



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

# SYNERGY

*The Newsletter of the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations*

**Volume 5 Issue 9  
October 2011**

### **In This Issue**

Mission: 1	1
Moderators' Musings	2
Gerry's House Online	3
Found & Forgiven	4
Financial Summary	5
Association Meetings	6

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## **Countdown to Mission: 1**

Nov. 1-11, 2011... ONE UNITED CHURCH on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice. This is MISSION: 1.

- ◆ In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will collect more than 1 MILLION ITEMS OF HEALTHY FOOD and other household items for local food banks and outreach services.
- ◆ In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will make an extra-special push to gather online contributions of more than \$111,111 DOLLARS for Neighbors in Need, offerings that will be shared for hunger-action purposes with agencies of justice and compassion throughout the United States.
- ◆ In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will offer more than 11,111 LETTERS to Congress asking our government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide, helping to provide a major final push to Bread for the World's 2011 "Offering of Letters" campaign.
- ◆ DURING THE FIRST 11 DAYS of NOVEMBER, an online tote board at [ucc.org](http://ucc.org) will tally our collective count of foodstuffs, donations and letters - information we'll update and celebrate in real time together.
- ◆ And throughout the 11 days, the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries will organize church-member delegations to meet with Members of Congress to bring attention to our church's concern about hunger at home and abroad.



Most importantly, our UCC motto and Jesus' prayer "that they may all be 1" will become a focused, concerted mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ to educate ourselves and one another about food-related policy issues through sermons, seminars and conversations; to advocate on behalf of hungry people at home and around the world; to raise money for hunger-action purposes; and to share bread - and tuna, and peanut butter, and vegetables, and cereal - with our neighbors in need.

Begin now to organize your church's victory strategy. And plan now to join in a national celebration of our campaign's success on Sunday, Nov. 13 - in your local UCC church.

The world needs the distinct values, vision and voice of the United Church of Christ - Continuing Testament. Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives. This is MISSION: 1.

## Moderators' Musings

Sisters and Brothers in the WRA—

This October finds the Association in the midst of preparing for the Fall Meeting (November 5 at Faith UCC,



Richmond Heights) and working through the numerous and delicate tasks associated with the transition to a new Association's General Minister. Much progress has been made on both fronts, but I am especially hopeful that you will start asking people in your churches to serve as Delegates and visitors to the Fall Meeting. Very soon now

you will receive your registration packets and I ask that you make time to get those in as soon as possible! You won't want to miss this time for the family to gather!

One of the highlights of the meeting is to celebrate the Western Reserve Association's participation in Mission: 1. I invite you to involve your churches in collecting food for the hungry, writing letters to your representatives and supporting famine relief through the Neighbors in Need Offering. As churches of the WRA I want to celebrate our total giving and I ask that you send me your tally (number of food items, number of letters sent, amount of money raised) for any part of Mission: 1 that you have participated in. I will lift these up at the meeting and present the total WRA support as well! We will also have copies of letters, stamped envelopes and information on your Senators and Representatives if you would like to sign a letter while you are at the meeting—I will add these to the tally at the end of the gathering.

See you at Faith! See you in November!

**-Mark Suriano, WRA Moderator**

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My calendar for October, probably like yours, is pretty full. But the date I hope you have circled is Oct 29<sup>th</sup> and have written in big bold letters "EOA-New Philadelphia". That's the place and date for our fall gathering. If it's not on your calendar please add and plan to attend. Part of our time will focus on the "business" of the association and the many ministries that impact our life together. Although reports and approving budgets are not usually high on people's reason to attend, I hope you will make it a reason. Just as local churches are challenged with decreased income to fund their ministry and programs so is the Association. The Association Council needs your input and ideas on how to meet the increasing needs of mission partners, local churches and how to affirm the ministries of our Association Ministers and support staff at a time when money to support these ministries is stretched very thin. Copies of

the proposed budget will be available before the meeting for you to study and pray about. The budget is a reflection of who we are and our vision for Christ's church.

These days I find myself singing an old camp song, especially when it would be easy to give into doom and gloom. "God is so good, God is so good, God is so good. God's been so good to me." But not just to me but to all of us. And, "God's been so good to EOA." Look at our Association Ministers and the gifts of leadership and faithful discipleship to Christ's church they lavish on us. Look at all those who serve in countless ways on behalf of the Association. Look at our Support Center Staff and their gifts and abilities. Look at how local churches are beacons of hope in their communities.

God is so good, therefore we need to do all we can, in whatever way we can to share that "goodness" with others. I look forward to seeing you on October 29<sup>th</sup> in New Philadelphia. I look forward to the renewing spirit of God as we lift our voices in praise and gratitude and God's spirit challenge us.

**-Sandra Hutchinson, Moderator**



# Youth & Stewardship

-Margaret Mills, Minister for Stewardship, Education and Youth

## Youth Calendar

Date	Event
October 6, 2011	<b>WRA and EOA youth leaders and educators</b> are invited. We will meet at 11AM at Melt Bar and Grill located at 14718 Detroit Ave. in Lakewood for lunch. Around 1:00pm we'll move to Lakewood Congregational Church located at 1375 W. Clifton Blvd. Our time together will include informal conversation, as well as an update on the Gerry's House Resource Center, an opportunity to meet Jenei Grigg, the new Gerry's House Director and the members of the Gerry's House Resource Ministry Team, as well as a chance to explore Gerry's House and the resources that are available to help you in your ministry. To RSVP or for questions contact Brandy Bring at <a href="mailto:brandy@firstchurchoberlin.org">brandy@firstchurchoberlin.org</a> or 440-775-1711.
November 18 - 20, 2011	<b>Ohio Conference Senior High Fall Youth Event.</b> Held at Pilgrim Hills and using Justice LED resources. The theme is <i>Let Justice Roll</i> based on Amos 5:24 - "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Musicians: Andra Moran and Stephen Daniel King. For more information or questions regarding the event, please email Bree at <a href="mailto:blee001@defiance.edu">blee001@defiance.edu</a> or Margaret at <a href="mailto:mmills@wraucc.org">mmills@wraucc.org</a> .
January 27 - 28, 2012	<b>It's Your Turn: EOA/WRA Youth Leaders Lock-In.</b> "YOUth" Taking the emphasis off youth and putting it on YOU - A time for Taize, journaling, massage, quiet reflection, 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. Watch for details.

If you have events you would like posted on our Youth & Stewardship Page, please send them to Margaret at [mmills@wraucc.org](mailto:mmills@wraucc.org).

## Gerry's House Online!

Gerry's House Resource Center has worked the entire summer to get its resources listed online and finally we're ready. Approximately 70% of all Gerry's House books, DVD's, VHS', CD's and other resources are ready for your viewing and checkout! Gerry's House is dedicated to helping you do ministry! By going to the link <http://www.librarything.com/profile/gerryshouse> you will be connected to a page that allows you to look at many "collections" of resource materials. By clicking on one of the collections you will be taken to a page that will show you all the materials in that collection of resources. If you click on one of the books in the collection you will have all the information (and usually a picture of the resource) for you to review. There are even places for people to leave comments and read others' comments about that resource. You do not have to join "Library Thing" (who is the host site for our online listing) to view our materials. You will need to join "library thing" to leave comments. Joining is free and a really simple process. Again, you do not need to join anything to look through the Gerry's House Resource Center listing of resources!

Books can be reserved by emailing us at [jgrigg@wraucc.org](mailto:jgrigg@wraucc.org) or by calling 216-749-3116 ext 100.

The resources can be picked up at Gerry's House 1375 West Clifton Blvd., Lakewood, Ohio 44109 (we are located on the 2nd floor at Lakewood Congregational UCC). Resources can be shipped to you at your expense or they can be dropped off (and picked up) for you at the EOA Canton Office by request.

Gerry's House will be continuing to list the remainder of the unlisted resources. We are getting in new resources on a regular basis and those new items are being added to the online collections as they are received. Our full listing will be complete before the end of the year.

Gerry's House Resource Center looks forward to helping you do ministry! Please feel free to contact us via email or phone with any questions and to also reserve your resources. Gerry's House is open Monday through Friday and the Director of Gerry's House, Jenei Grigg, is on site to help you with resource selection and questions Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 4:30PM to 6:30PM.



Gerry's  
House  
Resource Center

## Christian Peacemaking

You are invited to this next discussion in the series In the Public Square on Wednesday, October 5, 7-8:30PM, Old South United Church of Christ, 9802 Chillicothe Road in Kirtland. The presenter Rev. Byron Bland is Senior Consultant for the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation. One of the most important lessons researchers and practitioners at the Stanford Center have learned is the need to give shape to peaceful relationships as parties

try to find their way toward peace. While this insight may seem obvious, a closer look reveals fundamental barriers that stand in the way of successful peacemaking. Rev. Byron Bland will explore strategies for overcoming these barriers.

## Fiesta de Esperanza

You wake up to roosters crowing, dogs barking and the loudspeakers announcing another day at the school across the street. It's a little chilly, so you'd like to stay in bed a little longer. You know that if you don't get up for breakfast, you'll be starving by lunch time, so you roll out. You spend the morning swinging a pick, digging with a shovel, passing cement blocks or buckets full of wet cement. Your arms ache and your back complains, but the smell of the lunch being prepared by the family you are helping tells you, "it's a good pain."

Work continues after lunch until the local children come home from school and get right in the work line with you. After a van ride back to your lodging and a quick shower, you decide whether you want to go to a local restaurant or stay in, rest and help prepare a home cooked meal for you and like-minded others. The week is flying by, and you are already thinking about coming back again next year. Where are you? On the EOAWRA mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico which will take place from February 11-18, 2012.

Come to the Fiesta de Esperanza at Paradise UCC (619 E Main St, Louisville) on Sunday October 16 from 3:30 to 6:30 and learn more about this opportunity while sharing a meal with others who are interested in third-world mission work. You'll be glad you did. Call Paradise at 330-875-2677 if you have any questions about the Fiesta.

## The Oldest Church in the Western Reserve

The First United Church of Christ, Austinburg, will celebrate 210 years on Sunday, October 23, 2011. Please

hold this date to celebrate with special worship and a reception.

Settlers began arriving in Austinburg in 1799 from Connecticut. Rev. Joseph Badger preached the first sermon here in August, 1801. When he returned on October 24, 1801, they formed the organization with 16 charter members. In 1811, Rev Giles Cowles traveled from Connecticut to answer Austinburg's call as the first settled pastor.

You may contact Rev. Allison Milligan at the church at 440-275-5125, or the church historian Virginia Seifert, at [tgseifert@windstream.net](mailto:tgseifert@windstream.net) with comments or corrections.

## Found and Forgiven

### Story of the Prodigal Son Retold

*Found and Forgiven*, a musical based on the story of the prodigal son, will be presented Saturday, Nov. 5, at 3PM and 7PM at Trinity United Church of Christ, 915 N Main St., Akron, OH 44310. A spaghetti dinner will be served between shows, 4:30-6:30PM. The Market Path, a fair trade store supported by First Grace UCC, will offer items for sale, and Williard UCC will offer a basket auction. Program ads may be purchased at [debbierhinesmith@att.net](mailto:debbierhinesmith@att.net) or [jmcmillen1@neo.rr.com](mailto:jmcmillen1@neo.rr.com). Tickets for the performance and the dinner are available through the EOAWRA Support Center or at [faithmusicals@gmail.com](mailto:faithmusicals@gmail.com). All proceeds from the day will benefit Akron Urban United Churches of Christ: East Market Street, Miller Avenue, Williard, and Trinity.

The musical, *Found and Forgiven*, is written and directed by Rev. Sharon Alberson, Minister of Music at Trinity UCC in Akron. The intergenerational cast includes 35 people from Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Silver Lake, Stow, Kent, Brimfield, Hartville and Canton. The churches that benefit from this fundraiser are selected based on need and their involvement in urban ministry. All distribute food, clothing, and school supplies in the local neighborhood.

These churches also have a focus on healthcare education and employment assistance to people in the surrounding community.

A working group of Eastern Ohio's Department of Church in the World meets monthly with the pastors of the Akron urban churches. Volunteer work days have been organized to do much-needed repair and maintenance for the urban churches. Through these relationships, awareness of the need in Akron has grown.

Please consider purchasing tickets for the musical and dinner and sponsoring an ad in this year's program. Your purchase of an ad or ticket will provide needed resources to continue important ministries in Akron. Together we are improving lives and shaping a better future for our neighbors, all God's children.



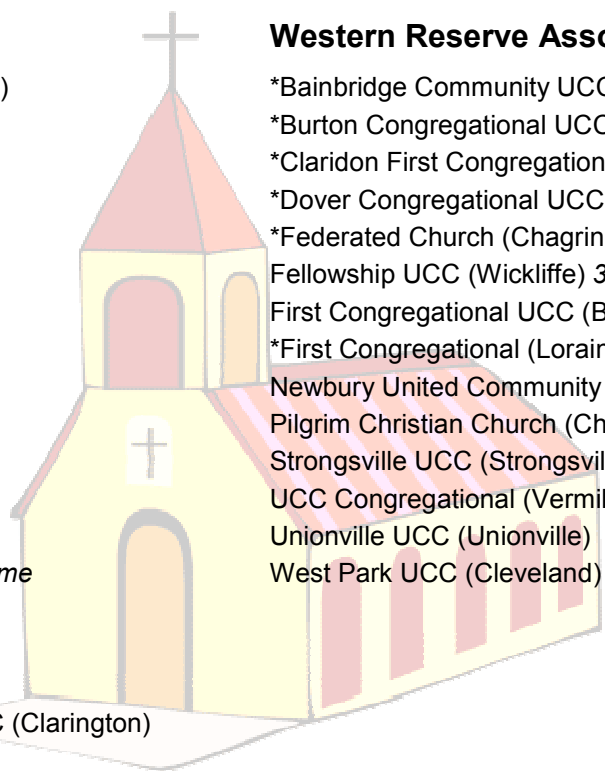
# Interim Ministry Training

The Christian Church in Ohio and the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ have opened the door for those who would like to serve as Interim Ministers in our state. The gold standard for interim ministry training is the extended 2-part program of the Interim Ministry Network. However, to help pastors get started in this vital ministry in the near future (and at a lesser cost) the Interim Ministry Working Group has been asked to host a special 3-day training event to qualify pastors in Ohio to serve as interims in either UCC or DOC congregations. Dr. Anthony Carpenter is presenter for this event. He has chaired the Interim Ministry Working Group and has served full-time and interim positions within the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Training is October 18-20 at Camp Christian, 10299 Maple Dell Rd., Marysville, OH. Register online at [www.ccinoh.org](http://www.ccinoh.org).

## Churches in Transition

### Eastern Ohio Association

- Atwater Congregational UCC (Atwater)
- \*Bethel UCC (Beloit)
- 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)
- Suffield UCC (Suffield)
- Trinity UCC (Canal Fulton)
- \*Zion UCC (Hannibal)/Immanuel UCC (Clarington)



### Western Reserve Association

- \*Bainbridge Community UCC (Bainbridge)
- \*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*
- First Congregational UCC (Berea) [On Hold]
- \*First Congregational (Lorain) *Part Time*
- Newbury United Community *Part Time*
- Pilgrim Christian Church (Chardon) [On Hold]
- Strongsville UCC (Strongsville)
- UCC Congregational (Vermilion)
- Unionville UCC (Unionville)
- West Park UCC (Cleveland)



## Vital Signs



### EOA Vital Signs

As of August 31, 2011

Total actual income for operations	\$368,936.42
Total actual expense from operations	\$408,064.36
Difference	(\$39,127.94)

### WRA Vital Signs

As of August 31, 2011

Total actual income for operations	\$486,056.09
Total actual expense from operations	\$520,337.26
Difference	(\$34,281.17)

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



Registration is taking place for our **Eastern Ohio Association Fall Annual Meeting**. Your local church is invited to have at least one lay and one clergy voting delegate...and as many visitors as you wish! Saturday, October 29 at First UCC (201 Fair Ave. NW, New Philadelphia) we'll begin with a full breakfast at 8:30AM downstairs where we'll have a big screen and presentations by Emmaus Homes and Pleasant Hill Retirement Community followed by the business meeting (voting, budget, reports). Then we'll move up to the sanctuary where Jim Oates, our Ohio Conference Church Development person, will open us to God's renewing spirit. Sharon Albers and friends will give us a quick introduction to her "Found & Forgiven" musical. Finally worship led by Rev Jeff Gerber and friends, including host organist Rick Michel.

But the best part of this gathering is probably meeting people of God – some you may know, and some you do not.

Please support God's wider church. Register now and come ready to participate October 29.

**Legacy** is the theme for the **WRA Fall Meeting** November 5th at Faith UCC, 575 Richmond Rd., Richmond Heights, OH 44143. A hearty breakfast will start the day and Pulitzer Prize winner Connie Schultz will round it off. In between we'll conduct business and worship together. Be prepared to share how your church is participating in Mission: 1 and bring unopened hotel-sized toiletries to donate to Mental Health Services in Cleveland. Delegates from each church plus pastors and visitors should fill Faith with FAITH! Watch for more details in mid-October.



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