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2023 REPORT FROM THE ASSOCIATION MINISTER REV. DANIEL BUSCH

“Missions: Making All Things New”

God declares: *“Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.*

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

“MISSIONS – MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.” *Missions*: the **“DOING AND LIVING”** of faith as proclaimers of the Good News of God in us and through us. **Missions** is not about us (or me, myself, and I); it is about call to ministry and being servants to the honor and glory of God. It is affirming others as God affirms us. It is about *“letting go”* of wanting more and more. It is about being stewards of what God shares with us so that we become blessings to others and with others **“Making All Things New.”** Isaiah, chapter 43, is part of what is called Second Isaiah, written just before the fall of Babylon, the nation who held captive the people of Judah. The people of Judah were joyfully anticipating being restored to Palestine after being held captive in Babylon. It is their joy that God would be **“Making All Things New.”**

“Missions” has the effect of **“Making All Things New”** for those who have been captive to forces beyond their control such as hunger, poverty, abandonment, loneliness, discrimination, and religious bigotry. It is **mission** of response and care that releases *“the captives”* from all that binds them, renewing and affirming in them optimism and hope as a child/children created in the image of God. There are so many *“isms”* in our lives that pull us away from God’s transforming power as God declares, *“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”* Even in their travels through the wilderness of captivity, the Judeans had hope that God would be *“making all things new.”* Fear and evil (and captivity) did not have the final word, for the promises of God restored them to their place in the nations of the world.

We live in a time of confusion and evil that is destroying human relationships and the relationship we have with the Creator God. The Church, as someone once noted, is a place of faith, fellowship, and fun. We cannot live faith in isolation because it takes a community to care and celebrate the goodness of God’s blessings. Blessings come alive when shared with one another. The congregations of NWOA are intentional about doing **missions**, witnessing uniquely as followers of Jesus Christ. These acts of **mission** do make a difference in people’s lives everywhere, and with God’s love, lives are changed and made new over and over again. This year’s Annual Meeting is celebrating some of the common **missions** we do together as an association, but we also give thanks for every church’s **mission** endeavors that care, love, and welcome friends and strangers alike. Thank you for your witness and financial support given to various **missions** that bless God’s family near and far. Continue to pray for those whose lives you touch through your caring love. As I visit NWOA churches, I am always filled with gratitude for their ministries and **missions** in the local faith community and social community. The sharing of time, talents, and treasures to the world community of faith and people is vital. Thank you for invitations to share worship with you in your various settings as communities of faith.

We have learned new ways of being and doing what it means to be the church. Most of our meetings have been via Zoom. What a blessing the internet has been to connect with one another, seeing, talking, and listening to one another. This year’s Annual Meeting is a hybrid meeting, both in person

and via Zoom. It offers the first in-person get-together since 2020. Whether in-person or via the internet, we affirm that we are finding new ways of being the community of faith with prayers, worship, reports, celebrations, and conversation with one another in Wapakoneta or through the world of the internet. We are affirming that God is with us, and we celebrate how God **Makes All Things New**. Thank you for adjusting and being the church near and far, together and online, all to the Honor and Glory of God.

The ministries of NWOA continue and we are blessed by those who serve faithfully and are committed to do *“the work”* of the association. Teams, committees, Cabinet members, and various program leaders are to be thanked for accepting the challenges of doing ministries of NWOA in variety of ways. We are in covenant with one another to share the Good News of God’s grace, love, and transforming power. Churches, members, authorized ministers, and together as NWOA live that covenant with God, for we have been blessed by God to be blessings to one another. We celebrate with our newest ordinand, Rev. Michael Ebersole. His ordination was a culmination of discernment, study, and was celebrated with the laying of hands on him in recognition of God’s blessing him as an ordained authorized Christian minister as part of the United Church of Christ.

Much of my work focuses on Church and Ministry issues. For the last three years, candidates for settled pastorates or as interims have not been readily available. Covid has resulted in what is called a *“time of great resignation”* of pastors/ministers among all faith communities, due to the weariness, fatigue, and lack of connectedness or isolation within the faith communities. Even interims have been difficult to secure for churches.

We have a special relationship to Heartland Conference and the other three associations. Programs for spiritual growth, personal faith formation, and **missions** are being done collaboratively as faith partners. The Conference Camp program offers opportunities for spiritual growth and enhancement, fellowship, and enjoyment for all ages.

We are blessed by an office staff that responds graciously and promptly to inquiries to concerns of inquirers. Joan Davidson (office administrator) has served NWOA now for 25 years. We are blessed by her efficiency and organizational skills for all of us. Deb Long (bookkeeper) is very competent, dedicated, and very organized in preparing the financial (and other tasks) for NWOA. Gib Adams (custodian) keeps our office building in order and quietly makes sure it is clean. The office has limited access for persons to come to the office and staff members are in the office to serve you. It is an honor and privilege to serve you as the Association Minister for almost eighteen (18) years. Thank you.

It is through ministries and **missions** that we continue the call to be God’s chosen, disciples of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be blessed to be blessings to one another. God continues to open to us ways of **“Making Things New.” BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ASSOCIATION MODERATOR MR. DOUG RICCI

RETURNING TO UNITY

UNITY – the quality or state of not being multiple, a condition of harmony, promoting an undivided total effect, or state of being made one.

In our world today there is much division on the political, religious, health, and personal relationships of our lives that need to be stitched back together to reduce stress and regain a feeling of oneness, unity.

Here at NWOA and at our churches our fear of COVID is being reduced as we see more people being vaccinated and we relax our strict quarantine. When practical we are meeting in person again, increasing our feeling of being made one.

As members of the UCC we believe we can agree to disagree as we listen to the ideas of others. We may not always agree with others but we will listen and try to understand why others believe the way they believe. In this way we find it easier to talk through our differences and find points of collaboration, leading to a condition of harmony.

We are bringing our pastors together in the Excellence in Ministry and Periodic Support groups to allow them to speak freely together to announce their joys and concerns of ministry. Sharing successes and failures promotes an undivided total effect and increases success throughout NWOA.

Your NWOA is working closely with the Heartland Conference and its member Associations in order not to be in a state of being multiple.

Your NWOA Lay School is second to none. The aim of the Lay School of Religion Program has been to maintain quality instruction, to create an atmosphere for Christian fellowship and dialogue, and to encourage growth in faith and understanding to enhance the local church's efforts to develop deeper and stronger faith communities for nurture, witness, mission, and leadership. The topics of education are very meaningful and are taught by top notch instructors. Taking a single class or pursuing a Lay School of Religion graduation will give you the tools to promote harmony among your peers.

As always, I cannot say enough about our Association Minister. This man is constantly working toward Unity in the NWOA. He is available to you 24/7, 365. He watches every church in the Association and celebrates every success and works tirelessly to solve every problem. It has been my privilege to work with him.

My time as the NWOA Cabinet Moderator is running short as I will step down at this Annual Meeting. I have pushed my comfort zones to their limits but it has been a very good experience for me. I would ask that each and every one of you think about what you could bring to NWOA service and volunteer some time working on one of the Ministry Teams. Get involved and help promote the UNITY that is NWOA.

Peace and blessings,
Doug Ricci

CABINET SECRETARY'S REPORT PASTOR JAY SCOTT

It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve the Northwest Ohio Association as Cabinet secretary. While it is a challenge to take minutes in an online meeting, I am fortunate to have help from others in the meeting who make sure everything is accurate. I am in my last year of my term, and I look forward to handing off the responsibilities to the next Cabinet secretary. Below are highlights from Cabinet meetings in 2022/23.

May, 2022 – Peggy George was appointed to the Human Resources Committee, and Rev. Joel Fetter was appointed to the Church and Ministry Team.

September, 2022 – Association Executive Assistant Joan Davidson was given a \$250 bonus in honor of her 25th anniversary in her position. Jeremy Mann and Jerald Fenske were appointed to the Human Resources Committee.

November, 2022 – The next budget and staff raises for 2023 were approved and recommended to the Annual Meeting.

December, 2022 – A vote via e-mail was conducted to gain approval of purchasing a new sign for the Association headquarters, estimated to cost \$1,200. The new sign purchase was approved.

January, 2023 – A slight adjustment was made to the medical reimbursement allowance for Joan Davidson. A committee will be formed to review the NWOA by-laws.

March, 2023 – The 2024 budget recommendation, including 4% staff raises, was approved and sent to the Annual Meeting for approval. Rev. Diane Christopherson and Teri Wies-Haithcock were appointed to the Lay School Board. Sue Snavelly was appointed to the Finance Committee.

The Minutes of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ April 30, 2022

A pandemic that struck our world early in the year 2020 caused changes in the way churches and denominations around the world worshiped, and the way business was conducted. Those changes continued into 2022. The Annual Meeting of the NWOA was conducted via the internet. Praise be to God for the technology with which we have been blessed, and which allows us to gather as one in Christ – even when we can't be together in person.

Call to order

Doug Ricci, Moderator, called the meeting to order, and extended a welcome to all those in attendance. Ricci also thanked those who helped plan and present this year's Annual Meeting. Ricci declared a quorum was present, and business could be conducted. At the start of the meeting, there were 71 people logged into the online meeting.

Opening Worship/Devotions

Rev. Daniel Busch led the Annual Meeting in worship.

Adoption of the Agenda

Ricci announced that those who have voice and vote in the Annual Meeting are: Ordained ministers who hold standing in NWOA or serve a church in NWOA, licensed ministers with standing in NWOA, commissioned ministers of NWOA, lay members of the Cabinet, previous lay moderators of NWOA who still hold membership in a church in the NWOA, persons professionally employed as Christian education specialists within NWOA, and local churches represented by the delegates the churches have selected to represent them.

The agenda for the Annual Meeting was presented, and a motion to approve it was offered by Christine Rettig and seconded by Kathryn Helleman. The motion carried.

Appointments

Ricci announced the appointment of Garland Gates as Parliamentarian, and Association Secretary Jay Scott would be taking minutes of the Annual Meeting.

Adoption of Standing Rules

The Standing Rules of the Annual Meeting were presented in the 2021 Annual Meeting book on page A-5. Ken Daniel moved to adopt the Standing Rules as presented, seconded by Amy Kinney. The motion carried.

Approval of 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting were approved on a motion by Johnny Jackson. The motion was seconded by Dave Voll, and carried.

Introduction of Guests and Granting of Voice

Dan Busch introduced the meeting's guests: Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay (Keynote Speaker), Rev. David Long-Higgins (Heartland Conference Minister), Rev. Nayiri Karjian (Living Waters Association Minister), Kevin Gehres (Disaster Coordinator, Heartland Conference). Brad McKibben moved to grant voice to these guests, seconded by Betty Rettig. The motion carried.

New to the Association and Members in Discernment

Garland Gates, chair of the Church and Ministry Team, introduced leaders who have joined NWOA since last year's Annual Meeting.

Jon Komperda, chair of the Discernment Committee, introduced Persons in Discernment: Michael Ebersole, James Robinson, Amy Kinney, Elyse (Everhart) Cramer, Kristen Leverton, Ryan Shields, Anthony Spearhart, and Donald B. Clark.

Keynote Speaker

This year's keynote address was delivered by Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay, National Ministries, United Church of Christ.

Mission Moment

A video about Defiance College was presented.

Financial Report – Treasurer Dian Ewald

Ewald noted a good year so far in 2022, continuing a theme from 2021. The records from 2021 have been audited, and the Executive Committee has heard the audit report and accepted it.

- The Cabinet moves to accept the 2021 Financial Reports and the Audit Report. The motion has been made by the Cabinet; there is no need for a second. Motion carried.
- It was moved by the Cabinet to adopt the revised 2022 budget. Motion Carried.
- It was moved by the Cabinet to adopt the proposed 2023 budget. Motion carried.

Nominations and Elections

Susan Bishop, a member of the Nomination Committee, presented the slate of nominees for Association offices and ministry teams:

- Nomination for NWOA Secretary: Pastor Jay Scott
- Nominations for Church and Ministry Team: Terry Rettig, Rev. Rhonda Hainer, Rev. Mark Bishop, Rev. Wendy Schindler-Chaney, Pastor John Paputza
- Nominations for Faith Formation Team: Rev. Mark Bishop, Rev. Mary Meadows, Pastor Amy Kinney, Pastor Elyse Cramer
- Nominations for Stewardship and Generosity Team: Ron Geiser, Rev. Doug Williamson, Ruth Novak, Fran Brodman, Pastor James Robinson
- Nominations for General Synod Delegates (Class of 2025 attending 2023 and 2025): Rev. James Brehler, Pastor Tom Kagy, Anthony Brookhart, Blake Depinet, Rev. Kathryn Helleman, Brad Rine, Amanda Harvey
- Nominations for Witness and Proclamation Team: Rev. Fred Coulter, Rev. Andrea Mericle, Rev. Dawn Balduf, Rev. John Mummert
- Nominations for Nominating Committee: Jane Myers, Mary Ann Ewing, Rev. Kathryn Helleman

With there being no nominations from the floor, there was a motion from Marian Plant to close nominations and have the secretary cast a unanimous ballot for the nominees. The motion was seconded by Jeremy Mann, and it carried.

Mission Moment

Videos from the Heartland Conference Minister, the conference Outdoor Ministries Executive Director, and the conference Disaster Coordinator were presented.

Team Reports and Association Minister's Report

Reports were referenced as published in the Annual Meeting Book by the following ministry teams: Faith Formation – E9, Stewardship and Generosity – E9, Witness and Proclamation – E10, Church and Ministry – E5 to E8. The Association Minister's report is on B1 and B2.

Christine Rettig moved to approve the receiving of these reports, seconded by Bryan Niebanck. The motion carried.

Ordinand Video

A video by Rev. Dawn Balduf was presented.

Significant Anniversaries

Garland Gates recognized significant anniversaries of authorized ministers. Dan Busch recognized significant anniversaries of churches in the Association. These lists are on page B-10 in the Annual Meeting Book.

Committee Reports

Written reports from the following committees can be found in the Annual Meeting Book: Excellence in Ministry – E12, Lay School Board – E13, El Salvador Ministry – E11.

John Gilberg presented a motion from the El Salvador Coordinating Team to renew the partnership agreement with the Lutheran Synod of El Salvador until either party wishes to terminate it. The motion carried.

Christine Rettig moved to approve the receiving of the committee reports, seconded by David Voll. The motion carried.

Other Business

No one offered any new business to the Annual Meeting.

Recognition of Newly Elected Officers/Teams, and Closing Worship

Dan Busch offered a prayer of installation for all those newly elected to positions in the NWOA.

Amenities Resolution

Ricci offered the following resolution to acknowledge, recognize and thank those who worked to make the Annual Meeting possible;

“Be it resolved that the Northwest Ohio Association gathered virtually on April 30, 2022 gives thanks to God for this day. ‘Together in Christ’s love, we collaborate to reconcile and restore all God’s creation.’ Be it further resolved that we are witnesses to a resurrection faith that affirms and proclaims that we remember that we are a community of faith that is challenged by our theme to find ‘Peace in Exile’ in our missions and ministries. ‘Empowered by the Holy Spirit we are called to connect, equip and support our faith communities to grow as faithful disciples and responsible stewards, following Jesus’ call to extravagantly love all God’s children and creation.’ Be it further resolved that we recognize the covenantal relationships we have with God, our faith communities, and God’s creation.’ Be it further resolved, “‘answering God’s call to build a just world for all, we commit in our shared life to: Live the love, unity, and compassion of Jesus; Collaborate to mutually share resources; Communicate with openness and transparency; Empower generous and responsible stewardship; and honor God’s diverse gifts among us in all settings.’ Be it further resolved that Northwest Ohio Association expresses gratitude and appreciation to all who have organized, guided, inspired, encouraged, and resourced our 59th Annual Meeting as we gathered together to remember that we acknowledge ‘Peace in Exile’ to the honor and glory of God.”

Jay Scott moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Tom Kagy. The motion carried.

Special Announcements

Ricci thanked all who served the Annual Meeting as technicians and planners: Anthony Brookhart, Diane Carter, Kathryn Helleman, Mark Bishop, Michael Kerstiens, Doug Ricci and Jim Brehler. He also thanked the Association staff: Joan Davidson, Deb Long, and Rev. Dan Busch.

Next Annual Meeting

The next Annual Meeting will be held on April 29, 2023 at St. Paul UCC in Wapakoneta, Ohio.

Adjournment

Jay Scott moved to adjourn, seconded by Tom Kagy. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Scott, Secretary

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

4.04.23

TRANSFERRED INTO THE NORTHWEST OHIO ASSOCIATION

Rev. Karsten Snitker from Wisconsin Conference/Southwest Association

July 5, 2022

TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE NORTHWEST OHIO ASSOCIATION

Rev. Becky Sunday to Heartland Conference/Central Southeast Ohio Association

June 13, 2022

Rev. Katherine Beckett to Indiana-Kentucky Conference/Southeast Association

Aug 9, 2022

DEATHS

Rev. Calvin Gerber

April 18, 2022

Rev. Fred Zimmerman

October 15, 2022

Rev. Steven Voelker

November 19, 2022

Rev. Glenn E. Coleman

December 23, 2022

Rev. David B Hunt

March 25, 2023

ORDAINED

Rev. Michael Ebersole

February 19, 2023 – St. John's UCC Baseline, College Hill UCC-Bloomville & St. Paul UCC, Wapakoneta

INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Andrea Mericle

August 13, 2022 – Parkvue Community, Sandusky

Rev. Jeremy Mann

August 21, 2022 – St. John's UCC, Bluffton

Rev. Karsten Snitker

October 23, 2022 – Trinity UCC, Tiffin

Rev. Philip Balla

January 15, 2023 – Memorial UCC, Toledo

RETIRED

Rev. Adrian Sunday

April 30, 2022

Rev. David Plant

December 31, 2022

Rev. Donald Giesmann

December 31, 2022

SUMMARY STATEMENT

- 85 Total ordained ministers with full standing in the Northwest Ohio Association
(this includes 46 retired ministers)
- 72 Local Churches in the Northwest Ohio Association 16,473 Total Church Membership
(this number included two Schedule I and one Schedule II churches)
- 32 local churches served by UCC ordained ministers
- 10 local churches served by ordained ministers of another denomination
- 8 local churches served by Licensed Lay Ministers
- 5 local churches served by Licensed/Students in Discernment (In-care)
- 1 local church served by Licensed/Commissioned Minister
- 2 local churches served by UCC Lay Ministers
- 3 local churches served by Lay Minister of another denomination
- 3 local churches served by Supply Pastors
- 4 local churches served by a UCC Pastor holding standing in another Conference/Association
- 1 Closed Church
- 3 local schedule I or schedule II churches
- 26 local churches reporting Chair of Christian Education and Faith Formation
- 17 local churches reporting Youth Leaders

**ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS –Total years of Ordination - 810
 LICENSED ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS –Total years Licensed - 10
 CHURCH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS–Total years in Existence - 2825**

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023

60 th Anniversary	Paul N. Moyer	May 10, 1963
55 th Anniversary	David M. Culp	September 29, 1968
	James W. Garner	September 29, 1968
50 th Anniversary	Louis H. Dorsch	June 3, 1973
	John D. Mummert	August 1, 1973
	David B. Hunt	June 17, 1973
	David R. Norwine	December 5, 1973
	Lowell L. Peters	June 14, 1973
	James P. Wise	August 5, 1973
35 th Anniversary	E. Jená Garrison	December 4, 1988
	Gale F. Gebhart	June 15, 1988
	Vernard W. Swett	May 8, 1988
	David A. Voll	April 17, 1988
30 th Anniversary	Wayne C. Chasney	August 1, 1993
	David E. Orr, Jr.	October 24, 1993
	Wendy S. Schindler-Chasney	December 5, 1993
25 th Anniversary	Faith A. Proietti	November 22, 1998
	Hafidha F. Saadiqah	September 20, 1998
	Jeanette L. Tangeman	June 7, 1998
20 th Anniversary	Elaine M. Bast	December 14, 2003
15 th Anniversary	Jennifer L. Jackson	May 17, 2008

LICENSED MINISTER ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023

10 th Anniversary	Ryan D. Shields	February 5, 2013
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CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023

200 years	First Congregational UCC, Berlin Heights	1823
190 years	St. Paul UCC, New Bremen	1833
	Trinity UCC, Tiffin	1833
180 years	First UCC, Marion	1843
170 years	College Hill UCC, Bloomville	1853
165 years	First UCC, Findlay	1858
160 years	Lytton-Zion UCC, Delta	1863
	St. Paul's UCC, Bellevue	1863
155 years	St. John's UCC, Genoa	1868
	Haskins Community Church, Haskins	1868
	Spencerville UCC, Spencerville	1868
150 years	St. John's UCC, Bluffton	1873
	First UCC, Marblehead	1873
	Washington Congregational UCC, Toledo	1873
140 years	Zion UCC, Bettsville	1883
125 years	Westminster Christian Church UCC, Harrod	1898
120 years	Calvin UCC, Toledo	1903
110 years	Park Congregational Church UCC, Toledo	1913