

From Nayiri Karjian, AGM

Ready for a New Name!

Naming is an ancient human practice. As far as history reaches people have had names and named others. Most names have some sort of original meaning, usually descriptive. Many cultures hold ritualistic ceremonies for naming. Our biblical ancestors named their children as they were born often by their experiences, i.e. when Rachel named her last son Benoni or "son of my sorrow" and his father Jacob renamed him Benjamin "son of blessing/of right hand" (Genesis 35:18), each depending on their experience of the child.

We do the same with God. We cannot name God, for God is beyond human words and definitions, but we can name our experiences of God, and our relationship with God. God is our Parent because we experience God as father and mother in relationship. God is Holy because we experience God transcending the mundane and the violent. God is Compassion because we experience God through loving and compassionate relationships. We cannot name God. We name our experiences of God.

Can we name our EOAWRA Association of Congregations by how we experience our life together, and by what we believe God is calling us to be and do together at this time and place?

The name the Associations Council discussed and consented to is – **LIVING WATER ASSOCIATION**.

Why **LIVING WATER**?

Rev. David Durkit brought to my attention that the word Ohio from Seneca (Iroquoian) literally means “good river”, and Cuyahoga means “crooked river” from the Mohawk Indian name Cayagaga.

Water is a powerful element and image. We are born into this life out of the water of our mothers' wombs, and reborn in spirit out of the water of baptism. We are refreshed every morning by water to begin a new day. Water's cleansing and refreshing power cannot be overstated. Jesus himself is the Living Water the fountain, foundation, the core of all we are. And, Jesus offered Living Water to a marginalized other, the Samaritan woman.

As the Ohio Conference UCC proposes a new structure for our life together, what better image can capture the journey of transitioning, as flowing, running, cleansing, reviving water out of which new ways of living are born?

Our Name: **LIVING WATER ASSOCIATION**, Ohio Conference United Church of Christ

Our Calling: **REFRESH, RENEW, RESTORE**

REFRESHing our souls, hearts and live  
RENEWing our congregations and church communities  
RESTORing the world to what God intended it to be

Our Purpose: To be a resource for the health and wellbeing our congregations

I hope and pray that our life together will continue to be Refreshing, Renewing and Restoring as the Holy Spirit guides our path in the footsteps of Jesus.