



# Three Rivers Current

A Publication of Three Rivers District Union of The United Methodist Church



Issue III, Vol. 16 Editor: Joy Snyder

<http://www.eocumc.com/threerivers/>

SUMMER 2020



*“When anxiety was great within me,  
your consolation brought joy to my soul.” Psalm 94:19*

We all get anxious about life from time to time, but these last five months have hit many of us with an *anxiety-tsunami*!

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased anxieties in every area of life: health, safety, employment, schools, churches, family events (weddings, funerals, graduations, etc.).

- On top of COVID-19, we face the ongoing pandemic of racism that continues to infect our culture.
- On top of COVID-19; on top of the pandemic of racism, there is anxiety over toxic national politics heading into the fall elections.
- On top of COVID-19, the pandemic of racism and toxic politics there are all the anxiety-inducing issues we regularly face (finances, relationships, work, etc.).

So with all these anxieties stacking upon one another, we can certainly relate to the psalmist feeling overwhelmed by anxiety! It is good to know that the Bible speaks to our true human condition! Yet, the psalmist proclaimed that even in the most unstable times God is the one who brings comfort and joy to our soul.

What an opportunity to be a witness to God’s power! When the world around us is being overwhelmed by the *anxiety-tsunami*, God’s people can show a way through it. I’ve already seen it!

In the midst of these unstable times, I have seen clergy and laity trust in God’s care and expand the proclamation of the Gospel in new ways. Churches are posting worship services, bible studies, and mid-week services on Facebook, Youtube, Vimeo and Zoom. These efforts are bearing fruit as many of our Three Rivers churches are reaching more people than before COVID-19! There are stories in our district of giving equaling or improving over last year’s offerings as people continue to be faithful in participating in God’s mission.

Even with all the anxieties we are facing God is using the efforts of clergy and laity to bring salvation to an ever-expanding circle of people. God is at work. We can see it. We can feel it. These are examples of good news that brings joy to our souls!

These examples reminds me that for God’s people our comfort and joy is found in staying focused and committed to continue Jesus’ mission in this world. His mission, now through us, is “To preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

Therefore, in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic **remember** we still have a mission!

In the midst of a racism pandemic, **remember** we still have mission!

In the midst of toxic politics, **remember** we still have a mission!

In the midst of our regular daily anxieties, **remember** we still have a mission!

When anxiety is great within us, let us **remember** the great mission God has empowered us to continue and let us **remember** to keep encouraging one another.

Daily let us boldly serve this great mission God has empowered us to continue in the name of Jesus. In pursuit of God's mission for the world we will discover the Divine consolation that brings joy to our souls.

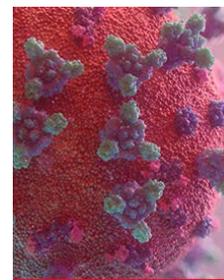
To help daily remember that God is **THE** shield against any *anxiety-tsunami* I encourage you to proclaim every morning Paul's courageous profession of faith...

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." -Romans 8:38-39

Blessings,

Rev. Ed Fashbaugh, Three Rivers District Superintendent

## *Guidelines for the Phased-in Reopening of EOC Church Buildings*



### **A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP TRACY S. MALONE AND THE CABINET**

Bishop Tracy S. Malone and the Cabinet will no longer offer a Conference-wide recommended phase for the reopening of our church buildings because each local church and faith community is in a unique setting and in locations with varying contextual realities. We urge local church leadership to be diligent in creating, implementing, and communicating guidelines for when and how worship services and small group gatherings can more safely meet again in-person. Task groups should use the Guidelines for the Phased-in Reopening of EOC Church Buildings in conjunction with information from their county health department in developing the guidelines for their context. Each group should meet often to monitor the coronavirus in its area and to make appropriate adaptations in congregational life.

The COVID-19 pandemic is fluid so as circumstances change across the Conference; we all must be prepared to adapt plans as needed to keep all within our care as safe as possible. The love and compassion of Jesus compels us to do no less. Visit the [coronavirus page of the Conference website](#) for the latest information from the Ohio Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, The United Methodist Church, and to read the updated Guidelines for the Phased-in Reopening of EOC Church Buildings.

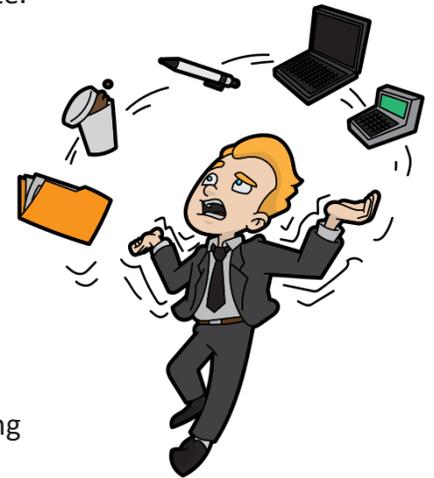
## CLERGY TIPS FOR MEETING REPORTING DEADLINES

We are blessed and thankful for the majority of the Three Rivers District clergy who meet consultation, charge conference and annual reporting deadlines! Thank you! You are already practicing many of the tips in this article. However, we know there are some who struggle with meeting these deadlines. If this is you, we hope the following tips will assist you in meeting those dreaded deadlines this year and in the years to come.

1. **Right now**, put the reporting deadline date on your smart phone calendar and set it to give you notices. *You may even want to set a date that is one week ahead of the actual deadline.*
2. **Start NOW!** Paperwork only becomes a major pain when we procrastinate.

The following may be helpful in organizing the paperwork...

- a. Organize the items you (the clergy) need to fill out
- b. Provide lay leaders with the items they need to fill out
- c. Set aside time **in the next two** weeks to begin
- d. Fill out as much as possible
- e. Note items that need special attention
- f. Set a date to have those items cared for
- g. Set a date to finish the paperwork
- h. Set dates to check in with lay leaders and how they are progressing
- i. Send all completed paperwork prior to final deadline



3. **CLERGY** please note you are responsible for **ALL** paperwork deadlines. This means even the paperwork your lay leaders are responsible for filling out (finances, evaluations, goals, etc.). So check in regularly with lay leaders to see how they are progressing, and if they need any assistance in meeting the deadlines. It may also be helpful to set reminders on your smart phone to check-in with lay leaders. **(Special note: As with clergy, the vast majority of our lay leaders are highly effective at getting in reports by the deadlines. Thank you!)**



4. If you run into any issues, have any questions, can't locate specific information, call the district office immediately for guidance. The closer we get to the deadline the busier the Three Rivers District's Administrative Assistant becomes with processing reports. The earlier you call the better for everyone.
5. Please note that funerals or having members in crisis are not acceptable excuses for missing deadlines...unless, of course, it is **YOUR** funeral☺. It is true that none of us knows when we may have to officiate a funeral, or sit with a member in crisis; however, we do know our reporting deadlines. Making the reporting deadline an administrative priority will keep us prepared to meet deadlines even in the event of an unexpected funeral or crisis.

If you follow these simple tips you should have no problem meeting reporting deadlines this year!

## CLERGY CONSULTS & SPRC MEETINGS

Three Rivers has scheduled clergy consultations and S/PPR Committee meetings for August and September. If the pastor or the SPRC chair has not received communication with details and forms please [contact the district office](#) immediately. Please note the following:

- All clergy one-one-one consultations will be conducted via ZOOM with the DS.
- Clergy will receive an email invitation to the zoom meeting a few days before the consultation. If you don't receive an email invitation by the day of the consultation, please contact the district office.
- The CPA/CPL is due prior to this ZOOM meeting. Clergy [times listed here](#)
- All SPRC meetings will be in-person, observing COVID guidelines, at designated locations. The SPRC Schedule is posted on the district website [here](#)
- The LCPA/LCPL forms are due prior to the SPRC meeting.
- **New this year**, the Clergy Ministry Assessment aka CMA is due at the same time as the LCPA.

The fall schedule and charge conference forms are now [available on the district website](#).

## ONE CONFERENCE: FIVE LOCATIONS! Tuesday October 20 @ 7:00 PM

Just like our churches and clergy, the district office is venturing into uncharted waters! We are planning to hold one charge conference that will be broadcast simultaneously to 5 local churches as well as members' homes. [Pre-registration required; details forthcoming.] **The pastor along with 1 or 2 church leaders from each church must be present at their assigned satellite locations in order to constitute a quorum and meet the requirements of an official charge conference.** All other church members can watch the conference from their personal devices. More details will be following on how this epic event will transpire. But we are excited to see how effective and efficient we can streamline the business of the local church amid COVID guidelines. You can view the assigned locations as well as the other charge conference schedules on the [district website under the resource tab](#). Due to the large amount of paperwork and administrative oversight for this meeting, we are requiring all churches to **submit final charge conference paperwork by October 1.**

## QUARANTINE IN NATURE AT FAMILY CAMP

If your household is getting cabin fever after months of sheltering in place, take a family camping vacation at one of our EOC Camps & Retreat Ministries camp sites. "The camp put out so many things for us, and the staff took such great care of us. It was as if we were actually at church camp, and we did everything you normally would there except we did it as a family. Way better vacation than going somewhere like Myrtle Beach and far safer," said the Rev. Brandon Keck of the experience he and his family shared at Camp Aldergate Family Camp.



"Being able to worship through scripture and song in the midst of God's creation was extra special after worshipping online for so many months. The talks we had around the campfire brought us together while keeping us a safe distance from people outside our household," said Katie Colbow, who stayed at Camp Wanake with her husband and their daughter.

[Learn more about this exciting new Family Camp opportunity.](#) Contact the camps to make reservations. [Aldersgate office](#) at (330) 627-4369; [Wanake office](#) at (330) 756-2333; or the [Asbury office](#) at (330) 569-3171

# **DISMANTLING RACISM**

## **PRESSING ON TO FREEDOM**

### **EOC ANTI-RACISM: Training Event being developed**

This spring the murder of George Floyd awakened many to the fact that the pandemic of racism continues to infect our nation. The Bishop and extended cabinet released a profound statement announcing our anti-racist commitment which can be read on the East Ohio Conference website along with other [Stand Against Racism Resources](#). This statement was then signed by over 700 clergy and laity of the East Ohio Conference.

It is our commitment to do more than simply release a statement. We desire to lead the EOC in pursuing our shared baptismal vow to, “accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.” Right now, a special task group is working on a conference anti-racism event for clergy. The details are in process, but it is expected that this event will take place this fall. Keep an eye out for details that will be forthcoming.

### **THREE RIVERS COMPASS GROUPS: Clergy Book Discussion**

In addition to, and in preparation for, the EOC anti-racism event, I am requesting that compass groups meet to discuss the book [White Fragility: Why It Is So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin DiAngelo. Currently the Bishop’s cabinet is reading this book for discussion at the annual cabinet retreat.

Not all compass groups have been active in the past year, so over the next several weeks I will be reviewing group assignments and ensuring that all are re-activated. In August, clergy will receive their compass group assignment, meeting dates, and a **complimentary copy of the book** made possible through the TR Leadership Development grant provided by East Ohio Conference Ministries and Mission Apportionment Funding. Please begin reading [White Fragility](#) when you receive it as preparation for compass group discussions.

### **VIRTUAL STUDY OFFERED: Starting a Journey of Reconciliation**

The East Ohio Multicultural Vitality office and the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) invite you to participate in the multi-week study “Starting a Journey of Reconciliation.” This interactive virtual study seeks to enlighten and empower participants toward reconciliation and restorative justice as united people of God that we might grow into a healthy, wholesome beloved community. This study will examine United Methodist and Christian tenets on racial justice; consider disparities and injustices in such areas as healthcare, education, and criminalization examined by respected authorities. It will explore racism’s impact in our communities while enlightening us to seek a beloved community. It will invite participants to reflect and be part of weekly conversations via Facebook and Zoom. The study begins at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 3. Use [this Zoom link](#) to participate and join [the private Facebook group](#) to engage in conversation throughout the week.

# AUGUST 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5 9A – 4P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Irish Rdg/Brmgh 7P Calvary/Kings 8P NCT Christ	6 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P South Vernon 7P Gay St 8P Mulberry	7 TR Office Closed	8
9	10	11	12 11A – 4P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P West Union 7P Plainfd/Orange 8P Fresno/Isleta	13 11A – 4P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Wesley Chapel 7P Danville 8P Jelloway/Berlin	14 TR Office Closed	15
16	17	18	19 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Lib. Chpl/Beulah 7P Amity 8P Epworth/Ebenzr	20 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Green Valley 7P Batmtwn/Waterfd 8P Fredericktown	21 TR Office Closed	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 TR Office Closed	29
<b>CABINET FALL RETREAT</b>						
30	31	<p><b>SUPPORT CONFERENCE MINISTRIES ONLINE</b></p> <p>The Conference has added a second way to make online donations to the life-changing ministries of The United Methodist Church. Both options are processed in a safe and secure manner using Vanco Services. Local churches and faith communities can continue to make online apportionment payments <a href="#">by clicking here</a>. Now individuals can make online donations to support Conference initiatives like Teach • Reach • Bless, Advance Specials, UMCOR, Special Sunday offerings and other East Ohio ministries <a href="#">by clicking here</a>.</p>				

# SEPTEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 11A & 3P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Kimbolton 7P Tipp/Pl. Grove 8P Lakeland Prsh	3 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Millersburg 7P Keene 8P Sugarcrk/Baltic	4 TR Office Closed	5
6	7 LABOR DAY Offices are Closed	8	9 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Loudonv/Lakev 7P Perrysvl/Bigelow 8P Nashville	10 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Conesville Chg 7P Roscoe 8P Pr Chpl/Canal Lws	11 Regular Office Hours Resume 9A – 4P Mon - Fri	12
13	14	15 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Brandon/Lock 7P Utica 8P Hopewell	16 9A – 2P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Killbuck/Blissfd 7P Moreland 8P Holmsvl/MtHope	17 9A – 4P DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Trinway/Prospect 7P Otsego/Bethel 8P Adamsville	18	19
20	21	22 9A – NOON DS Clergy Consults SPRC 6P Warsaw/NC/NG 7P West Lafayette 8P Grace	23 6P - SPRC Salem	24	25 CLERGY EXECUTIVE VIRTUAL SESSION	26 EAST OHIO VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONF
27 EAST OHIO VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONF	28	29	30	Oct. 1 DEADLINE for ALL Charge Conference Forms & Reports	Oct. 2	Oct. 3
CABINET						



U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit # 74  
Coshocton, OH  
43812

## SUMMER 2020 3 Rivers Current

415 Walnut St, Coshocton OH 43812-1533

740/622-8880 740/622-8884 FAX

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

**Return Service Requested**



### **WILL THIS BE YOUR LAST COPY OF THE *CURRENT*?**

The Three Rivers District Newsletter will no longer be mailed in bulk through the United States Post Office. Each year we send out 6-8 editions of The ***CURRENT*** depending on circumstances and current events at a cost of approximately \$900 per year. We have conducted several mailing audits over the last few years and the vast majority of pastors, churches and members prefer to receive their news electronically. We recognize that a small number of households do not have access to the internet. We are asking that you speak to your local church and learn if they have copies available. Several already provide this service. If not, you may contact the district office to make arrangement for a hard-copy of the newsletter to be mailed to your home. The district also provides weekly updates and announcements in the ‘***What’s Happening in TR?***’ e-news. We will continue to send out digital copies of ***The CURRENT*** every month or two, as well as our weekly e-news, to those who provide an email address. You can also view both ***The CURRENT*** and the ‘***What’s Happening?***’ on [our district website](#) under the news/events tab.

**Not receiving the TR e-news?** Send your request to [3riversdist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3riversdist@sbcglobal.net). Include the name of your church along with your name and email address.