
Ohio Valley District
The United Methodist Church

Valley Vision

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THE DIVINE SEEKER

Romans 8:37-39, No! in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, not anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I must confess to forgetting the truth and power of God as Paul presents it in the scripture when we discuss, debate, argue, and injure one another over the issues roiling our denomination. We have done and said some horrific things to one another in the past few years. I fear more behavior that resembles our culture's politics rather than the peaceful Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It causes me grief to see us treat one another in ways that are other than Christian, and in ways that are not loving. I am in relationship with Traditionalists, Centrists, and Progressives. Christ binds us together with Cords of Love that cannot be broken. Yet, we seem bent on breaking all the bonds of peace. I have heard and seen all groups demand their own way, shame others, judge others, and give in to anger. Truth be known,

sometimes I have participated in it. Please forgive me.

This all grieves me. For quite some time we have written about those seeking God. We have had Sunday School classes called Seekers. Books and articles have been written about those seeking God. The assumption is that people seek God. There is some truth in that. We were created to be in relationship with God and one another. The greater truth is God seeks us. If the name seeker is to be used, we should capitalize it and use it as a name for God.

Human seekers are rather distracted, less than half-hearted, and quite likely to seek something (really anything) other than God. The Divine Seeker is entirely different. This Seeker is fully committed, all in, relentless, focused, tireless, without a single pause, and does not fail. God's love requires no less. Does not matter where we go, what we do, what we say, or think; God seeks us out in love inviting us into relationship. Every human being on the planet is constantly invited into Grace. Location, Thought, Behavior, Words, none of these can prevent the Seeker from fully loving and embracing you/us! This is God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit.

You might be Traditional, Centrist, or Progressive (few of us are any one of these things. We are all a mixture of these three), doesn't matter. The Seeker pursues you, loves you, wants you, finds you to be beautiful and wonderful.

We find it quite difficult to believe that God finds all of us to be worth seeking, let alone beautiful and wonderful. We do not see others in this way. We often do not see ourselves this way. We certainly are not seekers like God is a Seeker. What we see is not how we are alike in the eyes of God, but all the ways we differ from one another. We major in seeing differences, and then using these differences as a means of separating one from another for the purpose of condemnation. We seek a church and a god made in our own image. Such is our idolatry. We seem to never learn. We forget the basic stories of Jesus. We forget all the sinners, ragamuffins, excluded, ignored, and condemned people Jesus loved, accepted, and forgave.

I do not know where we will end up. I know too many of us pursue our own ends without regard to Jesus Christ and one another to have much hope that we will remain one body deeply in love with the Lord and one another. But I have great hope in the Seeker! God will pursue us in the face of our sin and idolatry. God will pursue all the silly Traditionalists, Centrists, and Progressives into whatever hole we run down into seeking something other than God. I have great hope in a Love that will not fail. I have great hope in the Seeker who makes us MORE than conquerors (any bully can be a conqueror). I have great hope in God who gives life from death, finds the lost, gives rest to the weary, heals the sick, frees the prisoner, restores the forsaken, and gives justice to the innocent. Hope? Yes, lots of hope in Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Bruce



COST OF POVERTY EXPERIENCE

SATURDAY, JULY 13TH, 9—11:30 A.M.
GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 16 RIDGECREST ROAD, WHEELING, WV 26003

The House of the Carpenter is partnering with Think Tank, another non-profit from Springfield, OH to bring the Cost of Poverty event to the area. The COPE is a poverty simulation event designed to allow people to experience living many of the issues confronted by families in poverty. The simulation provides each participant a role in a family and assigns the family a variety of tasks to be completed during a “week” which is a 15-minute period of time. The goal is to be in better condition at the end of the week than you were at the beginning of the week. There will be 4 weeks of events for each family.

This program is open to anyone who would like to learn about the plight of those living in low income. If anyone would like to participate in this event, you may register at the event bright website at the link below or go to Facebook: houseofthecarpenter01 to register.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faith-cope-participant-registration-house-of-the-carpenter-tickets-61440083945?fbclid=IwAR1h2Kfq7uNJ76WEsf-M_5aGcVAqDJXPf-dSg5I9ry3KXUHibgD2VDCxza0

This is a free event.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Lucarelli at the House of the Carpenter, 304-233-4640.



EAST OHIO CONFERENCE
UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

UMVIM TEAM LEADER TRAINING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 9:30 A.M.—4:00 P.M.
URBAN MISSION
 301 N 5TH ST, STEUBENVILLE OH 43952

Enjoy a day of fellowship & conversation to learn about leading a mission team locally, nationally & internationally. Cost is \$35 (includes lunch, team leader manual & required background check). For questions or scholarship information, please contact Kathy Dickriede 330-468-2517 or kdickriede@gmail.com.

Register by August 14 online at https://umvimttraining_urbanmission.eventbrite.com or forms are available in the District Office.

KNOW SOMEONE HEADED TO COLUMBUS FOR COLLEGE THIS FALL?

Whether they're a first year, transfer, or coming back ready to graduate, Central City Church would love to connect and welcome them. Central City Church is a new United Methodist in Columbus. We meet just south of OSU's campus, and we're easy to get to from other schools as well. We'd love to connect with your child or grandchild who's headed to school. In fact, we have a gift that we'd love to get to them. It's a coffee tumbler, filled with gift cards and information about UM Campus ministries in Columbus. If you know someone headed to Columbus, we'd love to connect. You can reach Renee at renee@centralcity.co or call/text Renee at (614) 323-8262 or Adam at alreed395@gmail.com. They'd love to meet any students around this summer for orientations.



CENTRAL CITY CHURCH



BEDS FOR KIDS

Brentwood United Methodist Church, Urban Mission Ministries and volunteers are coming together to build bunk beds for kids in the Ohio Valley. This project is being modeled after a national program, “Sleep in Heavenly Peace.”

Rev. Bruce Hitchcock, District Superintendent, presented a check for \$1200.00 on behalf of the Ohio Valley District Mission Funds. Angela Kirtdoll, Executive Coordinator of United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network presented a check for \$2000.00 to purchase supplies for Bunk Beds for Kids.

Volunteer work coordinator, Mr. Kenny Elson, and Terrance Rainbow, Joshua Coordinator at Urban Mission, are excited to begin working together to provide beds for children who are now sleeping on floors or a sofa. UMW are asked to donate standard twin size sheets, pillows and blankets/comforters. Donations will be accepted at Urban Mission Ministries.

We are looking for men and women with carpentry skills to volunteer one day or more. To volunteer, please contact Brentwood UMC at 740-264-4531 or the Urban Mission Joshua Program at 740-282-8010.

EAST OHIO 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Bishop Tracy S. Malone presided over the 50th session of Annual Conference, which was held again this year at Lakeside Chautauqua on the shore of Lake Erie.

Annual Conference 2019 was the third conference centered on our quadrennial theme *Bearing Fruit that Lasts: Called, Committed, Connected*. This year we highlighted the joy of making a commitment to take up residence in God’s love and extend that love to others.

“Being committed to Christ commits us to one other. We are bound together in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. We are bound through the covenant of our baptism. Friends, this is who we are,” Bishop Tracy S. Malone said in her Episcopal Address.

The six worship services of the week were guided by the words from John 15:9-15 (CEB) and the business sessions reinforced our East Ohio Conference vision to “equip and support pastors, congregations and faith communities to grow in their capacity bear fruit that lasts” making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Midwest Mission Distribution truck and Eastbrook Mission Barn truck left Lakeside carrying more than \$12,000 in cash donations as well as 850 cleaning buckets, 750 hygiene kits, 540 school kits, 1,325 personal dignity kits, 185 baby palettes, 300 homemade hospital gowns, and medical supplies.

Thanks to the generosity of clergy and laity members of Annual Conference and their congregations, countless lives will be touched because of the money given during these offerings:

- \$24,958.46 was given during the Annual Conference offering at Lakeside. This total does not include donations sent to the Conference lockbox, which will increase the total given in the offering. Each of the following will receive one-third of the offering: Urban Mission in Steubenville, the general fund at Africa University, and the Bishop’s Discretionary Fund.
- \$7,391 was raised during the 5k Run /1-mile Walk for missions.

The entire 2019 Annual Conference Report can be found at <https://www.eocumc.com/>.

OHIO VALLEY NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Ohio Valley District was very proud of :

- Rev. James Gaston who was ordained an Elder.
- Rev. Ed Kovacik and Rev. Andrew Thompson who were commissioned as Provisional Elders.
- Rev. Ashley Steele who served as liturgist during Tuesday morning worship.
- Jonathan Monteith, Joseph Monteith, and Paige Arbaugh who participated in the Monday morning Service of Commemoration and Communion.
- The Ohio Valley Youth who participated in the Youth Annual Conference.

Thanks to:

- Rev. Seth Filburn and Beverly Pethtel for serving as our District Pages.
- Betty Wilson and all those who met daily to lift persons in prayer.
- Donald Devore, Kim Baxter, Maura Birney, Holly Brindley, Cindy Harrah, Ron Smith, Sylvia Deaton, and Ruth Hanson who volunteered to serve as ushers.
- Sue Rogers, and Gay Warren who helped with registration.
- Kim Baxter, Maura Birney, Beverly Pethtel, Pastor Ken Ogg, Rev. Bob Miller, and Sylvia Deaton who volunteered to serve as Communion Stewards.
- Pastor Lee Iden, Rev. Ed Kovacik, Pastor John Carpenter, Pastor Ken Ogg, Pastor Michelle Lucarelli, Rev. Steve Smith, Sylvia Deaton, Karen Kinney, Cindy Harrah, Linda Baker, and Susan Brown who volunteered to serve as tellers.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 8 Rev. Kevin Rinkes (Toronto First)
- 10 Rev. James Taggart (Asbury Greater Parish)
- 18 Pam Dawson (Bowerston First & Trinity)
- 28 Pastor Lee Iden (Bergholz/Chestnut Ridge)
- 31 Pastor Mike Cunningham (Deersville/Pleasant Valley)

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 8 Sharon Ogg (Sherrodsville Calvary/Dellroy)
- 11 Rev. Ashley Steele (Urban Mission)
- 15 Pastor Bill Westling (Brentwood/Riverview)
- 20 Pastor Deborah Kellar (Scio)
- 23 Rev. Vernon Palo (Mt Pleasant –Carroll)
- 25 Pastor Ian Thornton (Bellaire First)
- 26 Pastor Larry Helms (Old Wegee/Neffs)

Prayer Concerns

Please pray for the families of :

- Neil Wilds, *retired Elder*, who died May 21.
- L. Carroll Johnson, *surviving spouse of the Rev. Albert J. Johnson Jr.*, who died May 18.
- Catherine Lee, *surviving spouse of the Rev. George E. Lee*, who died June 21.



Reaching New People



- What growing, fruitful churches are doing today
- Reintroducing your church to your community
- How pastors lead into the mission field
- How laity grow relationships that introduce new people to the church
- Leave the workshop with a six month action plan

Mark your Calendar!!!

When: September 27 & 28, 2019

Where: Thoburn UMC
209 E Main St.
St. Clairsville, OH 43950

Sponsored by the Ohio Valley District and the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church

Workshop runs
Friday 6:00pm - 9:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 4:00pm

Churches will be invited to participate in an optional 12 month coaching cluster for clergy and laity to implement the fruitful behaviors taught in the workshop.

You can read comments from past participants here:

<http://wp.me/P1Mvzd-lfk>

Register your church's team for this free workshop with Paul Nickerson! A team should consist of the pastor and at least 3 laity. The workshop will be an intensive, practical, hands-on training on how growing congregations can reach new people. Lunch on Saturday will be provided.

REGISTRATION – Due by September 20

For the purposes of planning the workshop and handouts, please complete and return to the Ohio Valley District UMC, 352 Canton Rd, Wintersville OH 43953. You can also e-mail the information to cevans@eocumc.com or give Carol a call at 740-264-1601 by September 20.

Church: _____

Number Attending: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone/e-mail: _____

**Ohio Valley District
The United Methodist Church**

352 Canton Road
Wintersville, OH 43953

Phone: 740-264-1601
Fax: 740-264-1972
E-mail: cevans@eocumc.com
Web: www.eocumc.com/ohiovalley

Non-Profit Organization

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Electronic Service Requested



With the DS in July and August

July

- 1-15 DS on Vacation
- 4 Independence Day—Office Closed
- 16 DS at Area Center

August

- 19-20 Ministry Consults
- 26 Ministry Consults
- 27-29 Cabinet

Summer Office Hours: Monday—Thursday, 8:00 a.m.—noon and 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

Changes on the District

Kevin Daugherty will be assigned as Supply Pastor to Brilliant UMC effective July 1.

Pastor Ken Staley will be appointed to the Harrisville/Pleasant Grove Charge effective July 1.

Becky Latynski will be assigned as Supply Pastor to Brooks Run UMC and Bridgeport First UMC effective September 1.



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.