



## WHAT DOES EASTER MEAN TO YOU?

*“Jesus said ... ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die’” (John 11:25–26, ESV)*

This month we will join Christians around the world in the celebration of Easter-- without a doubt, the most significant celebration of the Christian year. Christians observe Easter to honor the resurrection of Jesus three days after his death. It is the oldest Christian holiday and marks the end of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting and reflection.

You are doubtlessly aware that Easter is a “movable” date on our calendar, sometimes coming in March, at other times in April. There is an involved reason for that. For a couple hundred years of the early Church, there was not a consensus on when Jesus’ resurrection should be celebrated. According to The Huffington Post, the first recorded observance of Easter happened in the second century, though it is likely that Christians were celebrating the resurrection much earlier than that.

In 325, bishops from around the Roman Empire gathered at the Council of Nicaea to hammer out a solution to theological debates raging in the early church. Among them was the question of when Easter should be observed. The council decided that Easter would be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox; that is how the date for the observance of Easter is determined today.

Partly for its complicated history and in part due to questions (much like with Christmas) about possible ties to pagan practices, the Puritans scorned religious holidays like Easter, claiming they lacked a scriptural basis. In fact, some Christian denominations are still wary of religious holidays. Jehovah’s Witnesses and many Pentecostal churches, for example, still discourage their members from celebrating Easter.

Regardless of how you view the history of the celebration of Easter, the **meaning** of Easter, for millions of Christians, is that of honoring and recognizing Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, and His glorious promises of eternal life for all who believe in Him. As theologian Marcus Borg has put it: “The central meaning of Easter is... that Jesus continues to be known and that he is Lord. The tomb couldn’t hold him. He’s loose in the world. He’s still here. He’s still recruiting for the kingdom of God.”

*Dr. Bradley G. Cole*



## THREE RIVERS VIM TEAM RETURNS FROM SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO NORTH CAROLINA



The Volunteers in Mission team, consisting of 24 persons representing nine churches from the Three Rivers District, journeyed to Lumber Bridge, North Carolina from March 4 - 10. They worked on two homes that happen to be three houses apart on the same street. A roof was replaced along with walls and ceilings, and two bathroom floors. In addition, a small porch (including steps) was replaced. Their work also included painting walls, ceilings and the porch.



### WHAT SNACK FOOD HAS SIGNIFICANCE DURING LENT?

- Pretzels
- Popcorn
- Chocolate
- Jelly Beans

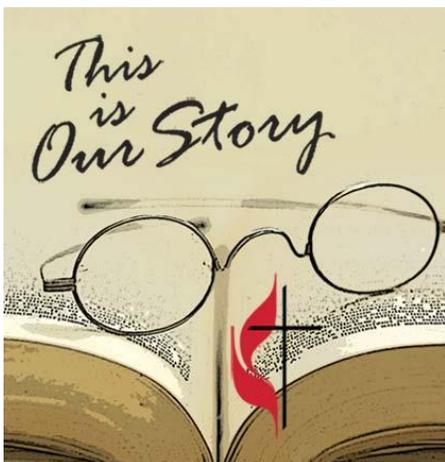
### HOW LONG IS EASTERTIDE?

- 24 hours (midnight Holy Saturday to Sunday)
- One Week
- 3 days (Maundy Thursday to Sunday)
- 50 days



(answers on page 8)

## THE UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OHIO



The UMHSO Convocation & Annual Meeting will be on April 22 at the Trinity UMC located at 200 N. Summit St., Bowling Green. The theme will be “Celebrating Women of Courage, Character, and Commitment in the United Methodist Church” and will include sessions of interest to local church historians. The Society encourages church historians, pastors, local churches, and other interested persons to join and attend this annual event. The UMHSO spring 2017 newsletter which includes a membership/registration form and a detailed schedule is at <http://www.umhso.org/Newsletter-Winter> **Heritage Sunday is May 21.** If your church is **celebrating a special anniversary** contact [Don Trigg](#) (330-715-5504) for acknowledgement of this landmark event.

## HEALTHY LIVING CHALLENGE, ROUND 2

According to a recent article in *The Interpreter* (Jan/Feb 2017), when you look at the general population, two-thirds are considered overweight. But for clergy the percentage is even higher—about 80 percent. So in order to help promote healthy lifestyles, we’re inviting the pastors of the Three Rivers District to participate (for fun and health) in the second round of the 6-Week Healthy Living Challenge. Starting the week of April 8, you will be encouraged for each day of the six-week challenge to (1) drink 32 ounces of water; (2) stop eating by 9 pm; (3) eat one serving of fruit; (4) eat two servings of vegetables; (5) keep a food journal; (6) take ten minutes to relax; (7) exercise for 30 minutes; (8) sleep at least seven hours.

Participants will be able to earn points in each category and keep track on a grid sheet we provide. (Starting week two you will have one of the above-mentioned components highlighted for double points that week.) This will be on an honor system. **You keep your own score.** At the end of each week you will send an email to the district office (by Monday 8:00 a.m.) reporting your points earned that week. **You do not have to share your weight. If you want you may share pounds or percentage loss.** Each Tuesday morning we will send participants a report of “standings” for the district so you can see how well you are doing!

In the first round of the 6-week Healthy Living Challenge last fall we started with pastors as a “pilot program,” but in this round we encourage you to invite members of your congregations or family members to try this as well. Just provide copies of our forms to those who want to participate, assign someone to receive the weekly reports from your group, and have fun getting healthy!



Pastors, look for an email with the forms to track results, as well as a Q&A sheet [or download forms here.](#)

**RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING** Saturday, April 29, 2017 at 9:00am to 2:30pm

Christ Woodland United Methodist Church ( 444 N Hawkins Avenue, Akron, 44313)

Discussions will include Defining the Doctrine of Discovery, understand definitions of racism and ideas on how to address racial injustice. For more information or to register contact [Tom Duce](#) 330-494-3337

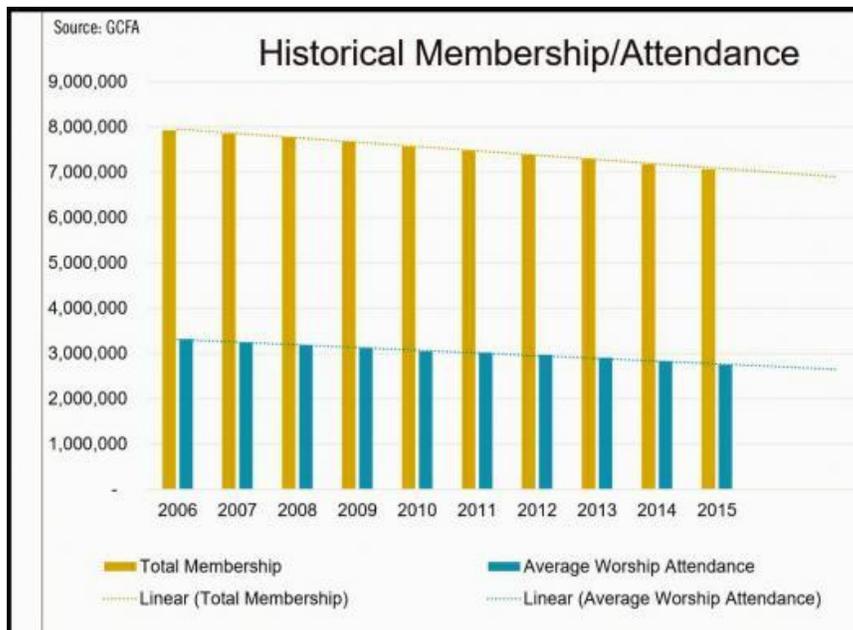
## REMAINING VITAL & HEALTHY DURING APPOINTMENT SEASON

[April 29, 2017 from 9:30a - 12:30p at Greensburg UMC] This workshop, by invitation, will offer transitioning tools and resources for the leaders and pastors in the church where a move-in or a move-out is scheduled.

## “STOP FIXING CHURCHES AND START SEEING THE PEOPLE CHRIST CALLED US TO REACH”

By Heather Hahn NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS)

The Rev. Junius B. Dotson made that declaration to the Discipleship Ministries board as he laid out his agency’s disciple-making strategies for the multinational United Methodist Church. At General Conference 2016, church leaders announced the denomination’s goal to make 1 million new disciples in the next four years. Dotson explained his agency’s intent, this is “not to save or to preserve an institution but for the sake of living out one of our scriptural values — it’s called the Great Commission. We have tried to reverse this decline by trying to offer technical fixes,” Dotson said,



“tinkering with our worship services, collecting huge amounts of data, tinkering with metrics and then when the metrics didn’t fit the picture we wanted, we readjusted the metrics. United Methodists”, he warned, “can’t program our way back to vitality.” [Image courtesy of GCFA] [Read more](#)

To Watch : The Rev. Junius B. Dotson’s 33-minute address to Discipleship Ministries board, [is here](#).

He offers practical ideas for maximizing discipleship at Easter [here](#).

### FREE WEBINARS FOR DEVELOPING CHURCH LEADERSHIP

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Creating a Leadership Culture** – Key components of a continuous leadership development culture and how your church can take a step in this direction. Leadership by church size. When: Apr 6, 2017 7:30 PM

Click here to register for [Creating a Leadership Culture](#)

**Closing Performance Gaps** – Between our current reality and where we want to be is a gap. We will look at how to close the correct gap and see more fruit in our ministry. When: Apr 7, 2017 2:30 PM

Click here to register for [Closing Performance Gaps](#)

**Ignite Your Leadership** – Christian leaders create a contagious environment. How’s your fire? Four steps to catching fire again! When: Apr 24, 2017 3:00 PM Click here to register for [Ignite Your Leadership](#)



### NASHVILLE UMC TO HOST DISCIPLESHIP WORKSHOP

Saturday, April 15 (9:30a - 3:30p)

Nashville UMC is located at 302 W. Millersburg St, Nashville, 44661. Each church is encourage to bring a team of people. To register contact, [Kelly Brown](#) at 800-831-3972 x 129 at the office of Congregational Vitality

## SPRING DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Sunday, April 23 at 3:00 p.m. at Coshocton Grace

In addition to all district clergy, the following local church leaders are voting members of District Conference and thus should attend: Lay Leader; Council Chair; Pres. UMM; Pres. UMW; Pres. UMYF; and Lay Member of Annual Conference. We will be conducting the business of the church in regards to district-level reports, budget, and leadership. An offering will be collected to assist our UM Missionaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Aaron and Mary Vandersommers, to "provide 250 mattresses for the UMC orphanages in Kinshasa and the two vocational schools for girls." The mattresses will be produced at a local factory at cost of \$35. Follow their ministry at [UMMissionCongo](http://UMMissionCongo) or support them through UMC Missionary Advance #3022154 or Congo Rural Development #3022293.



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLERGY—ATTENDANCE AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It is the duty of every ministerial member and local pastor under appointment of the annual conference to attend Annual Conference sessions. **Any clergy person unable to attend shall report by letter to the conference secretary, setting forth the reason for his or her absence.** Should any minister in active service be absent him or herself from the session of Annual Conference without a satisfactory reason for the absence, the matter shall be referred by the conference secretary to the Board of Ordained Ministry (The 2012 Book of Discipline ¶602.8). All members, both lay and clergy, who sign for full-time attendance at Conference are required to fulfill that commitment unless otherwise excused by the district superintendent; excuses shall be for emergency purposes only. The deadline to register for Annual Conference 2017 is May 12.

## THREE RIVERS FELLOWSHIP

MONDAY, JUNE 12

5:30 - 7:00P

450 Central Ave, Lakeside

Conference delegates, clergy and families are invited to  
join us in the parlor of the Lakeside UMC for light  
refreshments and fellowship.

# Clergy Spouse Breakfast & Fellowship

Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Time: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Where: Wesley Lodge, Lakeside

No need to RSVP, just show up!



Make new friends and spend time with old friends!



**Marketplace Shopping:**  
During breakfast and after short greeting and singing time!  
Don't forget to bring your checkbook!

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

The Marketplace: For every clergy spouse who loves to craft, sew, and bake, we invite you to bring your items to sell at our Lakeside Breakfast/Fellowship! 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](mailto:elsacourt@twc.com) or by calling 234-401-9454. For those who reserve a table, set-up begins at 8:30 a.m.

Deadline for a table reservation is June 1. Handmade and homemade items are valued because of their quality and price and we hope many of you will either sell items and/or shop. The proceeds will belong to the seller... this is not a fundraiser.

Childcare for children 18 months to 4th grade is available at Lakeside UMC. The cost is a donation. All clergy have received a Child Care Registration Form. To guarantee a spot for your child, register by 5-15.

Please register online:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ChildCare17>

Sponsored by the East Ohio Conference, District Offices, and Cabinet Spouses

## YOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

YAC will be June 9-11, 2017 at Lakeside. Let's have an even bigger group this year from Three Rivers! Contact [Chasity](#) for more details at 740-498-8134 x 210

**Registration:** \$50 ( RSVP by May 25)

Walk-Ins: \$70 (t-shirt not guaranteed).

**Food package:** \$32 per person for 4 meals

(Friday dinner option available)

**Accommodations:** Housing fills up quickly, don't wait! call Lakeside Housing (419-798-4461 x 230) or visit our YAC website at <http://www.eocumc.com/yac/>



We had an awesome time at our first Sticky Faith retreat last October. We are anticipating an equally awesome time for round two! Youth Leaders & Parents, **RSVP Chasity an approximate number of students and adults by April 21st.**

## Three Rivers District Youth Sticky Faith Retreat

Friday April 28th at 7pm-  
Saturday April 29th at 7 pm

Gay Street UMC  
18 N Gay St, Mt Vernon, OH 43050

Cost is \$10 per student  
Includes all meals, overnight stay and all  
retreat materials!

Each student should bring: an emergency med.  
form, a bible, a snack to share, sleeping bag  
and pillow and whatever else they may need for  
the overnight stay.

Students 6th grade and up are welcome!

**DON'T MISS THIS!**  
FAITH BUILDING, WORSHIP, FUN  
ACTIVITIES, CONNECTING WITH OTHER  
YOUTH GROUPS AND LOTS OF INSANITY  
For more info, Contact Chasity at (740)498-8134 or  
[bokuvu@yahoo.com!](mailto:bokuvu@yahoo.com)

# APRIL 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>WHAT SNACK FOOD HAS SIGNIFICANCE DURING LENT?</b> The correct answer is <b>pretzels</b>.</p> <p>The twisted pretzel is said to have its roots in Lent. According to legend, a 7th century monk made bread from flour, water, and salt—no eggs or milk because they were avoided during Lent. He then formed it into the shape of a common prayer pose of the day, hands on opposite shoulders. You have to turn the pretzel upside down to see it. [To learn more Easter History visit <a href="#">UM Communications</a> ]</p>						<p><b>1</b>  <b>District UMW Spring Meeting</b>            @ Danville            8:30a - 1p</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>CABINET</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>9</b>            Palm Sunday</p>	<b>10</b>	<p><b>11</b>  <b>Mission &amp; Ministry Mtg</b>            to review Project 3:12 applications            3:00 p.m.</p>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>Good Friday</b>  <b>Office Closed</b></p>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>16</b></p> 	<b>17</b>	<p><b>18</b>  <b>PAUMCS</b>            Spring Mtg at Oak Chapel, Wooster  <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b></p>	<b>19</b>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>Compass Leaders Training</b>            10:30 a.m. at district office</p>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<p><b>23</b>  <b>TR District Spring Conf</b>            at Grace UMC @ 3p</p>	<b>24</b>	<b>CABINET</b>		<b>27</b>	<p><b>28</b>            TR DISTRICT            Fri 7p --Sat 7p</p>	<p><b>29</b>            YOUTH RETREAT            Mt. V. Gay St UMC  <b>Healthy Transition Workshop</b>            Greensburg UMC</p>
<b>30</b>	<p><b>HOW LONG IS EASTERTIDE?</b> The correct answer is <b>50 days</b>.</p> <p>Easter is the festival day celebrating the Resurrection of Christ after his crucifixion. The season of Easter, like that of Christmas, lasts longer than the initial day. Eastertide is seven weeks or 50 days, including Ascension Day or Ascension Sunday and concluding with Pentecost Sunday, which celebrates the birth of the church.</p>					

# MAY 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Superintendency Committee 5-7p	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 <b>ADMIN ASST RETREAT</b> Office Closed	10	11	12	13
		CABINET				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		D.S. Vacation				
21 Heritage Sunday <a href="#">Ideas to celebrate your local church's history</a>	22	23	24 District Clergy Gathering with Dr. Call 9a-noon Roscoe UMC	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day Office Closed	30	31 CABINET	June 1	June 2	June 3
		Licensing School				



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[3riversdist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3riversdist@sbcglobal.net)

**Return Service Requested**



When it comes to faith development, we need to make the most of the elementary and youth years. The Barna Group states that two out of three Christians – 64%- make their commitment to Christ before their 18th birthday. And most kids develop their entire idea of who God is and choose whether or not they'll have a relationship with Christ before leaving the 5th grade. A life-changing experience is right around the corner for the young people in your congregation and community. I encourage you to invest in the spiritual development of the children and youth of your congregation and community. This investment will pay dividends that last for eternity. If you need promotional materials click on the [Promotional Materials tab](#) when you visit the [EOC Camps Website](#) or contact the [Spiritual Formation; Camps & Retreat Office](#) or call 330-499-3972 x108.