeper. The best way to contact Joan is by e-mail, jishibashi@wraucc.org.

“FOUND AND FORGIVEN “ - THE MUSICAL

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





Date	2011 YOUTH CALENDAR
June 8 – 10	Ohio Conference JUSTICE LED TRAINING – Heidelberg University, Tiffin
June 10 – 11	Ohio Conference Annual Gathering
June 11	Ohio Conference Sr. High Fall Youth Event Planning—immediately following Annual Gathering—Tiffin
June 28 – July 7	EOA/WRA Open to the Ohio Conference Youth@Synod — registration is closed
July 30 – Aug. 6	EOA/WRA OPEN TO OHIO CONFERENCE Kentucky Happening - Work and Mission Immersion! Open to Sr. High Youth - contact Margaret Mills for info (440) 487-2549 or mmills@wraucc.org
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. Musicians - Andra Moran and Stephen Daniel King

ALL DATES FOR 2011 AND 2012 WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE NEXT YOUTH PAGE IN SYNERGY - IF YOU HAVE EVENTS YOU'D LIKE TO ADVERTISE ON THIS PAGE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO MARGARET MILLS AT: mmills@wraucc.org. Thanks!

GLAUCE: The DNA of an inclusive church! (*Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators*)

October 11-13, 2011 at Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park in Angola, Indiana

The **goal** of this event will be:

- To explore the integration of hospitality in the teaching ministry
- How do we understand the community's story?
- 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 congregation life?
- And more!

Questions and Registration: Call Jan Davis @ 920-499-6901. To learn more or become a member of GLAUCE, visit <http://auce-uwcc.org>

MISSION PARTNERS (WRA): United Protestant Campus Ministries

United Protestant Campus Ministries (UPCaM) is an ecumenical, Protestant organization that seeks to develop Christian faith, leadership and community on our college campuses in the greater Cleveland area by providing opportunities for community service, study, worship, fellowship and pastoral care. It is a progressive campus ministry that has an emphasis on social justice, peace, and spiritual openness to all persons as exemplified in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

UPCaM is our UCC presence on the campuses of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, and Tri-C Metro. Surveys have shown that many of our authorized ministers answered the call to ministry because of their outdoor ministry experience, or campus ministry experience. UPCaM provides a vital ministry to young people who are looking for a non-judgmental faith community where they can be supported as they explore questions about religion, spirituality, individual beliefs and personal values.

UPCaM has volunteer opportunities to work with students, provide snacks, fellowship with them, offer them a ride to your Sunday worship service. The Executive Director, Rev. Donna Hughes welcomes invitations to come to your church to share the good news about UPCaM in a sermon or mission moment.

If you have a passion for young adult college ministry, contact Rev. Hughes for more information about UPCaM, at 216-421-9614, ext. 301, or revdmh2@yahoo.com.

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS: WRA*Mark Suriano, WRA Moderator*

Many thanks to those of you who submitted ideas to me regarding the reshaping and renewing the ministry of the Association. I received several emails and was very happy to meet with the Firelands Program District at their May meeting! While the task may seem monumental, I am confident that, with your help and God's guidance, we will be able to grow together in spirit and in service.



The methodology for making this transformation is a work in progress and has been influenced by the input I have received. We have much to give thanks for and much that can be done and the work will begin this summer and continue on through the rest of this year as changes are proposed and input sought.

The work of finding a new minister for the two Associations continues and is going well. The Joint Personnel Committee is very close to a position description and the first meeting of the Joint Search Committee will begin in early June. The position descriptions will be shared with you all and I will keep you up to date as the process goes forward. Meanwhile, many thanks to Donna, Margaret, Joan and Carolyn for keeping our ministry alive and well until someone is called.

Keep those emails coming. Let me know if I can come to your Program District meetings!

Mark Suriano

MODERATORS MUSINGS: EOA*Sandra Hutchinson, EOA Moderator*

People are not reading James Moore's book "Some People Feel the Rain, Others Just Get Wet" to find out how to cope with all the rain we have experienced this spring but to figure out how to cope with all the changes and challenges we experience in living. Moore's encouragement is not to merely survive or be the one who just "gets wet" but to get out there and embrace life, get out there and "feel the rain".

"Feel the rain" by giving gratitude every day for the abundant blessings God showers upon you. Express your appreciation to others. Congratulate others for their successes and accomplishments. Find new ways to live out your faith. When confronted with challenges look for how those challenges are helping you grow. Seize opportunities, hopefully new opportunities, to experience the joy of being Christ's disciples in the service of the whole human family and to proclaim the gospel to all the world.



We in EOA and WRA are discovering new ways to "feel the rain". I truly give thanks for the myriad of opportunities to serve with all of you. As a delegate this summer at General Synod in Tampa I will keep my eyes and ears opened for ways to help us strengthen our ministries here in northeastern Ohio as we continue to be Christ's church where we are planted.

On behalf of EOA I want to say "thank you James for your work among us and with us in the support center the last several years. God's blessings to you as you follow where God is leading you. And may you truly experience God's blessings and joy. We know you will "feel the rain and not just get wet."

Sandra Hutchinson

ECONOMIC JUSTICE: MAKE A DIFFERENCE: Unemployment! Deficit! Debt! Wage and Benefit Cuts! What is happening with the economy? Why should and how can the church be involved? The WRA Church in the World Team has reorganized. We are no longer meeting monthly but are meeting four times a year to bring thematic programs to our interested and involved local churches. The first was Justice LED, this one is on Economic Justice, and the next one will be on Environmental Justice. **EVERYONE IS INVITED AND URGED TO ATTEND.** Join together on Thursday, June 23 from 7:00 to 8:30 at Archwood UCC (in the parlor). We will gather with Edie Rasell, the UCC's Minister for Economic Justice to discuss these issues and what we can do to make a difference. Hear about practical ways the church can work for a fairer world. For information, contact Margaret Mills at mmills@wraucc.org.

FRACKING: Burning Water Faucets Coming to Your Home Soon: For the first time, a scientific study has linked natural gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing with a pattern of drinking water contamination so severe that some faucets can be lit on fire. Now we in northeast Ohio have the potential of being able to light our faucets on fire! This is a major environmental and health danger coming to our area. Come to the Faith Community Anti-Fracking Meeting, June 16 at 1:00 pm. at East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, 10848 Chillicothe Rd., Kirtland, Ohio Kirtland For more information about the destructive practice of fracking and how it is coming to Ohio, go to www.neogap.org.

Watch for screenings of the documentary Gasland which we showed on May 9 at St. Paul's UCC in Cleveland. Two more screenings are scheduled for Cleveland. After June 1, for more information you may contact Jim Deming, Minister for Environmental Justice, Justice and Witness Ministries, demingj@ucc.org, 216-726-3722.



VITAL SIGNS



EOA Vital Signs

As of April 2011:

Total actual income for operations:
\$182,087.58

Total actual expense from operations:
\$203,494.44

Difference: (\$21,406.86)

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

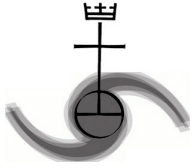
- St. Peter's UCC (Apple Creek)
- Atwater Congregational UCC (Atwater)
- * Bethel UCC (Beloit)
- * St. John UCC (Bolivar) *Part Time*
- * Trinity UCC (Canal Fulton)
- * Grace UCC (Canton) *Part Time*
- St. Paul's UCC (East Canton)
- * Zion UCC (Hannibal)/Immanuel UCC (Clarington)
- *First Congregational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



- Richville UCC (Navarre)
- St. Paul (Port Washington)
- Edinburg UCC (Ravenna)
- 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.)
- Strongsville UCC (Strongsville)
- Dover Congregational UCC (Westlake)
- Fellowship UCC (Wickliffe) *Part Time*



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Canton, OH 44718
(330) 453-8178

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Visit us online!

Eastern Ohio Association - www.eoaucc.org
Western Reserve Association - www.wraucc.org
Ohio Conference - www.ocucc.org

CAPITOL PUNISHMENT: "Is It Worth the Cost?" June 11th 9 am - 12 at UCC National Church House Justice & Witness Conf. Room, Rev. Sala Nolan Gonzales, hosting. Breakfast and Parking vouchers available. Join other people of good will working to live out their faith, fighting to end taxpayer waste, and to end the killing that is done in our name.

WIDENING THE WELCOME 2: "Inclusion for All". September 29 - October 1, 2011. Doubletree Hotel, Columbus. There will be education about mental illness and disabilities, ways to promote awareness and accessibility in your church, and more. Keynoters: Thomas Reynolds, Carolyn Thompson Christine Guth, J. Bennett Guess /



JUSTICE LED EVENT TO PRECEDE ANNUAL GATHERING: Prior to the Annual Gathering there will be a special justice leaders training session, June 8-10 for lay and clergy persons interested in becoming facilitators of the Justice LED program in their congregations.

The training is open to groups of two to eight church members who, with the endorsement of their pastor, wish to use the Justice LED (Leaders Engaging and Developing) program within their congregations. It will also be held on the Heidelberg campus.

Registration for this event, offered by the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries, is due by Friday, May 20. Cost is either \$75 per person for meals and two nights' lodging with a shared (double) dormitory room, or \$85 per person, which covers meals and a single dormitory room. Registration forms can be requested from Ferne or Kelly Burd at burdk@ucc.org or 216/736-3714. A minimum of two persons per church is required. For more information visit: <http://www.ucc.org/justice/training/>.

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.