



Valley Vision

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Ohio Valley District
United Methodist Church

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Fixer Upper

Dear Ohio Valley Friends,

Over the past few weeks, Lynelle and I have enjoyed watching several episodes of “Fixer Upper” with Chip and Joanna Gaines. You probably know how it goes. A young couple or family chooses a fixer upper-type of house. Then Chip and Joanna work with the couple to envision what the house could look like with carefully budgeted renovations. Joanna has a very good, creative eye – she can *see* what a house could look like even before they start. Chip is unfazed by the construction challenges; knock out a wall here, add windows

there, reconfigure this room, repurpose that porch, paint, decorate, landscape and ... *voila*, the house is transformed from fixer upper into a very attractive home. Without fail the people are “wowed” when the day of the “big reveal” comes, the panels are rolled back, and they see the renovated house for the first time, inside and out. Every time the transformation is amazing, a pleasure to see.

I like to think that we as Christians would deeply understand *renovation*. Let’s be honest: many of us are “fixer upper” kind of people. We’ve experienced revival at some point in our Christian journey; we’ve been redeemed, restored, renewed in Christ and we’ve served well for some time. But we’ve gotten used to the way things are, we’ve made accommodation with reality, and our place has become a little worn, lost some of the glow, comfortable but maybe not the best, not as good as it could be. You’ve heard the phrase, “It is what it is.” That’s how we see our life, our walk of faith, our church home. It’s not bad, it works for us, it could be worse, it could be a little better but we are content and we don’t want to mess things up. It is what it is.



Well, you have also heard it said, “God loves us where we are but loves us too much to leave us there.” I like to think that our Christian life is an adventure, not unlike some of these renovation projects we see on shows like Fixer Upper. God can “see” what we could be like and “envisions” reconstruction to restore God’s image in us, to make us more like Christ. Adam Hamilton puts it this way in his book *Revival: Faith as Wesley Lived It*: “Drawing upon the New Testament metaphor of redemption, Wesley taught that Jesus purchases us and the Spirit works to restore us. Spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, receiving the sacraments, journaling, reading the Bible and serving others are tools the Spirit uses to transform us. Wesley believed that the goal of the Christian life is to be holy as God is holy – to be consumed by love for God and neighbor, to avoid evil and do good always and everywhere, and to pursue the practices that deepen our love for God” (p. 50).

Maybe you’ve heard it all before, these spiritual practices and disciplines. Ok, but can you *picture* what we could be like, can you *see* what God wants to recreate us to be, can you *envision* the kind of people God wants to bear the name *Christian*? We fixer upper-type people aren’t bad people, but God is not finished with us yet. God has more *renovation* work to do to complete the transformation. The Apostle Paul puts it this way: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I suppose I don’t look forward to God’s sledge hammer work on me so much, but if that’s what it takes to make me a new creation, let the demo project begin. I trust God’s renovation work will bring needed transformation – the restoration of God’s image, renovated to be more like Christ, loving God and loving people with all that I am and all that I have.

Are you with me, fellow fixer uppers?

Jim

Financial and Administrative Services

2018 Tax Amnesty Program: February 15 is the last day to apply for the Ohio Department of Taxation 2018 Tax Amnesty Program. Individuals and businesses - including local churches - with unreported or underreported tax debts—such as unreported and unpaid employee withholding tax are eligible to apply for the program. Accepted participants can get current on their tax payments while avoiding paying ANY penalties and only HALF of the normally charged interest. The necessary information can be found at <http://www.ohiotaxamnesty.gov/PrepareAndApply>

Clergy Housing Allowance Tax Exemption Ruling: On October 6, 2017 U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb of the Western District of Wisconsin ruled that 26 U.S.C. § 107(2) violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. On December 13, 2017 Judge Crabb enjoined the IRS from enforcing section 107(2), which is the section permitting a housing allowance for ministers of the gospel, but she stayed the injunction until 180 days after either the conclusion of any pending appeals or the failure to file an appeal by a party. *This means that the clergy housing allowance is still available while any appeals are pending.*

2018 Mileage Rates The standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) are:

- 54.5 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 18 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

New Ohio Minimum Wage In 2018

The new minimum wage in the State of Ohio is \$8.30/hour. Pay for tipped employees is now \$4.15/hour. The current federal minimum wage is \$7.25/hr.

Employers whose gross earnings are \$305,000 or more are required to pay whichever minimum wage is higher. Employers who gross less than \$305,000 shall pay their employees no less than the current federal minimum wage rate.

Visit the [Financial and Administrative Services](#) page of the Conference website for the latest financial news.

Conversations on the Way Forward

There have been many positive responses to the Conversations on a Way Forward, and the originally scheduled conversations in February and March are near capacity. Due to demand, you now have three new opportunities to actively engage in the [Conversations on a Way Forward](#):

- Feb. 25, 2 - 5 PM, Newcomerstown Christ UMC
- Mar 8, 6 - 9 PM, Delaware Asbury UMC
- Mar 10, 9 AM - Noon, Fredericktown UMC

Each of these churches can accommodate the meeting spaces needed for 10 - 12 groups of eight people.

You must register online in advance. We cannot accommodate walk-in registrations.

To register go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/conversations-on-a-way-forward-registration-38001533610>

To change locations, go to the same site as above, sign in with new email, add the new location ticket and then cancel the prior location ticket. If you need assistance, please email events@eocumc.com

For questions or concerns, feel free to email Steve Court at SCourt@eocumc.com



Check out the scholarships available online at

<http://www.eocumc.com/scholarships/index.html>

Many of the scholarships have a March deadline, so share this information with persons in your churches so that they have time to complete the process.

Summer Camp Registration is Open! For more information contact the East Ohio Conference Camping Office at 1-300-499-3972, extension 108 or visit www.EOCSummercamps.org

YAC Early Registration is OPEN! \$40 per person through April 4. Regular registration is \$50 per person from April 5 - May 23. For more information go to www.eocumc.com/yac The District will reimburse the \$40 per person if you send us a copy of your paid registration.

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Weekend Retreat

SOLID ROCK



Event Information

- Who: 6th-12th graders
- Location: FFA Camp Muskingum
- Cost: \$60
- Check-in: 6:30PM (3/2)
- Pick-up: 10:30AM (3/4)
- Speaker: Joe Burkhardt
- Register by: 2/23

Date: March 2-4/2018

Description: Weekend retreat for the youth to experience Christ with other Christians their own age. It will be an unforgettable weekend.

For more information Contact
Jonathan Naylor: 330-341-9933
jlnaylor3@gmail.com



Epworth Center's New Director

The Epworth Center Board of Directors is pleased to announce the hiring of Deaconess Sherri Buehl as Director. Sherri has worked at Epworth as Director of Community Development since 2012 when her husband, Rev. Theodore Buehl was appointed to Barnesville First United Methodist Church. She has worked in the nonprofit sector 13 years and has served in various volunteer roles throughout the United Methodist Church. As a Deaconess she has vowed to a ministry of Love, Justice, and Service.

The Epworth Center is best known for the many mission teams of all ages who have traveled near and far to reside in our cabins and lodge for days at a time in the summer to repair homes within an hour radius of Bethesda, offer Vacation Bible School in nearby communities, and transformed one of our cabins into our Project Manna Choice Food Pantry giving those we serve, our neighbors the ability to choose the items their family will eat while feeling a sense of ownership in caring for those they love.

Epworth Center's Project Manna ministry takes place year round and helps on average 45 families per month. Our Choice Pantry is open the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month 9am-11am and the 3rd Tuesday 5pm – 6pm. Project Manna Christmas serves on average 130 families who apply for help. Families are blessed to receive 5 bags of food and clothing and toys for their children. All toys are donated by churches and civic organizations. Our lodge is transformed into a Toy Store where parents actually choose the gifts for their children. Our 2017 Distribution touched many families. One woman in tears hugged and thanked us, sharing how grateful she is for the Epworth Center staff and volunteers and told us she loved us.

As we move into a new year we are excited to open our doors to helping those not only in our backyard, but throughout the United States. Saturday, February 24, 2018, 2-6pm we will host a lasagna dinner along with entertainment and Vendor Sale. All proceeds will go to helping hurricane victims. We hope that you will join us for a wonderful afternoon.

We plan to continue growing our Work Mission ministry, Project Manna, and looking to partner with churches, civic organizations, and businesses to help all who are in need. If you would like to invite our new Director to speak at your church, meeting, town hall; please contact Epworth Center at epworthcenterohio@gmail.com or 740-484-4705.

Crossroads of Ohio Methodism Robes and Stoles Needed

The United Methodist Historical Society of Ohio (UMHSO) will meet at the Canal Lewisville UMC, 198 E Church St., Coshocton 43812 on Saturday, April 21, 2018 with the theme, "Crossroads of Ohio Methodism". The Annual Meeting and Convocation, usually alternating between East and West Ohio Conference sites, brings together UMHSO members (local church historians, pastors, and others) to share historical preservation and exhibition resources, ministry ideas for local church anniversary celebrations, and good Christian fellowship. This year's event, in the Three Rivers District, also includes optional Friday PM visits to local historical sites, with a block of rooms available for those staying in Coshocton Friday night. Further information and a full schedule for the Convocation will be out in March in the official UMHSO semi-annual newsletter. Historians and others who are interested in membership may contact Ed Duling at 419-353-9273 or ebd2140@aol.com or visit www.umhso.org/MembershipForm

Before Elaine Hopkins left East Ohio, she was involved in a project that would enable any incoming clergy to be able to be provided with robes and stoles at no cost. These robes have been supplied by retired clergy or spouses of deceased clergy. Many clergy are not wearing robes and stoles every Sunday but on occasion would like to. However, those who desire to wear them find the cost to be almost prohibitive for some. Uniontown UMC is the repository for these. If you are a clergy that has a robe or stole to donate, please contact them at Uniontown UMC, 13370 Cleveland Ave., NW, Uniontown, OH 44685; 330-699-3587 or email to uniontownumc@gmail.com

At the time of the receipt of this item they only had two robes, but if you have a need for one, contact them.

New Appointments: Bishop Malone has announced the following appointments:
 Rev. Jim Winkler from the District Office to the Mayfield UMC effective July 1, 2018.
 Rev. Adam Davis from Thoburn UMC to Lorain Lighthouse UMC effective July 1, 2018.

Prayer Concerns

- Michelle and Samuel Lucarelli and family on the death of her father-in-law.
- Pastor Drew & Patti McPeck and family on the death of Drew's mother.
- Rev. Tom & Kathleen Snodgrass on the death of Tom's mother.
- Kathy Thomas (Pine Grove)
- Bob Miller (Amsterdam/ Mt Zion)

Deaths: Please pray for the families of the following:

Rev. George E. Bailey, retired elder, died December 16. He had served the Sugar Grove, New Somerset and Bellaire First churches on our district.

Rev. Alva W. Taylor, retired elder, died December 12.

Rev. William G. Alvey, retired elder, died December 17. He served the Lansing church on this district.

Ruth Katherine McElroy, surviving spouse of H. Dean McElroy, died January 19.

February Birthdays

- 1 Rev. Eric Kluth (Harsh Memorial/ Kilgore)
- 15 Pastor Phil Bliss (Bellaire 1st)
- 15 Tonya Bliss (Bellaire 1st)
- 17 Amy Monteith (Scott Memorial)
- 18 Lynelle Winkler (District Office)
- 19 Michael Myers (Leesville)
- 20 Rev. Adam Davis (Thoburn)
- 21 Patti McPeck (Tri County Trinity Charge)
- 23 Maggie Hoder (Flushing/ Bannock/ Maynard)

**Ohio Valley District United
Methodist Church**

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TARRP Offers Informative Workshops for Small Churches Sat., March 3 @ Christ Cambridge UMC.
The Town and Rural Resource Program (TARRP) of the East & West Ohio Conferences invite all small membership churches to attend this important workshop that will help your church board, mission team, and others learn and be equipped to help your church to make a difference in the lives of your parishioners and community. Workshop topics include:
Safety and Security in your Church: So what happens in an emergency at your church—lost child, unresponsive adult, accident, a disorderly person, gas line break, smoke, tornado, utility failure, intruder or active shooter? Who directs the members? What's the plan? Who to call? We should know.
Regarding Opiate & Heroin Addiction: Learn how and why persons, even 12-year-olds, are addicted. Why pre-school children are addicted. Why arrests don't solve the problem.
Cost is \$18 per person or \$15 for 3 or more from the same church/charge. Registration deadline is February 22.

Where is the DS in February?

1	Cabinet
3	A Way Forward - Thoburn UMC
12 - 14	Cabinet
21	10 AM: District Leadership Committee
22	6:00 PM: District Finance Committee



District Conference will be held on Saturday, April 21 at Cadiz Scott Memorial. More details in the next newsletter.

All Newsletter items for March issue must be in the district office by February 21..

Ministry & Mission Funding

Does your church have a creative new idea for implementing ministry and increasing outreach? [Applications are available NOW](#), on the conference website or by calling the District Office. These applications will be prioritized based on the Mission, Vision, and Strategy of the East Ohio Conference. Deadline for submission to the District Office is February 23.

THE MISSION
The Mission of the United Methodist Church is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
THE OHIO VALLEY STRATEGY
FROM REVIVAL TO DISCIPLESHIP TO MISSION:
To align resources, develop leaders and inspire growth to increase the number of vital congregations in the Ohio Valley District.
THE GENERAL RULE OF DISCIPLESHIP
To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.