

Footnotes from the Foothills UPDATE



June 2023

Watch for NEW
Hocking River District
Newsletter coming
next week!

Farewell, Foothills, Hello, Hocking River!
This will most likely be my final message to the Foothills District.
Beginning July 1, most of what is now known as the Foothills District will become the Hocking River District. About a dozen churches in Fairfield, one in Ross, and one in Pickaway Counties will belong to other Districts.

Reflections from Annual Conference: Committed, Connected, Community

Dear Members and Friends of the Foothills (and Hocking River) District:

After three years of virtual Annual Conference, we gathered in-person at the Dayton Convention Center for three power-packed days of worship, celebrations, teaching, reconnections, recommendations, and holy conferencing. Sometimes, the conferencing was holier than it was at other times. There was laughter, singing, tears, frustration, rejoicing, silence.

Among the celebrations were inspiring worship services, spirit-filled preaching, joyous retirements, hope-filled commissioning, and majestic ordination. Several awards recognized intentional evangelism (DENMAN Award) or faithful discipleship (One Matters Award). These highlighted individuals or churches that took the mission of making disciples seriously. The Denman Award went to a lay person in the Dayton area. The One Matters Award (sponsored by Discipleship Ministries) was given to a church that went from zero baptisms and zero professions of faith to one, because each ONE Matters to God. This year, the One Matters Award was presented to Pastor Linda Ward and the Bremen UMC. Not only did they go from zero to one, they went from zero to eight and zero to 20! Praise God!

Other celebrations included those retiring after years of faithful service. Some of the retirees had been serving churches in the Foothills: Harold Benson, Jeff Belt, and Rick Bennington were all re-retiring! Sheryl Goble, Daniel Lamphier, Ruth Messick, Robert McDowell, Paul Wymer, John Kay,

Ray Kane were Foothill retirees. Not all of those were recognized due to the timing of the Annual Conference and the retirement requests.

In addition to these dedicated servants, we witnessed the ordination of the class of Deacons and Elders, as well as the commissioning of the new Provisional Deacons and Elders. Among the Provisional Elders was Dan Wells, Pastor of Dresden UMC.

Throughout our days together the theme of Committed, Connected, Community resounded through preaching, teaching, and other presentations. We were encouraged to take heart in the midst of these challenging times and to remain resolute in our purpose and mission as Christ's followers who share the love of God with all people in all places.

And as is often the case with Annual Conference, there were moments of tension and division. For some, it was the final straw in a deeply divided environment. For others, it meant hope for better days ahead. For me, it was both encouraging and discouraging, hopeful and hurtful, uplifting and depressing. How can that be? It was a mix of so many significant issues that sometimes our emotions got the best of us. I, for one, long for the day when we can all put aside our differences (however important or petty they may appear) and focus on being the Church of Jesus Christ rather than drawing lines in the sand and wanting (or shall I say, expecting) others to choose sides. How broken our Lord's heart must be at times! And yet, we continue to hear these words and strive to live them out:

COMMITTED... CONNECTED... COMMUNITY.

"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." (Hebrews 10:23-25 NLT)

Praying for Commitment, Connection, and
Community,

Mark



PHONE NUMBER FOR FOOTHILLS DISTRICT OFFICE:
(740) 677-0136

One Matters Award



Dr. Timothy Bias presents the “One Matters Award” to Rev. Linda Ward (Bremen UMC)

Commissioning and Ordination



Newly Commissioned Provisional Elder Dr. Dan Wells (Dresden UMC)

Appointive Cabinet 2023



Top row: Linda Middelberg (Assistant to Bishop Palmer), Tim Bias (Olentangy River), Jenn Lucas (Great Miami River), Calvin Alston (Scioto River)
Front row: Amy Haines (Maumee River), Bishop Palmer, Mark Chow (Hocking River), Jim Wilson (Western Lakes)