

EAST OHIO EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP

Rev. Mike Grant, Chairperson

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Rev. Thomas D. Snyder, Treasurer

Rev. David West Past Chairperson

General Conference Issue

February 2012

OUR PURPOSE:

to **AFFIRM**

Our United Methodism's commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,

to the historic Christian faith,

to the Wesleyan doctrinal standard,

to the Holy Scriptures as authority for faith and life.

to **DEMONSTRATE**

the relevance and the validity of scriptural Christianity for our day.

to **EMPHASIZE**

the mission of the church as leading persons to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ,

which will result in personal Spiritual growth,

and responsible actions for social justice.

to **CHALLENGE**

all United Methodist to make a radical commitment of our lives to Jesus Christ,
leading to personal and social HOLINESS!

Chairperson's Word

This is an exciting time to be a part of EOE. We have a thoughtful and forward looking Board of Directors with many plans for the year. I am sharing them with you so you can come alongside us with your prayers and support.

First, we have a very special event, "*Come and See*" on Saturday March 17, 2012 at Cuyahoga Falls First UMC. Great leaders from East and West Ohio will share about issues at the forefront of **General Conference 2012 (GC)**; *Call To Action*, *Ministry Study*, and the financial state of our church. The day will end with a panel discussion when your questions on any GC topic will be addressed. Please come and bring a group from your congregation. See the enclosed flyer, registration deadline March 9. General Conference will be held April 24-May 4 in Tampa, FL.

Please hold General Conference in your prayers. Pray for delegates by name. Send them a note of encouragement. Pray in your worship, include it in prayer chains. Have a prayer vigil in your church or district. There is world-changing power available to Christ's followers in prayer, so let us pray that power is unleashed and the Holy Spirit is present in Tampa.

The North Central Jurisdictional Conference will be held July 17-20, 2012 in Akron, Ohio. Currently there are no Bishops up for election and the conference may be shortened. We will have a hospitality room with light refreshments. If you would like to be a host in this room, bake cookies or muffins, or help financially, please email us at EOENewsletter@aol.com.

At our Annual Conference in Lakeside June 17-21, 2012, we are looking at changing our annual dinner to a luncheon because of rising cost. We will share more in the next newsletter. Please plan to come to this annual time of food, business, and fellowship.

Lastly, we have a task force proactively looking at the future of our group. We stand on the shoulders of many great evangelical leaders, and their faith and sacrifice has forever touched lives like mine. But we live in a different time and we must find new ways to share the timeless message of the saving power of Jesus Christ with the next generation of potential believers. Please pray for us, as we seek God's guidance. It is an honor to serve you and I pray God's richest blessing on you.

Mike Grant 2012 EOE Chair

2 Big Disputes Ahead at General Conference

Reproduced with permission from Heather Hahn UMNS

Two proposals hover near the top of the controversy list as The United Methodist Church approaches this spring's General Conference. The first would restructure the denomination, including consolidating nine of the church's 13 general agencies under a 15-member board. The second would end job guarantees for ordained elders in good standing.

The 2012 General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, will have final say on the proposed changes when it meets April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla. However, the proposals already are drawing scrutiny from United Methodist groups across the theological spectrum, and those groups will be out in force at General Conference advocate their points of view.

Both proposals aim to address four decades of declining United Methodist membership in the United States. Legislation to restructure the denomination originated with the Call to Action process. The Study of Ministry Commission drafted the legislation to alter "security of appointment" for elders, a move endorsed by Call to Action leaders

"I don't think there is any question that the restructuring proposals and the entire ministry report, of which security of appointment is one piece, will be some of the primary places of debate," said the Rev. Robert J. Williams, the chief executive at the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History. Almost everyone agrees the denomination needs to change. Where views differ is how best to go about it. In general, leaders of the denomination's unofficial progressive groups fear the recommended restructuring will lessen the church's commitment to ethnic diversity and minimize programs that foster church growth, particularly among people of color.

The recommended restructuring "isn't United Methodist, and it isn't Wesleyan," said Donald L. Hayashi, who worked with the Methodist Federation for Social Action, a denomination-wide progressive caucus, in drafting an alternative reorganization that has been submitted to General Conference. Reconciling Ministries Network, another progressive caucus, also supports the alternative plan.

Meanwhile, leaders of unofficial evangelical groups see the restructuring as a cost-saving measure that will put more focus on local congregations. "We believe that a lot of the proposals are moving us in the right direction," said the Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, vice president and general manager of denomination-wide evangelical caucus Good News. Although often on opposing sides, some progressives and evangelicals share misgivings about legislation to eliminate "security of appointment" for elders in good standing. In The United Methodist Church, bishops and their cabinets are responsible for appointing clergy to congregations and other ministries. "We're concerned that pastors (might) become vulnerable to arbitrary decisions on the part of bishops and cabinets," Lambrecht said.

The two proposals come after a number of studies over the past four years showing that the denomination's status quo is unsustainable. While The United Methodist Church is growing worldwide, particularly in Africa and the Philippines, the U.S. membership has declined by 29 percent since 1968, going from 10.7 million members to fewer than 8 million. The U.S. membership still provides most of the denomination's financial support.

The initial legislation to restructure the denomination's agencies came out of the multiyear Call to Action process, initiated by the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table to "reorder the life of the church."

The proposed agency — the United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry — would combine the functions of nine general agencies — the Board of Discipleship; Board of Higher Education

and Ministry; Board of Global Ministries; Board of Church and Society; Commission on Religion and Race; Commission on the Status and Role of Women; Commission on Archives and History; Council on Finance and Administration and United Methodist Communications, which operates United Methodist News Service. The work would be organized into offices of congregational vitality, leadership excellence, missional engagement, justice and reconciliation, and shared services. The hope is that the consolidation will eliminate walls of separation, competition for responsibilities and redundant activities among the agencies, said Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, a leader in the Call to Action process. A “more nimble, cost-effective and focused” agency structure would in turn help annual (regional) conferences foster more vital congregations, he said.

However, Hayashi — who is also president of the National Federation of Asian American United Methodists — said the proposed reduction of agency governing boards from more than 400 people to 15 would “effectively eliminate racial/ethnic leaders on the agency boards,” he said.

“United Methodist agencies mandated to monitor race and gender discrimination would disappear and the five ethnic plans approved by General Conference would not have the capacity to continue providing leadership training, continue developing new congregations and (continue) revitalizing existing ones.”

He pointed out that that ethnic minorities, particularly Latinos, account for the greatest population growth in the United States. “They are younger and more family-oriented,” he said. “This offers the greatest opportunity for church growth, but they don’t offer high income. Will they be a priority?”

Evangelicals take a different view. Reducing the size of boards and agencies can help local congregations by reducing what they pay to support the general church, said Patricia Miller, executive director of the Confessing Movement Within the United Methodist Church, an evangelical caucus.

“I think (the current structure) is extremely costly, and there are more efficient ways to deal with the issues of boards and agencies,” she said. “Ministry takes place at local churches. Boards and agencies can help with some availability of programs, etc., but the actual ministry takes place at local churches.” Lambrecht of Good News also said his group favors Call to Action’s “emphasis on local church vitality” and its potential cost saving.

Point of agreement

Progressives and evangelicals do share some concerns about the restructuring. Leaders of both Good News and Methodist Federation for Social Action criticized the Call to Action plan for not offering enough representation to church members in the central conferences — church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

In the proposed legislation, the board of the newly created United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry would be accountable to a 45-member advisory board called the General Council for Strategy and Oversight. This council would replace the 60-member Connectional Table, which coordinates the denomination’s mission, ministries and resources.

The legislation designates that the 45-member council board should include one member from each of the seven central conferences. The board’s 41 voting members also will include five bishops, five members the denomination’s ethnic caucuses, three representatives from the Advisory Committee on Ministries with Young People and 21 members elected from jurisdictions in proportion to their jurisdictions’ membership.

“You have the Southeastern and South Central jurisdictions getting the lion’s share of the vote,” said the Rev. Steve Clunn, Methodist Federation for Social Action’s coalition coordinator. “Either you’re going to be representative across the board, which is fair, or you’re going to create power blocks, which this does.”

Lambrecht expressed similar worries. “I am not sure the 45-member General Council is large enough to be actually representative of the church,” he said. “We are a little bit concerned about the under-representation of the central conferences on that group.”

Security of appointment

Methodist Federation for Social Action and Good News also join together in panning proposed legislation to eliminate “security of appointment” — which is also known as guaranteed appointment — for ordained elders.

The Study of Ministry Commission, in its report, said the practice is not financially sustainable and “limits the ability of the church to respond to the primacy of missional needs.” An earlier report estimated there are 784 more U.S. clergy than positions needed in the church.

The commission has submitted legislation that would allow bishops and cabinets to give an elder in good standing a less than full-time appointment. The legislation also would permit bishops and their cabinets, with the approval of their boards of ordained ministry and annual (regional) conference’s executive session, to put elders on unpaid transitional leave for up to 24 months. Clergy on transitional leave would be able to participate in their conference health program through their own contributions.

Lambrecht said he fears the current legislation offers too few protections for clergy. “At Good News, over the years we’ve become aware of numerous stories of pastors who are either arbitrarily denied an appointment or appointed to a much lower position simply because the bishop or (district) superintendent didn’t like their theology,” he said.

Clunn voiced a slightly different concern. “For us, the big question has been: ‘Why do we give more power to bishops in terms of appointment of clergy, when they are not using the power they have now?’” he said. “If there are clergy who are ineffective now, they have the right and responsibility to take that to the (conference) board of ordained ministry to work on to either help that clergyperson become more effective or to help them find a new vocation.”

The legislation changes the current process by stripping a conference’s clergy “the final say in terms of voting whether a clergy person is removed or retained or in good standing or not,” he said.

****Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.***

News media contact: Heather Hahn, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

The Challenge of Diversity

By Rev. Dr. Chet Harris* Reprinted by permission from the Winter 2012 East Ohio Joining Hands

Diversity remains one of the greatest strengths of The United Methodist Church. Our diversity ranges from the theological to the cultural. We have a rich tradition of reaching people from myriad backgrounds and opening our doors to leadership that reflects this respect for diversity. The United Methodist Church defies the litmus test that defines many denominations and non-denominational churches. Our historical tradition guides us into practical personal holiness and active social holiness. Our governing politic is profoundly representative in nature and scope.

I needed to share this view of The United Methodist Church because our diversity in my opinion is our greatest asset but also presents our greatest challenge. The issue of human sexuality once again will test the steel of true diversity in our denomination. The risk of making the aforementioned statements may cause some people to believe I openly affirm all manner of diversity. Life has boundaries. Diversity must have boundaries or we will slide into a libertine view of life.

General Conference 2012 will face the issue of human sexuality, or more precisely, the rights and privileges of people who embrace the homosexual lifestyle. The possible rewriting of the language in the Book of Discipline, whether in part or whole, will directly impact the life and future of The United Methodist Church.

There are a few points I would like to express in regard to the attempt to change the current language of the Discipline.

First, it is a myth to believe that all we need is more information about the sexuality issue. I am weary of the apologetic approach to the issue before us. Both sides believe they are absolutely right and neither plans to move a fraction toward the other.

Second, it is a myth to believe changing the language will help to grow our denomination. This is simply a “smoke and mirrors” approach to the issue. Our membership will not suddenly expand by thousands of people who agree with the change in language. Actually, the evangelicals will quietly depart and attend the non-denominational church around the corner. Church growth cannot be the reason to change the language.

Third, our denomination will not magically become two denominations if the language is changed. The day for the possibility of that happening is ancient history. Instead, membership would splinter like bamboo smashed against concrete.

Fourth, it is a myth to believe a vote by General Conference to change the language on human sexuality will change our worldview. This will not happen. Worldview on this level is not an issue impacted by a vote. The entire issue of homosexuality centers on one’s view of Scripture and inspiration.

What is the answer? General Conference cannot give us the answer. The answer remains in our ability to dialogue on this issue with a sense of the Holy. This dialogue will not happen on Conference floor with three speeches for and against. If we vote to change the language in the Book of Discipline, we must own the resulting actions of the proponents of both worldviews.

***Rev. Dr. Chet Harris is in his 21st year at Dueber Church in Canton.**

Please help us be good stewards

Please let us know of address corrections or changes and if you would like to receive the newsletter electronically (PDF). Send changes to EOEFNewsletter@aol.com

For newsletter correspondence and articles

**contact Harley Wheeler, Editor, at
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mail: 735 Lynnwood Ave.
Minerva, OH 44657,
Telephone: 330-522-4158**

“If tomorrow is the day of Judgment, we will then cheerfully stop working for a better future, but not before” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison

**THE REV. ROBERT D. SNYDER
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
FOR SEMINARIANS**

**Established in memory of the contributions made to the
East Ohio Annual Conference**

and

**East Ohio Evangelical Fellowship by
The REV. ROBERT D. SNYDER**

The Scholarship Committee is seeking applicants for the fund that are entering or attending Seminary, on an Elder's track, with a heart to tell the world about the good news of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is assumed that the intent of scholarship recipients is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ in the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. Applications can be downloaded from the EOEF website at <http://eoefboard.org> in DOC or PDF format. Information is available there, and questions will be answered at snyderfund@neo.rr.com.

To make contributions:

Contact:

Lynn Carper

800 N. Market St.

Minerva, OH 44657

lecarper@frontier.com

For applications/information:

Contact:

Rev. Tom Snyder

22 S. Gamble St.

Shelby, OH 44875

snyderfund@neo.rr.com

Treasurer's Note

EOEF Financial Report

Submitted by Tom Snyder, EOEF Treasurer

As of 12/31/11 the account balances for EOEF are as follows:

General Fund Checking - \$244.47

General Fund Savings - \$2,134.35

John Mahaffey Savings - \$2,305.85

Juris. Impact Savings - \$1,093.73

Total Assets as of 12/31/11 - \$5,778.40

We are still working on plans for having a presence and an impact at the Jurisdictional Conference this year, and if you are willing to support that work, which may become significant in the event that there is an Episcopal Election, we still would appreciate your gift to the Jurisdictional Impact Fund to support that work. Checks may be made out to the EOEF, and note "JI Fund" on the notation line. Send contributions to Tom Snyder, 22 S Gamble St, Shelby, OH 44875. Thank you!

Extreme Bible Zone

As they do every year, the EOEF will be sponsoring Extreme Bible Zone at Camp Wanake. During this week long camp experience, the campers will learn about the Bible through studying, competition, and quizzing. Our goal is to reach the youth around us and help them to get into the Word of God. The Campers will enjoy a week of camp that includes hiking, games, singing, canoeing, and climbing. Each night we finish off with the Bible Bowl where we see what we have learned that day. The dates for this year are July 22-27. If you know of youth in 5th to 8th grades, why not encourage them to attend a camp that can encourage them to dig deep into the Bible? Ever thought of volunteering for a week at camp as a counselor? We are also in need of people

who love youth and want to help them to get a better understanding of the Word of God. If this is something that would interest you please contact Becky Evanoff at beckyevanoff@yahoo.com. Look for us in the Summer Camp brochure!!

EAST OHIO EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP

Robert D. Snyder Memorial Scholarship

The Robert D. Snyder Scholarship committee is pleased to announce that we are again taking applications for the Scholarship in memory of Rev. Robert D. Snyder.

The award gives preference to but is not limited to seminarians, whose faith, practice and beliefs echo those of the Reverend Robert D. (Bob) Snyder, who seek to serve the Conference he served, in the name of, and for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Application deadline is March 1st, mailed to Mrs. Becky Evanoff, 2830 Abraham Ave., Massillon, Ohio 44647, beckyevanoff@yahoo.com with award determination finalized by April 30th, and disbursement to the recipient and their school in August.

Applications can be downloaded at the EOEF website, <http://www.eoefboard.org> in either Word or PDF format. Instructions for filing the application are in the application. We are asking that the recipient would be available to attend the EOEF Banquet at Annual Conference, to be recognized. If that is not possible, a short video can be submitted in lieu of traveling to Conference.

For those of you who might wish to be a blessing to seminarians, and have not acted upon that wish yet, contributions to the fund can be made to the Robert D. Snyder Scholarship Fund, in care of Mrs. Lynn Carper, 800 N. Market St., Minerva, OH 44657. Questions or further information can be obtained by contacting the following: snyderfund@neo.rr.com or www.eoefboard.org.

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“Encounter: A Blueprint For The House Of Prayer”

presented by Terry Teykl

Do you struggle to maintain a healthy prayer and worship life? Whether you have been praying and worshipping for decades or are just thinking about getting started, a day with Terry Teykl will energize and equip you to more effectively communicate with the Father. Terry’s passion is contagious as he communicates foundational principles and practical ideas. He’ll make you laugh, but you will come away from the experience convinced that you can make a difference in your church, your life, and the lives of those who are yet to find faith in Jesus. This "Day Away" study will teach and model effective prayer and 10 different prayer models for your life and your local congregation.

Participants will receive Terry's workbook on prayer.

Lunch is provided by The Outlet Cafe.

Registration begins 8:15

*Terry's presentation at 9:00
Saturday, March 24th, 2012*

*Faith UMC (across from Crestview Schools)
1574 SR 96 East
Ashland, OH 44805*

Online registration at:
www.terryteykl-in-ohio.eventbrite.com
Pre-Registration by March 10th \$35 at the door

*Mail Registration to: Prayer Encounter Ashland First UMC
220 Sandusky St.
Ashland, OH 44805*

For more information you may contact our registrar, Mary Ann,
at 419-289-7551 or email maryann@ashlandfirst.org



“Come and See”

How General Conference can Renew and Reform our Church

Saturday March 17, 2012

9AM-3PM

Cuyahoga Falls First UMC

¹³ *But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. John 16:13 (NIV)*

Come and See what is coming before **General Conference 2012** in Tampa, Florida April 24-May 4. **Worship in Spirit and Truth.** Learn from General Conference delegates about the *Call to Action Report* and *Ministry Study*. Have your questions answered by a **Round Table** panel, any question on any GC topic. Registration opens 9AM. Program begins 9:30AM

Speakers

Mr. Jerry Rinehart: East Ohio GC delegate, GBOD member, Discipleship

Rev. Greg Stover: West Ohio GC delegate, Connectional Table member, General Administration

Rev. Dr. Gary George: East Ohio GC delegate, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop, Financial Administration

Mrs. Jessica Vargo: East Ohio GC delegate, Conference Treasurer, Financial Administration

Rev. Dr. David Baker: East Ohio GC delegate, Sr. Minister Cuyahoga Falls First UMC, Ministry & Higher Education

Preacher: **Rev. Dr. Chet Harris** Sr. Pastor Dueber Church UMC

Worship Leader: **Rev. Scott Walsh** Pastor New Leaf UMC

Cuyahoga Falls First UMC
245 Portage Trail
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221
www.firstchurchcf.com

Registration Deadline: Friday, March 9

Please prepay lunch: \$10

Sponsored by the East Ohio Evangelical Fellowship

www.eoefboard.org

Registration

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Number attending: _____ X \$10 (for lunch) = _____ enclosed

Names of additional persons: _____

Registration information can be emailed to: lecarper@frontier.com but **please prepay lunch**

Checks payable to: EOEf Mail to: EOEf c/o Lynn Carper 800 N. Market Minerva, OH 44657

Questions? Email EOEFNewsletter@aol.com

Registration Deadline: Friday, March 9