



HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
N. KY • OH • WV

Annual Gathering to Convene September 24th and 25th



Plans for our Annual Gathering are coming together. You have seen the dates already. The registration link will go live on August 16th as the final “crossing of the t’s and dotting of the i’s” is completed. At this moment, with all eyes closing monitoring Covid, it will be an in-person event with option for virtual participation via a platform called Hop-In.

Some key highlights will be the presentation to the conference the nomination of the Rev. David Long-Higgins to be our Conference Minister (information was emailed and mailed to every church in June), music by “The Many”, a special honoring of chaplains at our Friday evening meal/celebration event, and our special Saturday worship leader, the Rev. Dr. Imani Jones, Co-Pastor of Advent UCC in Columbus. As always, we will have a variety of business to conduct from the election of Board of Director members to approving of our budget for the year ahead.

There will be 10 workshop opportunities offered, 5 on Friday and 5 on Sunday that are designed to be practical in their application and in some cases, tied to the recent work of General Synod, recently attended by 66 delegates from the Conference. Exhibitors will be present so that you might greet those who bring a wide range of expertise, experiences, and resources.

Of course, part of the highlight of any gathering is getting a chance to visit with friends who, in the best of years, we only get to see occasionally but since a year ago March, we have not had the chance to gather with until now. For the Board of Directors, it will be the first time we will have been able to gather in person since February 2020 before the Covid outbreak moved us to Zoom, and the conference offices themselves being moved to a “virtual” space with our rental agreement ending at our former conference location.

The Annual Gathering will be held at First Community Church (north campus) at 3777 Dublin Road in Columbus and Covid protocols will be in place which will include mask wearing for all present along with safe distancing. You will be encouraged to bring your electronic equipment to access all the materials that will be sent out ahead of time. If people need a hard copy, some will be available if you indicate it on the registration form which will go live on August 16th.

Friends, we are gathering to do the ‘work’ of the conference. We are praying and planning diligently for an event that we wish to be safe and enriching for all who attend. I cannot express enough gratitude for the incredibly hard work of our planning team, led by Rev. Beth Gedert. It is no ‘faint of heart’ effort to conceive of and plan the details of an event that will be both in-person and virtual. I give them full credit for all the work that has been done along with a special thanks going out to our partners at First Community whose commitment to host is no small feat in a time of Covid.

Let me end with a final request. When your registration form hits your “in-box” on the 16th, please respond promptly. Because of all the extra challenges for doing an in person and virtual event, having accurate numbers of attendees is critical, the sooner the better. Thank you so much for your consideration in this matter.

I look forward to seeing you on the 24th and 25th. Be Blessed...Be a Blessing

Rev. Dave Plant
Heartland Conference Moderator