

East Ohio Annual Conference – 40th Session
Lay Delegate Report
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June 28, 2009

See the Preconference Workbook at > http://www.eocumc.com/ac09/pdf/preconference_wkbk.pdf

The conference took place during the week of June 15-18, 2009 at Lakeside, Ohio.
The theme this year was “be transformed,” as United Methodists we are to rethink what it means to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

Episcopal Address

“Friends, if there was ever a time to rethink church, now is the time,” Hopkins said during the annual Episcopal Address. Hopkins encouraged members to step outside their comfort zones and realize that in order to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, all United Methodists must *rethink* church.

State of the Conference Highlights:

See full report at <http://www.eocumc.com/ac09/pdf/JVstateofconference.pdf>

The EO conference paid 100% of the general church apportionments for the third year in a row. Seventeen out of 63 United States conferences achieved that goal.

There are 793 churches in East Ohio.
Over 554 churches have less than 100 worshippers.
It is estimated to take 125 worshippers to support a full-time pastor.
East Ohio only has 189 churches out of 793 that worship over 125 or 24%

The health care costs for East Ohio per person have more than doubled from under \$6,000 in 1999 to \$14,000 in 2008, compared to approximately \$9,000 per person in the national average. This is a reflection of the number pastors approaching the retirement age and pastors that are currently retired, compared to the off balance in the number of younger pastors entering the field of service.

The average giving per worship attendee for 2008 was \$1278, an increase of 4.5% in four years. This increase is nowhere close to the increase in pastoral cost need.

State of the Conference Council on Ministries

Rev. Paul White began with the theme “We do need to rethink church so we can change our declining statistics.

He encouraged the membership to rethink church so we can truly be about our mission of “making and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

Another ongoing concern is for Global AIDS. The conference voted two years ago to join the worldwide effort to fight HIV/AIDS by raising \$1 per member. To date \$12,301.95 has been raised.

Jurisdiction Conference Delegation

For the third quadrennium in a row, a bishop was elected from East Ohio with the election of Rev. Dr. Julius Trimble at the 2008 Jurisdictional Conference. Eleven representatives (7 lay and 4 clergy) from East Conference serve on various boards and agencies at the general church level.

East Ohio will host the 2012 North Central Jurisdictional Conference.

General Conference Constitutional Amendments

The 2008 General Conference passed thirty-two amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. This Constitution, which is found in the beginning of the Book of Discipline, is the foundational document establishing and governing The United Methodist Church.

A two-thirds vote of the General Conference is required to pass these amendments, and these proposed changes to the Constitution *require further two-thirds approval from all area annual conferences the following year.*

Amendments Summary:

Voting results from our EOUMC Annual Conference may be found at http://www.eocumc.com/ac09/pdf/gc_constitutional amendment_vote.pdf

A brief description of a few major changes before the conference delegates:

I (1) Amend 4 - Inclusiveness of the Church, accepting "all" who walk through our church doors.

IX (9) Amend 23 - Add to end of first sentence 'provided that no jurisdictional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates.'

XIX (19) Amend 35 to allow associate members, provisional members who have completed educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study and served two full years preceding the election to vote for clergy delegates to General Conference.

Remaining amendments with the same wording change:

Delete 'central' and replace it with 'regional.' This will affect how the global UMC is organized and orchestrated, allowing more of a voice to countries outside of the United States.

All amendments were voted in favor of passing by NEOUMC, but will require a 2/3 quorum from the entire UMC annual conferences. 134 UMC annual conferences will be voting.

Board of Pensions and Hospitalization

To meet requirements for pension billing of pastors, an **increase of 4%** will be incorporated into the plan compensation for 2010 Annual Conference funding of the Clergy Retirement Security Plan.

For appointed clergy there will be a rate **increase of 10%** for health care plan participants. The cost for hospitalization has risen to just under \$13,000/year or \$1,065 flat rate premium for 2010.

For lay participants, there will also be a **10% increase** on a single plan, at \$446 monthly premium or \$5,352/year and for a family premium for lay participants will be \$1,166 monthly premium.

The apportionment for health care benefits for 2010 is \$1,299,870.00

The loss of funding reserves due to the current poor economic conditions has deeply impacted the status of these services.

Bishop's Three C's Presentation

Churches, Clinics, and Classrooms Report

A Mission team will travel to Liberia January 26-February 8, 2010 to help set up a missionary home for children.

Another team will travel to Russia to help establish new churches.

EOUMC is establishing mission opportunities in Zimbabwe

New Church Development Team

The New Church Development Team shared that there are 12 new churches in the conference. Four are new church starts, three are re-starts and five are vital mergers.

The Vital Merger model is 2 or more congregations merging together, selling their buildings and building a new church building. Research says that each new generation becomes more and more distant from the church.

Pedaling Parsons

Bicycle tours lead by pastors that travel through several states. A flatland tour will be July 13-17 from Luther, Michigan to Monroville, Indiana. A challenge tour will be September 14-18 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Pedaling Parsons are raising money this year for community centers in Akron, Bethesda, Cleveland, Steubenville and Youngstown. The group has raised over \$600,000 for missions over the last 22 years.

Resolutions Summary:

Resolution 2009-01: "Third World No More"

The purpose of this resolution is to re-educate the East Ohio Conference to refrain from using the term Third World to refer to the people of former colonial countries and their citizens. The term Third World is offensive and implies discrimination. Submitted by Commission on Religion and Race, Rev. Armando Arelleno, chair Resolution adopted.

Resolution 2009-02 Environmental Awareness Sunday

This resolution asks that the conference establish at least one Sunday for the purpose of environmental awareness. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that "we urge wholehearted support of the conservation of energy" and further that "we...call on individuals, congregations... and communities to reduce their emissions. Youth Annual Conference 2009 encourages members to walk, bicycle or carpool to church to reduce the use of nonrenewable resources.

Submitted by Youth Annual Conference Resolution adopted.

Resolution 2009-3

This resolution encourages youth to participate in worship and to discover, develop and implement their s spiritual gifts. Resolution asks churches to designate a Youth Sunday; giving youth an opportunity to lead worship.

Submitted by Youth Annual Conference Resolution adopted.

