

# The Old Apple Tree



*East Ohio Conference Retirees Association  
Spring 2024*



Members of the 2024 Retiree Class will be celebrated during the Annual Conference on Saturday, June 15, at 2:30 p.m. at the Service of Commissioning, Ordination, and Retirement at the John S. Knight Center in Akron. Bishop Lanette L. Plambeck of the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area will be the speaker. We hope many of our present retirees will attend this service to welcome our newest retirees. For information on this class of retirees visit [2024 East Ohio Annual Conference \(eocumc.com\)](https://www.eocumc.com).

## **2024 Retiree Association Annual Gathering**

The 2024 Retiree Gathering Luncheon and Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 10, at Ashland University. Please save this date and look forward to further information and reservation forms that will be mailed in August. This is a time to recognize the 2024 Class of Retirees, honor those who have gone on to their heavenly retirement, and to fellowship with one another. Plan to join us at this annual gathering and reconnect with colleagues and friends.



## **Present Retiree Gatherings**

At present there are three Retiree Gatherings (from our former ten districts) that continue to take place. Each of these Gatherings is open to anyone who may wish to attend. These Gatherings and contact persons for more information if you wish to be invited/included are:

- Former Mahoning Valley District Area; meets once a month at the Eat-n-Park Restaurant for breakfast at 9:00 a.m. at 5451 Mahoning Ave., Austintown, OH; Contact Dick Smith at [smithdsmith48@live.com](mailto:smithdsmith48@live.com) for information.

- Former Mid-Ohio District Area; meets monthly for lunch at Ontario U.M. Church, 3540 Park Ave. West, Ontario, OH; Contact David Mansperger at [demansperger@yahoo.com](mailto:demansperger@yahoo.com) for more information.
- Former Three Rivers District Area; meets quarterly in the Coshocton area; Contact Martha Stuller at [mlstuller@gmail.com](mailto:mlstuller@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Health Care Information**

Some retirees may be receiving a refund for their purchase of Paxlovid. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services changed their stance to include Paxlovid in the patient assistance program where the retiree cost share is \$0 effective 11/2/2023. Claims will be reprocessed and if a refund is due, the retiree will receive a check along with a letter in 6-8 weeks (from March 12).

### **Your United Healthcare**

Your member website has been designed to help you do more, giving you 24/7 access to everything your plan has to offer.

#### **After you sign up for your online account and log in, you can:**



Look up your latest claim information



Search for network doctors



Review benefit information and plan materials



Explore Renew by UnitedHealthcare our member-only Health & Wellness Experience



Print a temporary UnitedHealthcare® member ID card and request a new one



Sign up to get your Explanation of Benefits (EOB) and other plan documents online



Search for drugs and see how much they cost under your plan

As always – if you have any questions or concerns about your UHC Plan, please contact Robin Whitacre, Benefits Manager, at (330) 499-3972, Ext. 151.

## TOAT CHANGES

With our East Ohio Conference changes from ten to four districts there has been a need to make changes in the way you submit information for The Old Apple Tree. At present we no longer have District TOAT Correspondents. Presently to submit news and information you can send a brief report to Paul White at [paulw2800@gmail.com](mailto:paulw2800@gmail.com). As we can better identify the districts in which retirees reside (a project presently being worked on) we may be able to return to having District Correspondents. We also rely on emails that the East Ohio Conference office currently has, to attempt to alert both retirees and surviving spouses of TOAT deadlines for submitting information. Please be sure to keep both your physical and email addresses current with the conference office.

# Connections

We tell each other our hobbies, new ventures, and many ways of serving Christ within and beyond “appointment” ministries. We may be retired, but we are still alive in Christ and active in the church and in the world. We also ask for prayer in the challenges of elder years.

## West Plains District

**Steven & Linda Brown** traveled for 20 days in March from Florida to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, with dear friends who were observing their 50th wedding anniversary; the first wedding Steven conducted. We experienced amazing scenery, kangaroos, and extremely cold south wind from Antarctica. The people are extremely focused on cleanliness and ecology. Steven and Linda, snowbirds,

plan to drive, not fly, to Ohio in late April.

**Mike Namy** shared my most recent MRI on March 26 showed no evidence of cancer. It has been two years since my treatments for CNS lymphoma. My oncologist is very pleased with my progress. Secondly, I have been serving quarter time at West Salem UMC. This is in the West Plains district, where we currently reside. Thirdly, I was in Naples Florida for two weeks with a good friend of mine in mid-January. Lastly, my granddaughter will be

graduating from Jackson-Milton High School and is planning to attend KSU.

**Bill McCartney** participated in the 100th anniversary of the Mt. Lebanon UMC (Pittsburgh) building at which they recognized any whose ordination took place in that church. Bill's ordination in 1956 was one of three ordination services that took place there at the Mt Lebanon church. The other dates were 1930 and 1980. There were two members from the 1980 ordination class who also participated in the anniversary

services. Bill has just accepted an Interim assignment to serve the Galena UMC for 11 weeks starting Sunday, April 21. He admits he is both delighted and a bit apprehensive about the responsibility.

**Gary Olin & Sally Nelson-Olin** write they enjoy life at Kendal at Oberlin. We keep busy doing our part to help Kendal be an engaging, resident-involved community. Sally helps other residents with computer challenges. She also serves with the group that supports the Kendal Resident Association website. Gary is a member of the Kendal Board of Directors, serving on the Strategic Plan Committee and the Master Plan work group. We relate to Christ Episcopal Church, Oberlin, where we worship regularly and participate in activities. Sally had an opportunity to preach there in Lent. We are active in the Center for Evangelical United Brethren Heritage at United Theological Seminary. We each serve on the Center's Advisory Council, where Gary is chairperson. Sally's project for the Center has been to digitize hundreds of oral history cassettes of former EUB leaders from the 1970s and '80s. Presently the Center is planning a scholarly conference in October, "Heirs of Pietism in World Christianity". The winter of 2023-24 found us dealing with a major health challenge, as

Gary was hospitalized for a heart issue in early December, followed by a lengthy recovery. As spring begins, he is doing much better and we look forward to an enjoyable, engaged Spring and Summer.



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## Northern Waters District

**Jerry & Betty Butcher** report in our retirement for the past 25 years, we enjoyed living on Lake Muzzy in Ravenna during the summers and spending winters in sunny Mission, Texas near our son Markus and family. But when the pandemic hit in 2020, we stayed put in Texas. In July 2022 we decided to leave Texas permanently and move back home to Ohio. We now live in an apartment next to our daughter Vickie and husband

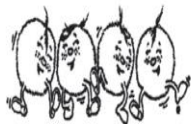
Allen Gage in Mogadore, Ohio. Betty will be 90 in May, and I am not far behind. Both of us enjoy reasonably good health. I preached my last sermon in Advent of 2022 and am still able to go fly-fishing. Now I am writing my memoirs about life growing up in West Virginia, the ministry and fly-fishing. It is great to be back in Ohio among family, friends, and United Methodist colleagues. Love and blessings to all.

**Stan & Carol Wallace** are excited to have their daughter, Beth, move back to Akron from New York City. She is buying a house in Highland Square. Stan recently spent many hours assembling a 74-page, 8-Frame exhibit for the March McKinley Stamp Show. He expected a ribbon for first time Exhibitor, but he also won a Gold Ribbon and a Best Foreign Ribbon for his exhibit "Beautiful Stamps of Southeast Asia" (Indo-China, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam).

**Charlie Yoost** is in his sixth year as Senior Director of Religious Life and Pastoral Care at Lakeside Chautauqua. Amongst the guest preachers he will host this summer are Jim Wallis, founder of *Sojourners*, Grace Imathiu, originally from Kenya, Charles Boayue, originally from Liberia, and Matt Laferty, originally from

Crestline, Ohio, and former president of CCYM, now the Executive Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome, Italy.

### Joygerms Card



WE WERE MADE FOR JOY!

In Spite of: Delay, Denial, Disappointment,  
Disaster, Disease & Demise

WE WERE MADE FOR JOY!

May JOY be: Found, Surround, Abound, Astound and  
'Hound' You All The Days of Your Life! ..Cuz..

WE WERE MADE FOR JOY!

– via Joygerm Joan White  
Syracuse, NY

### Central Valley District

**W. Robert Morrison**, parish musician at First Methodist, Canton (later Church of the Savior UM; Crossroads) 1951-1994 and Annual Conference musician for many years moved in December 2023 to Canton Christian Home #450 and is parish musician at St. Mark's Episcopal, Canton. He donated his *hausorgel* to Holy Trinity Lutheran, Massillon, and his 1914 Mason & Hamlin piano to Canton Christian Home chapel.

**Jim Skinner** reports he enjoyed a Road Scholars

event in Washington, D.C. during Holy Week focusing on Diplomacy. It was a 5-day educational event teaching us about America's Foreign Service. April 1 was the 5-year anniversary when my wife Karen entered Memory Care and eventually Long-Term Care for her Alzheimer's diagnosis.

**Marta Mathatas** started the new year with a compression fracture at the top of her big arm bone. Six weeks immobilized was not fun, but she is doing well with physical therapy. She is very involved with the Alumni Board of Directors of her alma mater, Cornell College in Eastern Iowa. The Class of '74 will be having their 50<sup>th</sup> Homecoming Reunion Oct 4-6, and she is reaching out to classmates, helping with a Memorial Service, and helping guide the Class gift of an endowed scholarship. DeLoe has mostly recovered from his esophagectomy of 2023. His digestive tract still gives him some problems, but his 50 lb. weight loss means he can ride his bike faster and faster. The big event of the year looks to be attendance at the World Methodist Conference, in Goteburg, Sweden, August 13-18. They will be visiting the Baltic capitals – Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, Vilnius, and Copenhagen from July 26-Aug 8, with Overseas Adventure travel, and hope to

get to Oslo on their own between Aug 8-13. Marta was an exchange student in Finland in 1969 and is hoping to visit 2 Finnish exchange students who were high school friends and her Finnish family. Grandkids and our church family make life pretty darn good.

**Coralee Cox** writes: I continue to greatly enjoy retirement (since July 2021) and my involvement in Cope-land Oaks, where I live in a wonderful villa that is perfect for me. I love my opportunities here to lead worship and preach at our Vesper Services and to lead community Bible Studies. I really appreciate all the offerings here to enhance and enrich our bodies, minds, and spirits. We also have a lot of fun together... most often over food. It brings me immense joy having the time and leisure to further deepen relationships with my awesome family in Minnesota (including my godchildren: nephew Jim (age 46) and grandniece Aubrie (age 17). Additional extraordinary joy? Reconnecting with old friends and making new ones, also being active in the ministries and missions of Union Avenue UMC in Alliance (from which I retired). Despite my having idiopathic autoimmune disease which has caused severe sensorimotor polyneuropathy on my entire left side, I remain ineffably blessed. With

adaptations and help from a precious and faithful sister-friend, I am loving this season of my life... and driving while singing along (loudly and without audience) with radio and my wide variety of CDs. Truly and absolutely, the joy of the Lord is my strength. And His grace is indeed sufficient. Thanks be to God!

**Pam & Randy Monteith** had an amazing adventure fulfilling one of Randy's "bucket list trips". They enjoyed a 15-day Norwegian Panama Canal cruise. The ship launched off in LA, stopped at many ports in Mexico, in Guatemala, Panama, and Columbia. Randy, a civil engineer, has a great interest in canals, bridges, etc. The 10-hour passage through the locks and lake was continually narrated. The book "Land Between the Seas" by David McCullough is a great read.

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"We turn not  
older with years  
but newer every  
day."

– Emily Dickinson  
via Matt Samra  
Marshall, MI

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### South Forest District

I am sorry to report we did not receive any information from people living in this area of our conference. The hope is we will be able to collect some good news from our retirees in southern Ohio for the Fall issue of TOAT.

### Out of Conference

**Jim Magaw** reports coming back from a recent therapy appointment, having scheduled 10 more appointments in the next ten weeks. A couple of evenings later as I sat in our apartment, my back hurt terribly. I simply took the brace off, something I have not been doing before until bedtime. I have not worn the brace again for about five days and have much less pain. I am not pain-free, but greatly improved. I am thankful to God and all of those who have prayed for us during many past weeks. Thanks to God who embraces all of us with healing love. God bless you in all your concerns.

### Three Animals Go to Heaven

A horse, a dog and a cat die and go to heaven. St. Peter greets them at the pearly gates and takes them to see God, seated on His throne. God asks the horse, "Why do you think we should let you into heaven?" "I worked hard all my life," the horse replied. "I broke my back tilling the earth and bringing in the harvest, year after year."

"Fine," God said. "Come on in."

"And you?" God addressed the dog.

"I was loyal to my master," the dog replied. "I hunted with him, protected his family, and lay by his side every day when he was sick."

"Good," God said. "You are welcome to enter."

God then looked at the cat and asked, "And what about you?"

"You're sitting in my chair," the cat replied.

– via Paul Samra

## Out of State

**Kristin McKinley:** My husband Russ and I are enjoying life off the beaten path in the mountains of southeast Arizona. We've had a few medical misadventures over the past 2 years, too many to detail other than to say I've had 14 surgeries, 10 of them to repair a very wonky right kidney (which I'm very grateful to report is functioning nicely at 20% function with no stents or other help, and my left kidney is healthy). Despite the medical issues, we have been very fortunate to have traveled in Europe extensively to visit our ancestors' villages – so far, we have been to Moldova/Ukraine (pre-war), Sweden, Norway, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. This summer we hope to complete the adventure by visiting Denmark and Slovakia.

One-liner via United Methodist  
Pastor Karl R. Kraft of Dover, DE:

***"Wisdom is knowing  
some of the best days  
have not happened  
yet."***



"Well done, good and faithful servant! You received over a hundred phone solicitations at dinnertime, and you never lost your temper! Enter into the joy of the Lord!"

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*

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The deadline for submitting materials to be included in the 2024 Fall Issue of TOAT is August 15, 2024. Submit materials to [paulw2800@gmail.com](mailto:paulw2800@gmail.com)

A pastor was suddenly called away and unable to officiate at the Sunday service in his church. He entrusted his new assistant pastor with that duty. When he returned home the following week, he asked his wife what she thought of his young assistant's sermon.

"The poorest I ever heard," she said. "Nothing in it at all. It didn't even make sense."

Later that day, the pastor met his assistant, and asked him how he had managed the previous Sunday.

"Fine, sir, absolutely wonderful," the young priest replied. "I didn't have time to prepare a sermon myself, so I preached one of your old sermons."

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## THE OLD APPLE TREE

**Compiled by reporters  
from the East Ohio  
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Association**

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Please keep in prayer the families of the following retirees who have entered the church triumphant since our last reporting January 1, 2024:

- Richard Ferrell**, *retired Elder*, died January 17.
- Miriam Moore**, *surviving spouse of the Rev. Homer H. Moore*, died January 30.
- David N. J. Smith**, *spouse of Rev. Dr. Ivy Jo Smith*, died February 15.
- Thomas S. Taylor**, *retired Elder*, died February 22.
- Elizabeth Parks**, *surviving spouse of the Rev. Richard Parks*, died February 13.
- Wynn A. Lembright**, *retired Elder*, died February 17.
- Jack O. Schierloh**, *retired Elder*, died February 18.
- Jane E. Wilds**, *surviving spouse of the Rev. Neal Wilds*, died February 19.
- Lorraine S. Thompson**, *surviving spouse of the Rev. Ernest Thompson*, died March 7.
- Forrest Waller**, *retired Elder*, died March 31.

(Please note that a family member should contact the bishop's office at time of a death. Send notices to Melissa McGee at [mmcgee@eocumc.com](mailto:mmcgee@eocumc.com)).