



God  
is still  
speaking,

UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# SYNERGY

The Newsletter of the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations

Volume 7 Issue 1  
January 2012

Next submission deadline is  
Friday, January 20

### Featured Articles

Summer Camp Rally	1
Harmony Grove	2
Youth & Education	3
Financial Summary	4
Spring Meeting	6

#### Eastern Ohio Assoc Staff (330) 453-8178

- ◆ Rev. Carol Barth (x102)  
Interim Association Minister
- ◆ Rev. Richard Plant (x103)  
Associate Association Minister

#### Western Reserve Assoc Staff (216) 749-3116

- ◆ Rev. Donna Brooks (x102)  
Interim Association Minister
- ◆ Rev. Kurt Schaller Blaufuss (x110)  
Interim Ministry Placement & Credentialing
- ◆ Ms. Jenei Grigg (x100)  
Director of Gerry's House

#### Shared Staff (EOA & WRA) (216) 749-3116

- ◆ Ms. Margaret Mills (x101)  
Minister for Stewardship & Youth
  - ◆ Ms. Carolyn Willis (x108)  
Finance Director/Accountant
- (330) 453-8178
- ◆ Ms. Machel Miller (x101) Office  
Manager/ Search & Call Coordinator
  - ◆ Ms. Cheryl McGraw (x100) Communications and Admin Support

## 2012 Summer Camp Rally

Join us for the 2012 Summer Camp Rally at Pilgrim Hills on January 20 - 21, 2012. Meet some of the summer staff, volunteers and camp directors. Hear about future plans for Outdoor Ministries from Joyce Oyler, our Executive Director. Meet the new registrar, Ann Sperry. Learn how the camp experience can impact your congregation through church retreats, fellowship, faith formation and spiritual growth. There is no charge for this event! You can even register online at [www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/CampRallyRegForm.htm](http://www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/CampRallyRegForm.htm)

We encourage past campers, volunteers, staff and Camp Champions to attend and invite people who have not attended camp in the past. Share the experience, the energy and the excitement of Outdoor Ministries as we get ready for 2012 Summer Camp Season!

A health form is required for each rally participant. You can print the form at [www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/healthformrally.pdf](http://www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/healthformrally.pdf). It is strongly recommended that you complete, scan and email your form(s) to [anns@ocucc.org](mailto:anns@ocucc.org) before the rally. We will accept health forms at the event, but every participant (youth and adult) must have a health form on site.

Questions?

Contact Ann Sperry, Camp Registrar

[anns@ocucc.org](mailto:anns@ocucc.org)

or 800-282-0740, Ext. 207



## Moderator's Musings

**-Mark Suriano, WRA Moderator**

As the year speeds to its close I hope that you all are taking time to enjoy this holiday season and are finding yourselves empowered by the One who came to be one-with-us in Jesus.

Thank you to all who participated in the Fall Meeting of the Association at Faith UCC in Richmond Heights. Almost 200 delegates and guests were present for the meeting, fellowship, and the presentation by Connie Schultz and the reviews of the day have been overwhelmingly positive. Thank you to Lenore Marken for organizing the event, to the folks at Faith for the extravagant hospitality and gracious spirit, and to Gene McAfee for his powerful sermon!

Special thanks go to Joan Ishibashi, who is ending her time with the WRA at the end of December. Joan has been a valuable addition to the staff, tending to Interim Ministry Placement, Credentialing, and the Lay School. As of January 1, 2012 the Interim Ministry Placement and Credentialing functions will be handled by Kurt Schaller Blaufuss who has been hired on a contracted basis to work with the WRA while the joint staffing between the EOA and WRA takes shape.

The work of the Search Committee continues. The profile is scheduled to be published in January with an application deadline set for the end of March. Interviews will be scheduled by the Committee throughout the spring months for those candidates that match the new job description and the new ministry pattern. We hope to be able to present a candidate in the fall and ask for your prayers that both the committee and the candidates may be given the grace of discernment in the days ahead.

Thank you to all of you and your churches! You are vital to the life of the Association, both in your OCWM giving and in your participation in the various ministries of the Association. I look forward to another year as your Moderator in 2012 and pray that you be richly blessed in the new year.

## Sabbatical Time for Margaret

**-Margaret Mills**

I am grateful for the approval of both EOA and WRA councils for a time of sabbatical leave. From January 4 to January 24 I'll be working on issues of immigration approaching it from the standpoint of *Documented and Undocumented Immigrants - How Does the Issue Effect our Churches and the Extravagant Welcome and Radical Hospitality We Profess?*. I'll be gaining information from our Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC, traveling to Arizona for a border experience, and hopefully meeting with a person dealing with immigration in Sherrod Brown's office. I'm excited to share the information with WRA's Church in the World group on February 16th. A continua-

tion of my work will be a gathering of the Network of Wider Church Youth Ministries group at Centro Romero in California in late February. All of these experiences will also be shared with our youth leaders. So stay tuned - and THANKS.

## Hello from Harmony Grove

**-Andra Moran**

*Editor's Comment: Andra Moran is the favorite singer/songwriter for youth events in EOA/WRA and the Ohio Conference.*

In my life as an artist, I can say unequivocally that music is a force to be reckoned with: music can bring us to salty tears just as it can bring us to our feet, cheering. Music knits us together in ways nothing else can and gives words to feelings that are hard to express. Music causes undeniable change in the ways we connect to each other and to God.

In my travels, I have met many people who consistently ask me for one thing: new music that reflects their theology, their hopes, their questions and their dreams. For years now, I have listened and prayed and written and sung my way into a new album of original worship and congregational songs called *Harmony Grove*. These songs serve as a way to voice my own convictions, as well as my doubts, and navigate different seasons in our lives. The themes of *Harmony Grove's* songs are hope, never-failing love, welcome, renewal, justice, comfort, peace and finding our way on a journey.

As this record is full of songs meant to be sung together, I have chosen a non-traditional method of funding to record and manufacture *Harmony Grove together* called Kickstarter. Through the Kickstarter campaign, people can back this album with as little as \$1. There are thank you gifts at each level of giving, and your participation will decide whether this album is made or not.

All of these songs have been road tested with my congregation in Nashville, as well as other groups in retreat settings around the country and in Europe. It's exciting to hear and see these songs uniting people, linking our diverse stories through common musical experiences.

Most of the times in my life I have felt closest to God, I have been singing with other people. Perhaps that is true for you, too.

Whoever you are, and whatever you believe, thank you for taking the time to check out this adventure. I hope you'll choose to be part of it! Please visit [www.kickstarter.com/projects/andra/harmony-grove](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/andra/harmony-grove).





# Youth & Education

## Last Chance to Save this Page!!!

Information on these events will be listed as the times draw closer, but the entire list will not be printed again in *Synergy*.

Date	Event
January 20-21	<b>Summer Camp Rally.</b> Pilgrim Hills. There is no charge for this event! You can even register online at <a href="http://www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/CampRallyRegForm.htm">www.ocucc.org/OutdoorMin/CampRallyRegForm.htm</a>
January 27-28	<b>It's Your Turn: Youth Leaders' Lock-In.</b> "YOUth". Taking the emphasis off youth and putting it on YOU. A time for worship, journaling, massage, quiet reflection and learning ways to take care of ourselves in the midst of busy youth group schedules. We'll be back at the Radisson and Church House in Cleveland. Register by contacting Margaret Mills at <a href="mailto:mmills@wraucc.org">mmills@wraucc.org</a> or online at <a href="http://www.cvent.com/d/7cq8qc/1Q">http://www.cvent.com/d/7cq8qc/1Q</a> .
March 3-4	<b>Junior High/Mid High Retreat.</b> "Let Justice Roll". Pilgrim Hills, 10AM Saturday through 11:30AM Sunday. Our youth know how to do charity really well - helping with food pantries, work camps and mission trips - but do we help with the justice part of our mission? This event will focus on justice through the music and leadership of Andra Moran and Stephen Daniel King. Small groups will focus on questions to challenge our youth to think about justice Biblically. And of course there will be free time, games and workshops. Save the dates and watch for registration information.
March 16-17	<b>Ohio Conference Educators Retreat.</b> Temple Hills, 7PM Friday through 3PM Saturday. Theme and program ideas coming soon.
April 26	<b>EOA/WRA Educators/Youth Ministers Gathering.</b> 10AM to 2PM. Location to be announced.
May 5	<b>EOA/WRA Spring Gathering.</b> Middleburg Heights Community Church.
July 10-13	<b>National Youth Event.</b> Purdue, IN. 7PM July 10 through 8:30PM July 13. EOA/WRA will provide transportation and a group experience. Contact Margaret Mills at <a href="mailto:mmills@wraucc.org">mmills@wraucc.org</a> for information. For information on the event itself, go to <a href="http://www.ucc.org">www.ucc.org</a> .
July 28-August 4	<b>EOA/WRA Kentucky Immersion and Work Experience.</b> Contact Margaret Mills for information at <a href="mailto:mmills@wraucc.org">mmills@wraucc.org</a> .
October 15-17	<b>Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators Gathering.</b> "The Creator is Still Creating." Techni Towers, Chicago. Keynote speaker will be Steve Chase.
November 16-18	<b>Ohio Conference Senior High Fall Youth Event.</b> Pilgrim Hills.

# Attention all Church Treasurers and Financial Secretaries

Please have all OCWM and Special Gifts for 2011 into the Association Offices or Lockbox by January 10, 2012.  
 Any receipts that come in after this date will be credited to 2012.  
 Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter

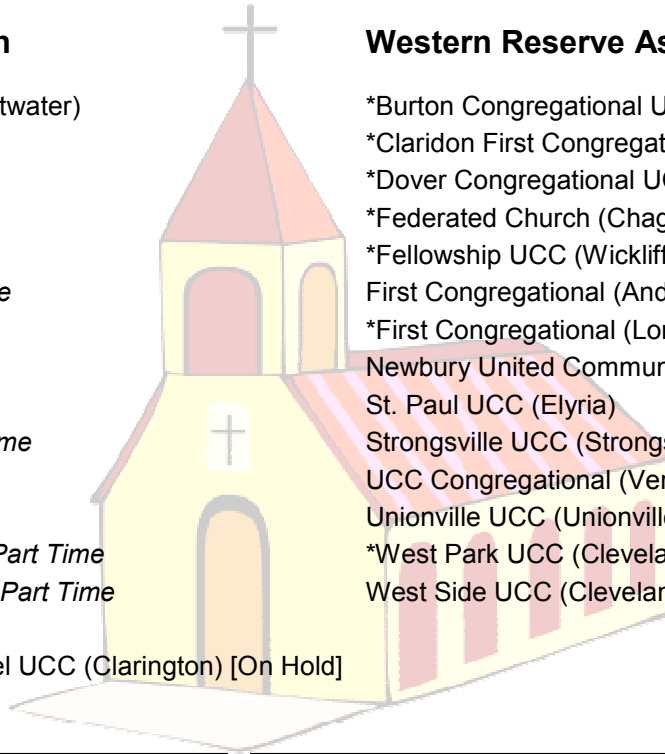
## Churches in Transition (\* denotes churches receiving profiles)

### Eastern Ohio Association

- Atwater Congregational UCC (Atwater)
- Edinburg UCC (Ravenna)
- \*Emmanuel UCC (Akron)
- First Federated (North Jackson)
- First UCC (Sugarcreek)
- \*Grace UCC (Canton) *Part Time*
- Grace UCC (Uniontown)
- Paradise UCC (Canfield)
- Richville UCC (Navarre)
- \*St. John UCC (Bolivar) *Part Time*
- St. John's UCC (Dover)
- \*St. Paul (Port Washington)
- \*St. Paul's UCC (East Canton) *Part Time*
- \*St. Peter's UCC (Apple Creek) *Part Time*
- \*Suffield UCC (Suffield)
- \* Zion UCC (Hannibal)/Immanuel UCC (Clarington) [On Hold]
- Zion UCC (Ragersville)

### Western Reserve Association

- \*Burton Congregational UCC (Burton)
- \*Claridon First Congregational UCC (Huntsburg) *3/4 Time*
- \*Dover Congregational UCC (Westlake)
- \*Federated Church (Chagrin Falls) Associate Pastor
- \*Fellowship UCC (Wickliffe) *3/4 Time* [On Hold]
- First Congregational (Andover)
- \*First Congregational (Lorain) *Part Time*
- Newbury United Community *Part Time*
- St. Paul UCC (Elyria)
- Strongsville UCC (Strongsville)
- UCC Congregational (Vermilion)
- Unionville UCC (Unionville)
- \*West Park UCC (Cleveland)
- West Side UCC (Cleveland)



## Vital Signs



<b>EOA Vital Signs</b>	
<b>As of November 30, 2011</b>	
Total actual income for operations	\$548,547.68
Total actual expense from operations	\$568,966.49
Difference	(\$20,418.81)

<b>WRA Vital Signs</b>	
<b>As of October 31, 2011</b>	
Total actual income for operations	\$669,719.52
Total actual expense from operations	\$682,499.89
Difference	(\$12,780.37)

*We wish to thank you for your continued giving to Our Churches Wider Mission!*

## Our EOA Moderator-Elect -Jim Painting

Why would anyone want to be the EOA moderator? For Rich Miller, 2012 moderator-elect, it was the continuation of a spiritual journey that began several years ago. The church where Rich was a member was debating an exit from the UCC and suddenly he realized that he could be without a church home. To fill the void he chose to become more involved in the EOA and that resulted in membership on the Church In The World

committee. What followed was an invitation to put his name on the ballot to be the moderator. His response was something like, "Are you crazy?"

Rich was uncertain he was the right person for the position. For almost 29 years he has worked as a buyer and purchasing agent, most of it with Hercules engines, and wondered how his work experience would translate into a church leadership role. After a couple months of soul-searching he accepted the challenge and is now eager to serve the Lord in a new way.

And what does a moderator do? There is the administrative responsibility of preparing and presiding over EOA meetings, but there is also a more informal obligation to be aware of and communicate what is happening in the various EOA organizations.

Since he has experienced first-hand the sadness of extreme dissension in a church, our new moderator understands the importance of respecting each opinion and working towards unity through love. A life-long member of the UCC and a resident of Stone Creek since the late 1970's, Rich and his wife Sharelle chose to search for a new church home after their church cut ties with the UCC. They are now happily active at First UCC in New Philadelphia.



## First Immanuel Serves 1,000 Meals

*The following is taken from an article by Shannon Harsh in the 11/25/11 issue of "The Review".*

Days of preparation, dozens of turkeys and more than 150 volunteers added to a happy Thanksgiving for more than a thousand people. For seven years First Immanuel UCC in Alliance has been serving turkey dinners on Thanksgiving Day. It's gotten so big that it has become an interdenominational effort with other churches in the area helping financially and in other ways. The cooks served up about 70 turkeys along with mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, vegetable, dinner roll, cranberry sauce or apple-sauce and dessert to about 1,150 people. Some meals served were carryout, but the majority were delivered, many to people living alone or in assisted living. Leftovers were donated to the Rev. Bobby Williams of New Beginnings House of God to distribute to people in need.

## Wanted: Organist/Minister of Music

First Congregational United Church of Christ in Elyria is a faith community that enjoys creative and relevant worship blending styles from many Christian traditions. They are seeking a talented musician to fill the part-time position of Organist/Minister of Music. See the full job description at [www.firstcongelyria.org](http://www.firstcongelyria.org). Please send a resume and cover letter by January 8, 2012 telling about your interest in this position to:

First Congregational UCC

Attn: Martha Twining

330 2nd St.

Elyria, OH 44035

Or e-mail Martha Twining at: [mktwining@oh.rr.com](mailto:mktwining@oh.rr.com)

## West Park UCC: A Loving Community -Renee Hess

It was a rainy afternoon in early December when I arrived at West Park UCC on Rocky River Dr. in Cleveland to meet with the church's interim pastor, Rev. Charlotte Noble. After anxiously gripping the steering wheel for over 30 minutes while the rain beat down on my car I was so pleased to be greeted by Rev. Charlotte. Her smile was sweet and she was soft spoken and most welcoming.

When asked about the members of West Park she was most impressed with the laity ministering to laity she discovered when she arrived. Rev. Charlotte described the congregation as hard working individuals who are serious about their faith. She sees this church as a caring, loving small community of believers in a larger community open to those who are searching for a place to belong.

The church is currently focusing on the youth of their congregation becoming actively involved in leadership roles. Outreach projects include a community meal, bags of groceries for the needy, and children's items for Laura's House.

In the spring the church undertook an unexpected major repair project of the church's steeple. This church that consists of policemen, firefighters, teachers and such pulled together to raise funds of approximately \$100,000 to start and complete this project in a short period of time. That is an amazing example of this congregation's determination to get the job done.

Please be in prayer for the West Park UCC in the months ahead while they are going through the search process for a new permanent pastor. See the church's website for more details at [www.westparkucc.org](http://www.westparkucc.org).



## Joint Spring Meeting

The joint EOA/WRA spring meeting will be held on May 5, 2012 at Middleburg Heights Community Church, 7165 Big Creek Pkwy, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. Dr. Clinton McCann, Eden Theological Seminary, will be our keynote speaker. Please put it on your calendar right away!

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Gerry's House Resource Center

*Helping You Do Ministry Now and Next Year!*

Be sure to check our nearly completed resources online at <http://www.librarything.com/profile/gerryshouse>. Books can be reserved by emailing

[jgrigg@wraucc.org](mailto:jgrigg@wraucc.org) or by calling 216-749-3116 ext 100. Please remember to include Gerry's House in your congregation's mission giving. Also, keep Gerry's House in mind for your members who may be interested in keeping resources readily available for all WRA and EOA congregations.

Consider honoring your pastor, church educator, confirmand and others by sending a designated contribution to Gerry's House Resource Center. Your designated contribution can be for a specific resource or for the purchase of resources in general. A commemorating placard will be put in the book(s) honoring your thoughtful gift. Please call or send donations as designated gifts clearly marked as a gift to Gerry's House. All checks need to be written to Western Reserve Association, P.O. Box 64-3851, Cincinnati, Ohio 45264-3851.

A heartfelt thank you to Faith UCC (Richmond Heights) for the leadership gift of \$1000 from their mission fund! What a wonderful blessing!



EOA/WRA Support Center  
United Church of Christ  
2560 Clearview Ave. NW  
Canton, OH 44718  
(330) 453-8178



**Visit us online!**

Eastern Ohio Association - [www.eoaucc.org](http://www.eoaucc.org)  
Western Reserve Association - [www.wraucc.org](http://www.wraucc.org)  
Ohio Conference - [www.ocucc.org](http://www.ocucc.org)