

**The Report of the Minister of Faith in Action
To the Council of Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast,
Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ**

Saturday, September 17, 2022

I regret that I am unable to attend our Council Meeting this time. Occasionally, I am requested to participate in interfaith and ecumenical gatherings, which is an important part of my call. I have been asked to participate on a panel at a convocation hosted by the Catholic Sisters of Northeast Ohio titled, "[Our Common Home in Peril: Gathering for a Just and Sacred Future](#)", at Magnificat High School, in Rocky River. I have been tasked with speaking and leading a discussion about Ecological Spirituality, the sixth goal area of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. Unfortunately, it is scheduled for the same time as our meeting. Thank you for offering me the privilege to fulfill my call in this way.

Following the guidance of our General Minister, Nayiri, and my Steering Team, I have intentionally chosen to scale back my activities this fall in order to focus more attention on creating and curating resources for the Community Engagement Toolbox and planning for the spring. Along with the regular items on this report, I have included updates about a few projects from earlier this year that are currently being planned to repeat in 2023.

The Community Engagement Toolbox Project

This fall I plan to create resource libraries for a number of prophetic witness and community engagement areas, beginning with a Community Organizing Resource Library and an LGBTQ+ Affirming Resource Library. I will be asking a number of pastors and ministry leaders for their recommendations, especially resources designed for children. Your recommendations are always welcome.

Faith in Action Steering Team

(Fall 2022)

With the guidance of the Faith in Action Steering Team, we are moving into a time of more intentional focus on developing resources for our congregations to use in their everyday outreach ministries. This fall, the Faith in Action Steering Team will be working to design a strategic plan for the Living Water Association's Faith in Action Ministry.

Faith in Action Grants Program

(November 1, 2022)

We have begun promoting our 2022 fall grants cycle, with the deadline for applications set for November 1. Because of a number of other programs this year, we only have the funds remaining to award one or two grants this fall.

Heartland Conference Anti-Racism Network

(September 7, 2022)

Our last gathering was on Wednesday, September 7, 2022. Our guest presenter was our own Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay. The title for the evening's discussion was "Reflecting or Refracting the Holy: Discovering Racism Embedded in Christian Worship, Theology, and Practice. The video of that presentation, other details of that gathering, and more resources for the Heartland Conference Anti-Racism Network can be found on our website's Anti-Racism Resource Library at livingwaterone.org/antiracism. Our next gathering is tentatively planned for Wednesday, November 2. More information is forthcoming.

Our Nature Series

(Spring 2023)

This past spring, in partnership with the Community Life Collaborative, a new nonprofit created to help further the mission of the Federated Church of Chagrin Falls, the Living Water Association co-hosted an environmental justice educational series, *Our Nature: Rethinking, Restoring, and Rebuilding Our Relationship to Nature*. The goal of the program was to build collaborative partnerships and educate ourselves about how to better care for creation. Everyone involved agrees that it was a huge success. Plans are in place to host the series again this coming spring. Already, we have programming scheduled in the Cascade Valley neighborhood of Akron in partnership with the Jewish Family Services in Akron, the Cascade Locks Park Association, and the Conservancy for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park that will feature watershed discipleship and a [water walk](#) led by the Founder and Executive Director of the Indigenous People's Taskforce, [Sharon Day](#).

Cascade Valley Exploration Camp / Cascade Valley Compassion Camp

(July 11-15; Summer 2023)

This past July, the Living Water Association hosted a five-day summer camp for children 6 to 12 in the Cascade Valley Neighborhood of Akron in collaboration with the Conservancy for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Friends of Elizabeth Park, the Akron Parks Collaborative, the Cascade Locks Park Association, and First Church in Hudson's outreach organization, First Serve. We had originally planned for two weeks of camp, but we ran into a number of challenges, including the cost of transportation and food and the availability of Conservancy staff. The camp offered campers the opportunity to explore the Little Cuyahoga River, the Ohio & Erie Canal, and the Cuyahoga River watershed. The feedback we received from the campers, their families proved that this venture was a huge success. Plans are underway to host multiple camps during the same week next summer. We have community programming planned during the spring

leading up to the camp to help promote it; the Our Nature series (see above) is one example.

Our Whole Lives Training

(Spring 2023?)

Plans were underway to host an Our Whole Lives training for Northeast Ohio this fall, in partnership with the Heartland Conference. We ran into difficulties with scheduling, so we were encouraged by Amy Johnson and Kelly Burd to postpone it until the spring. The program will be held at Plymouth UCC in Shaker Heights. Our plan is to split the costs for the program with the Heartland Conference and a number of local congregations. This will allow us to offer training in a way that is affordable enough that we can host three training sessions, creating enough trained facilitators to host OWL programs in our Association for all ages. If anyone knows of ministry leaders who would be interested in this training, please have them contact me.