

Ohio Valley District United Methodist Church



Called to Pray

Dear Ohio Valley Pastors and Members,

It is fascinating to note that the Letters of the Apostle Paul are written to newly established churches who are seeking to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ amidst the trials and tribulations found both inside and outside the church fellowship. Following Jesus has never been easy!

After declaring the supremacy of Christ and sharing the good news of the Gospel in his Letter to the Colossians, Paul challenges these exceptional disciples of Jesus (see his Thanksgiving and Prayer in Col. 1:3-14) with these powerful words:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (3:12-17 NIV).

Why did the apostle have to write these words? Well, because many followers of Jesus were *not* doing these things! This has been true of the church from the beginning: We do not find it easy to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts or to be bound together in perfect unity. Matters of discipline and order were challenging then and they continue to challenge us now.

Following the April 28, 2017 Judicial Council ruling (about which Bishop Tracy Malone wrote, “The Judicial Council ruled that the consecration of a gay bishop violates church law, but it also stated that Bishop Oliveto ‘remains in good standing’ until an administrative or judicial process is completed.”), Bishop Malone wrote a pastoral letter calling upon all clergy and all churches of East Ohio to pray unceasingly and to commit ourselves to faithfully live out our mission, unity and connection as United Methodists.

Our bishop has noted that we are at an impasse related to human sexuality. In order to help us find our way forward, the bishop has specifically called upon us to pray for the work of the Commission on a Way Forward that has been named by the Council of Bishops. She has also invited us to pray for our own East Ohio A Way Forward design team that has already begun work to develop a plan and process for engaging clergy and laity in meaningful dialogue across the conference. And we need to be in prayer for the special session of the General Conference set for Feb. 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. As stated in the bishop’s letter, the purpose of this conference will be “limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops, based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.” (Bishop Malone’s letter may be found at www.eocumc.com)

Every year we gather at Annual Conference with the Charles Wesley hymn, *And Are We Yet Alive?* The third verse declares the truth about our experience over the past year: “What troubles have we seen, what mighty conflicts past, fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last!” Then we declare our faith, singing together, “Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love ... [So, let us] take up the cross till we the crown obtain.”

Therefore, as our bishop has taught us, may we stay encouraged! May we stay focused on the mission of Christ and his Church. May we continue to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world. May we love God and neighbor with all that we are and all that we have. And may we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

May the peace and love of Christ bind us together in unity,

Jim

Meet Lynelle Winkler



As many of you saw in a previous newsletter, Rev. Jim is getting married on May 20 to Lynelle Garn. As a district we would like to welcome Lynelle to our area and celebrate their marriage. In that light, we will be having a “meet and greet” reception on Sunday, June 4 from 3 to 5 PM at the Wintersville UMC, 702 Main St., Wintersville 43953. Clergy and laity are invited to come anytime during this two hour period. There will be light refreshments. No presents but cards are welcomed. RSVP to Gay appreciated but not required. If any church would like to help provide cookies, please call Gay by May 19.

District Clergy Family Fellowship Monday, June 12, 6 to 7:30 PM Otterbein North Shore Retirement Center

Menu: Chicken Salad Wrap, Club Sandwich, Fresh Fruit, Mixed Greens Salad Bar, Assorted Cold Pasta Salads, Assorted desserts, Coffee, Tea, Lemonade

RSVP by June 2 by calling or emailing Gay.

Visit Africa University

The generosity of the East Ohio Conference built the first two three-story dormitories at Africa University, and has endowed the most university scholarships of any annual conference in the denomination. The March 19 special offering for Africa University raised \$801 to further support its students.

You have an opportunity to represent the East Ohio Conference and visit Africa University with Bishop Tracy S. Malone August 20-30, 2017. While in Zimbabwe the group will tour the 3Cs-supported Emsizini School, visit Victoria Falls, cruise the Zambezi River, take a game drive in a national park, and see a drum and dance show.

The reservation deadline is May 15, so you must act quickly if you would like to be part of the EOC delegation. The approximate cost of the trip, including airfare, is \$5,300/person. A \$750 deposit is due, along with the trip application, by May 15. E-mail Bruce Hitchcock at bhitchcock@windstream.net to request an application and receive the payment schedule.

Health Benefits

Conference-Sponsored Health Benefits to Change effective 1/1/18

It is *very important* that you attend one of the eight informational meetings hosted by the Conference Board of Pensions. Anyone can attend any of the meetings, at which handouts will be distributed and the changes discussed.

You should attend an informational meeting if you are currently covered by the conference health benefit plan with Aetna. This includes:

- active clergy and lay employees of the local church,
- retirees younger than age 65,
- retired clergy, their spouses and surviving spouses who are younger than age 65,
- lay delegates to Annual Conference, and chairpersons of Finance Committees and of Staff Parish Relations Committees.

No changes are planned to the health care benefits of retirees who are age 65 or older; retired clergy, their spouses and surviving spouses.

The 2018 Health Benefits Plan page of the conference website will have the latest information, as it is available. Please direct questions to Benefits Manager Betsy Stewart at betsy@eocumc.com.

Health Benefits Informational Meetings

All are welcome at any scheduled meeting

April 30 @ 3:30PM* – Southern Hills

**Following the 2:30pm Spring District Conference*
Mid-East Career & Technology Centers, Buffalo Campus
57090 Vocational Rd. in Senecaville, 43780

May 16 @ 9:30AM – Western Reserve & Mahoning Valley —

Wildare UMC (WR)
7211 N. Park Ave. Ext. in Cortland, 44410

May 16 @ 1:30PM – North Coast & Canal

Montrose Zion UMC (CN)
565 N. Cleveland Massillon Rd. in Akron, 44333

May 17 @ 9:30AM – Firelands & Mid-Ohio

Ashland First UMC (MO)
220 Sandusky St. in Ashland, 44805

May 18 @ 9:30AM – Three Rivers & Tuscarawas

Newcomerstown Christ (TR)
648 Oak St. in Newcomerstown, 43832

May 18 @ 1:30PM – Ohio Valley (Rev. Dan Bryant, Mahoning Valley DS, will be in attendance for Rev. Winkler)

Cadiz: Scott Memorial UMC (OV)
807 E. Market St. in Cadiz, 43907

May 25 @ 9:30AM & 1:30PM

East Ohio Conference Area Center
8800 Cleveland Ave. NW in North Canton, 44720

Questions or concerns, call or write Betsy Stewart at 1-800-831-3972, ext 103 or betsy@eocumc.com



East Ohio Camps

East Ohio Camps and Retreat Ministries offer something for everyone – children, youth, adults and families – and can provide accommodations year-round for a small intimate setting or a large group gathering. For more information call 1-800-831-3972 ext 108

Whether it be fun in the sun at **Summer Camp** or cozying up to the lodge fire while on retreat, East Ohio Camps and Retreat Ministries offer you the opportunity to listen for God's whisper among the towering timbers and refreshing waters of our three unique camp sites.

Camp Aldersgate, **Camp Asbury**, and **Camp Wanake** each offer **Summer Camps** and year-round retreat facilities. Participants have incredible experiences while they make new friends, try new things, learn about God, learn about themselves, and then take it all home.

Our goal is to provide comfortable settings and quality programs through which people can experience Christ's love for them and all creation, and have the opportunity to share that love with others. We invite you to explore God's greatest gift – "the Wonder of Nature" – with memorable camping and retreat experiences in East Ohio.

Vera Rebrovich - New Director of Financial and Administrative Services



Vera Rebrovich is the new director of Financial and Administrative Services for the East Ohio Conference, effective April 1. She has extensive finance, accounting, and management experience, and is a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the State of Ohio. "Vera brings a strong accounting background and more than 20 years of experience as a financial manager and analyst with major firms in our area," said the Rev. David Palmer, Council on Finance and Administration chairperson. "I'm very happy to be joining the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. I attended Rittman UMC growing up and have many happy memories of Sunday school, youth group, and summer camp at Camp Wanake," Rebrovich said. She succeeds Jessica Vargo in the re-titled position.

2017 Clergy Pictorial Directory: Clergy members will need to sit for individual headshots during Annual Conference. *No appointment is necessary.* Clergy simply need to stop in to one of the two studios inside Bradley Temple to have their photo taken, during any of the following times: Monday, June 12, 11 AM to 6 PM; Tuesday, June 13, 9 AM to 6 PM; Wednesday, June 14, 9 AM to 6 PM; Thursday, June 15, 9 AM to 2 PM.

These headshots will be the official clergy photos for all EOC publications for the next four years. Please email Rick Wolcott wolcott@eocumc.com with any questions

Clergy Spouse Breakfast and Fellowship Wesley Lodge, Lakeside

Wednesday, June 14, 9:00 - 11 am

New Menu for Breakfast: scrambled eggs, meat, biscuits, danish, muffins, whole fruit, dry cereal, yogurt, orange juice, milk, coffee and tea.

Marketplace Shopping: During breakfast and after short greeting and singing time! The Marketplace: For every clergy spouse who loves to craft, sew, and bake, we invite you to bring your items to sell. Tables will encircle our venue so don't delay reserving a space. Ten tables/spaces will be available.

Contact Elsa Court at elsacourt@twc.com or by calling 234-401-9454. For those who reserve a table, setup begins at 8:30 a.m. Deadline for a table reservation is June 1. Sponsored by the East Ohio Conference, District Offices, and Cabinet Spouses

Prayer Concerns

- Cory Gardner (Smithfield)
- Sympathies extended to the families of:**
- * **Frances Dyer**, spouse of Rev. James Dyer, died on March 18.
 - * **Barbara Ann Crooks**, surviving spouse of Rev. Paul Crooks, died March 30.
 - * **Rev. William D. Wright**, retired associate pastor, died April 16.
 - * **Donald Lee Bender**, spouse of Rev. Sonja Bender, died April 22.

Happy "May" Birthdays

- | | |
|----|--|
| 11 | Clara Jackson (Lansing) |
| 21 | Rev. Steve Smith (Mt. Pleasant) |
| 23 | Pastor Al Hoder (Maynard, Flushing, Bannock) |
| 26 | Jackie Taggart (Asbury Greater Parish) |
| 27 | Rev. Randy Weaver (Lincoln Avenue) |
| 27 | Rebecca Gifford (Thoburn) |
| 31 | Sharri Roxann Kovacik (Bray's Chapel, Riverview) |

Changes in the District

- Rev. Dr. Thomas Snodgrass (Scott Memorial) is retiring from full time ministry as of June 30. Bishop Malone has appointed Rev. Snodgrass to the Jewett and New Rumley UMC's as of July 1 as a part time retired elder.
- Rev. Steve Modranski (Sycamore Tree) is retiring from ministry as of June 30.
- Rev. Timothy Monteith has been appointed by Bishop Malone to the Scott Memorial UMC as of July 1.



YSF District Coin Challenge: Bring your coins! Bring bills to counteract the other district's coins. Each dollar will take away one ounce of a competing district's coins.

They are once again having a coin challenge at YAC to benefit YSF (Youth Service Fund). The past 2 years Ohio Valley has come in 2nd place next to Tuscarawas District and we want to WIN this year. Please start collecting your change now (paper \$ counts also). Change can be dropped at the District Office until June 6th or taken with you to YAC.

YAC and YSF information can be found at www.eocumc.com/youth

Pastors, Mark your calendars for the Fall-for-All Clergy Retreat, November 13, 14, 15 at the Carlisle Inn, Sugarcreek. More information will be in future newsletters.

*Ohio Valley District
United Methodist
Church*

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Pine Grove UMC Open House

Since 1884 Pine Grove UMC has been ministering to the congregation and the surrounding communities. Pine Grove is a small, active church located on Co. Rd. 72, 3.7 miles west of Hammondsville, in Jefferson County, Ohio. This is a rural community where there are more cows than people. Major events started in 2001, when the church was raised and a basement, with restrooms was added.

In May of 2014, a stained glass window installed and dedicated. The window was a labor of love as several of the woman of the community and congregation designed and constructed and then saw to the installation of the window.

The bell cupola that had been on the building was blown off, the roof was patched, but the bell and cupola were not put back in place. After many years of planning, designing and fund raising, a steeple design was settled on. In December 2016, a steeple with the original church bell was installed.

Thank You!

Due to your past and present support these major goals have been reached at Pine Grove United Methodist Church. Please join us in celebration on May 21, 2017, at Pine Grove United Methodist Church County Road 72, Hammondsville for a Trio of Events;

9:30AM for Morning Worship/Dedication of Steeple,

Followed at Noon till 3pm by an Open House

SOUP/SALAD/SANDWICH

Luncheon

Donations Accepted

---Also at Noon till 3PM ---

A COOKIE WALK

Homemade Cookies, Great for Weddings or Graduation Parties, at \$5.00 per Dozen

Where is the DS in May?

May

7	Preach at The Bridge
8 - 9	Cabinet
11 10:30 AM	Compass Group Leaders Meeting at Tiltonsville UMC
16	Mahoning Valley District Health Care Meeting
18 - 29	Wedding and Honeymoon
31	Cabinet

Office Closed on May 8 & 9 due to Administrative Assistant's Retreat and Training. Office closed May 25 & 26 and 29 for Memorial Day weekend.

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.

Deadline for submissions to the June newsletter is May 24.