



“GOD WITH US”

“...he paused a little, and then with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, ‘The best of all is, God is with us’; and then...again repeated the heart-reviving words, “The best of all is, God is with us!”¹

There is hardly a more central promise that God has ever made to us human beings than this one– that God is with us! No matter what comes our way, there is this affirmation that the God of all creation will never leave us nor forsake us. Just think of the alternative– that God is **not** with us! What would **that** be like? (I don’t want to know.)

What if God were only willing to be “with us” as long as we don’t make mistakes, take wrong turns, get too obnoxious, etc.? If God should ever choose not to be with us, then words like grace, mercy, and love would have no meaning. This is the time of year when we especially celebrate this promise made clear in the birth of Jesus. Matthew 1:22-23 puts it this way:

“All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, “which means, ‘God is with us.’”

Jesus was born, yes, but he was also sent, and “Emmanuel” was one of the names assigned to him. “God with us.” He turned life upside down with the message he presented. But he also left people with the sense that they had never been closer to God than when they were with him. (Or should we say, when **he** was with **them**?)

God is not indifferent to us. God came to us, in the most radical way, by taking our humanity onto himself. May we rejoice in that glorious good news! May we, this Christmas, know more than we have ever known before that God has come to us in Jesus and that we can always live in the assurance of his presence.

¹ (The Journal of John Wesley, ed., Percy Livingstone Parker, Chicago, IL: Moody Press, p.419)

Important Announcement: It is with mixed feelings that I inform the churches and clergy of the Three Rivers District of my intention to retire effective June 30, 2019. It has been an extreme pleasure and honor to have served as your superintendent over these past four and a half years. It has been a highlight of my ministry in The United Methodist Church, which began in February of 1978. Over these years I have had the blessing of serving in four local church appointments and two connectional appointments beyond the local church, as well as this most recent period as a district superintendent. I have had the joyous privilege of ministering with and to people at high moments of celebration in their lives and times of deep sorrow. I have especially enjoyed the strong relationships formed on our district. I am certain to miss many things about my years of active ministry, but the time has come when it seems right to prepare for its conclusion. Please know that my earnest endeavor will be to serve well over these remaining months.

2019 LAY SERVANT TRAINING



-- **Basic Coursework** is a 2-day study and must be taken prior to any certified course and provides incoming Lay Servants with the tools they need to provide leadership for the local church through leading, caring and communicating. The text provided by the UMC is entitled:

Lay Speaking Ministries: *"God calls you to a life of servanthood as a disciple of Jesus Christ. This course will aide you in serving the church in a greater capacity."*

-- **Certified** -- choose one of the courses listed below:

Leading Worship: Worshiping with the United Methodists: Revised by Hoyt Hickman (Instructor: Brad Call)
"This book is essential reading for clergy and lay worship leaders and will be helpful for explaining and interpreting the official United Methodist pattern to old and new members."

-- Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, Professor of Worship- Boston Univ. School of Theology

Preaching: From Pew to Pulpit by Clifton F. Guthrie (Instructors: Gary Campbell & John Armstrong)
"This sparkling book introduces preaching to lay preachers and seminary students while bringing fresh and provocative ideas to seasoned preachers." --Ronald J. Allen, Christian Theological Seminary

A detailed assignment will be mailed to you with your book after you register for the coursework. The 2016 UMC Book of Discipline ¶ 247.11 states: *To maintain status, a report and reapplication with recommendations must be submitted annually and a refresher course approved by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries must be completed once in every three years.*

DEADLINE for registration is February 15, 2019

It is very important to register early! Materials need to be ordered in a timely manner.

When: Basic Course: **Friday, March 15, 2019** from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. **and**
Saturday, March 16, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Certified: **Saturday March 16, 2018** from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Prairie Chapel UMC, 45494 County Road 23, Coshocton, OH 43812 (directions at www.pchapel.org)

NAME: _____ **CHURCH:** _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

E-mail: _____ **PHONE: (Best #):** _____

Course Level: (pleased select one) **BASIC:** ___ NEW (first time) or ___ RENEWAL

CERTIFIED: ___ NEW (first time) or ___ RENEWAL

Advanced Courses for those seeking Certified Lay Servant Status: Please select your first choice

___ Preaching: From Pew to Pulpit or ___ Leading Worship: Worshipping with the United Methodists

Special Lunch needs _____

Lunch will be catered. Please indicate food sensitivities and/or allergies or specialized diet (ex: diabetic, gluten free, vegan or vegetarian). Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs!

The registration fee is \$25.00. This fee covers the cost of materials and lunch.

Make check payable to: Three Rivers District with Memo: Lay Servant Training

Mail \$25.00 & this form to Three Rivers District, 415 Walnut St, Coshocton, OH 43812

It is our expectation that each participant will complete the homework, read required training materials and arrive prepared for lively discussion. We will be taking pictures on Saturday for a Lay Servant Ministries District Directory.

Questions? Contact Mandy Armstrong 330-432-2024.

VIM PROJECT TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE POLE BUILDING AT KEENE FOR TRAILERS

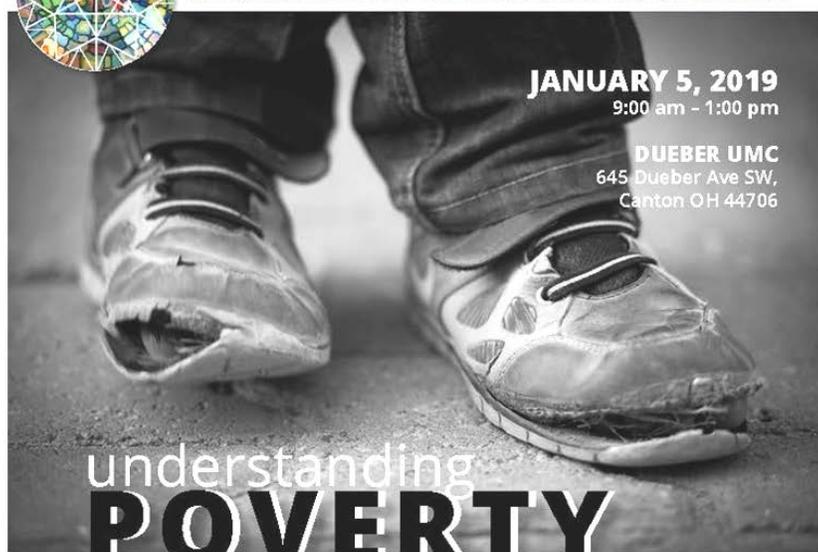
Did you know that Three Rivers has TWO tool trailers that are used throughout the year for a variety of missions and ministries?

These trailers were donated to the district and are graciously housed at Keene UMC. Additionally, over the last few years, local TR churches have contributed funds to purchase many tools necessary to perform the tasks and construction on these mission trips and outreach projects. The Mission & Ministry Strategy Team has determined the next step should be to protect our resources against weather and theft by the construction of a pole building on the property of Keene UMC to house the trailers. This will also make us compliant to insurance requirements. If you or your church would like to make a donation to this project, please send your check to the district office with "TRAILERS" written on the memo line.



PERSPECTIVES

A MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES EVENT OF THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



JANUARY 5, 2019
9:00 am - 1:00 pm

DUEBER UMC
645 Dueber Ave SW,
Canton OH 44706

understanding POVERTY

simulation & discussion

**FREE & OPEN
TO EVERYONE**

Youth
Laity
Clergy

Understanding Poverty is an interactive experience that helps participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. **It is a simulation, not a game.**

Lunch will include time for reflection and discussion.



Presented by the East Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church in Partnership with:
Board of Church and Society • Bridges Out of Poverty • Committee of Religion and Race
Great Lakes Bridges • Thrivent Financial

Register @ <https://eastohiopoverysimulation.eventbrite.com> | Please register by December 28.

For more information contact Courtney Gould at vitality@eocumc.com

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY:

Poverty Simulation & Discussion

Sat. January 5, 2019 | 9am-1pm

Dueber UMC

645 Dueber Ave SW, Canton OH 44706

FREE, interactive experience designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month

Click to [register by Dec 28, 2018](#).

Presented in partnership with The Board of Church and Society, Bridges Out of Poverty, Committee on Religion and Race, Great Lakes Bridges and Thrivent Financial.

Rev. Lynne Hottle recently received board certification as a chaplain upon attending final interviews at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore Maryland. Rev. Hottle, retired deacon, serves as the Chaplain of Genesis Health Care Systems.

CONGRATULATIONS

MISSION & MINISTRY FUNDING

It is time to begin evaluation of 2018 Ministries & Missions funding and to complete applications for 2020 funding. These forms are typically ready mid-December and soon thereafter on the conference website. Please watch for an announcement of their availability in the near future. **The deadline to submit your 2018 evaluations and 2020 applications to the Three Rivers District office will be February 20, 2019**

Effective ministry programs are those that exhibit characteristics that strengthen the local church; educate people in the making and maturing of disciples for Christ; and create opportunity for witness and outreach. Mission projects are based on programs that serve the needy and involve the local congregation in hands-on ministry outreach. The East Ohio Conference is responsive to the needs of the local church while encouraging the local congregations and individuals to be the primary connection to ecumenical and community needs.

Funds for mission purposes are intended as "Seed Money" to help initiate ministry and mission outreach. Programs/projects should not be funded for more than 3 years unless extenuating circumstances merit up to 5 years. Ministries and Missions funding may not be used for capital expenditures or to provide clergy salaries.

For applicants to receive Ministries and Missions funding they must respond to the following questions:

- How does this project bring people to Christ?
- Is this a United Methodist outreach ministry? How is the local congregation involved in this ministry?
- Who is the target audience? What issue does this project address?
- How does this ministry help strengthen The United Methodist Church?
- How will the mission project decrease its reliance on this seed money over a 3 year period?
- Are there other funding sources available to this ministry?

Programs designated as **Advance Specials** will soon be receiving their paperwork for renewed status. There is a conference deadline of January 15. Don't forget to obtain the District Superintendent and/or Mission Chair signature prior to submitting your request. If you are interested in apply for Advance Special Status please contact the office for more information. An Advance Special "endorses" a ministry as appropriate for direct funding by individuals, churches & special offerings. These donor-directed monies offer long-term support in addition to local church support for the apportioned budget.

Registration Form for 2019 TR Leadership Event (Please fill out one form per person.)

Or go ONLINE to register at eocumc.com/threerivers under events tab

Name: _____ Church: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ REGISTRATION DEADLINE: **Monday , January 7, 2019**

Place the NUMBER of the workshops listed above that you would like to attend as well as an Alternate Choice

SATURDAY A. _____ B. _____ **ALT** _____

Mail registration & money: Three Rivers, 415 Walnut Street, Coshocton, OH 43812 memo: Leadership Event

Cost: \$5/person with a \$20 per church team cap.

Select One: ___ Payment is enclosed ___ Will pay at the door ___ My church is paying for me/our group

THREE RIVERS LEADERSHIP: COMMITTED TO BEARING FRUIT THAT LAST

Saturday, January 12, 2019 at Roscoe UMC in Coshocton from 9 AM – 12:30PM



By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples...Abide in my love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:8-12)

Doors will open at 8:45 a.m. with registration in the narthex and breakfast goodies provided in the Fellowship Hall prior to opening comments at 9:15 a.m. Please select two workshop/sessions and an alternate.

Cost: \$5/person with a \$20 per church team cap. **Registration deadline is Monday, January 7, 2019.**

1.) **A Place of Prayer** with Pastor Tadd Sponseller (Waterford UMC)

How do we go about birthing, growing, and releasing prayer into the life of a congregation?

2.) **Paul's "Show and Tell" Approach to Discipleship** with Jill Rock (Fredericktown UMC)

What did the Apostle Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 11:1 when he says "follow me as I follow Christ"? What can we learn from this model of "imitating Christ" as well as helping other believers to do the same?

3.) **Visual Liturgy** with Kathy Ellis

Discover how designing worship spaces can enhance the message, engage the membership and employ creative connection to God's word.

4.) **Leading Others to Lead** with Rev. Ron Shultz (Cuyahoga Falls' Family of Faith UMC)

In this workshop we'll uncover key elements and characteristics needed to identify and develop passionate, committed and focused leaders who can help revitalize your church. We'll look at areas such as vision-casting and organizing your vision once it's cast as well as, what should you look for in a leader and what is the pastor's roll in leading leaders to lead.

5.) **Engaging Hospitality** with Pastor Jason Snyder (Utica UMC)

When you Google "church hospitality" you get a 'to-do' check list. Your Hospitality Team implements the ideas– yet people aren't returning. Sometimes churches get so focused on the task at hand, that we lose the focus on the person in front of us. Engaging Hospitality will help us merge function with feeling.

6.) **Knowing Your Community** with Pastor Ken Smailes (Killbuck and Blissfield UMC)

How well do you know your community? Learn how to use demographic data from the Mission Insite online tools to be more effective witnesses and better adapt church ministries to your community's needs and beliefs about faith.

7.) **Creating a Culture for an Effective Church (Intro)** with Mark McDaniels (one session only)

Culture has the greatest impact on the future of your church. Get the culture right and the other details will fall into place! [This class is a repeat of last year's successful workshop and an introduction to Workshop # 8 listed below.]

8.) **Implementing Healthy Church Characteristics** with Mark McDaniels

Learn how to assess your current church culture and introduce characteristics or building blocks for a healthy church. [It is advisable to first take "Creating a Culture..." workshop #7 prior to session # 8.]

9.) **Telling Our Stories to Make an Impact for Christ** with Rick Wolcott, EOC Communications Director

Learn techniques for improving the reach – and the power – of your message by incorporating words, photos, videos and social media when telling the stories of your church's ministries.

10.) **Lay Servant Ministries: Making the Connections** Mandy Armstrong (TR Lay Servant Director)

Pastors, do you have members you would like to help guide into their calling within your church? Members, are you being called to serve in your church but not sure how? Let's make the connections.

DID YOU MAIL YOUR REGISTRATION? Early Deadline of January 7, 2019
The Leadership Event registration form can be found on page 4 of this newsletter
or online at eocumc.com/threerivers under the events tab.

HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS WORKSHOP

Mon, January 7 (9 AM -- 4:30PM) AND Tues, January 8 (9 - 11:30AM)

This is a two-day workshop. Please plan to attend both days.

[Register online](#) by December 31, 2018. It will be held at Faith UMC (300 9th St NW, North Canton * 44720). This workshop is sponsored by the East Ohio UMC Office of Congregational Vitality and North Canton Faith UMC. Using insights of family systems theory the Healthy Congregations workshop helps church leaders and members expand their understanding into how churches function as emotional systems. What can be done to prevent anxiety from becoming a toxic force in your congregation? The workshop is designed to help churches respond to the presence of anxiety in ways to help the church stay focused on its unique mission and purpose.



DECEMBER 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3 Deadline to enter EZRA Leadership Contact Joy if you need help	4	5	6 Office Closed for training	7	1 Clergy Christmas Gathering
			CABINET			8
9	10	11	12 Charge Conference North Liberty 4:30p.m.	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Office Closed	22
23	24 Glory to God in the highest! 	25 A Child is Born and his name shall be Emmanuel. <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29
		District Office Closed for Holidays				
30 Office Closed until Jan 3	31	 Merry Christmas & New Year Blessings from Brad, Sue and Joy at the Three Rivers 				

January 2019

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. Isaiah 1:18

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Year-end Local Church Reports must be entered into EZRA (Church Dashboard) by January 21, 2019		1 New Year's Day	2 Office Closed	3	4 Apportionments must be received at the EOC by Jan 4 to receive 2018 credit.	5
		CABINET				
6	7 Lay Servant Comm. Mtg 6:30p	8 Regional Cabinet 1:30p	9	10	11	12 <i>District Leadership Event See pg 5</i>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday observance. <i>All offices closed</i> Year-end Reports are Due	22	23	24 dCOM interviews	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	SAVE the DATE The Spring District Conference will be held on May 5, 2019 at Roscoe UMC in Coshocton. There will not be a January newsletter. The February edition will be sent out around Jan 28.	
CABINET						



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3riversdist@sbcglobal.net

Return Service Requested

If
you
look
for me
at Christmas
you won't need
a special star.
I'm no longer
just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.
You may not be aware of me
amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond
the stores and all the decorations.
But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do
and listen to your heart
you'll find I'm waiting there for you.
You're the one I want to be with,
you're the reason that I came,
and you'll find me in the stillness
as I'm whispering your name.
Love,
Jesus

(adapted from the Kimbolton UMC newsletter, Nov/Dec 2018)