



Disability Ministries
The United Methodist Church



OHIO DISABILITY & MINISTRY COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER

The holiday season is upon us! Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year are just around the corner! We extend our warmest greetings and prayers for a wonderful season of Hope, Joy, Love and Peace!



Dry Bones

By ODMC Co-Director, Rev. Michele (Mimi) Luebbers

October 26, 2022

Read Ezekiel 37:1-14

I have been advocating for people with disabilities since I was a teenager, but it wasn't until my recent hip replacement surgery that I, myself, have experienced firsthand what it is to live with mobility challenges. I recognize that my condition is only temporary, but for many individuals, facing these issues of accessibility and acceptance is a permanent way of life. For me, the presence of pain and fatigue, and my forced dependence on others has been a grueling exercise in humility. I am realizing that I make a much more patient care giver than receiver. Yet, as one of my friends who lives with profound physical disabilities likes to remind me, the kin-dom of God is designed as one of *interdependence*.

As I struggle to bear weight on my brand-new titanium hip bone and strain to pull myself up to standing these first few times following surgery, God asks me, "Can these bones live again?" And I respond, "Lord God, only you know." Then, I remember that when I trust God enough to do what I am being called, no commanded, to do, that is when I feel most alive, when things come together for me, when they really start to click, or should I say "rattle."

Sooner or later, we will all find ourselves in the valley of dry bones, feeling frustrated, discouraged, hopeless, even cut off from God. Yet, that is when the Lord God promises, "You shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live." And so, I stumble weakly and awkwardly forward, clutching onto my walker, as I do my faith, for dear life, knowing that the Lord has spoken and will act.

Lord God,

When we find ourselves in the valley of dry bones, at a loss for hope and feeling completely cut off from you, come breathe your holy, healing, spirit into us. Then, we will rise up and live again, co-creators with you in communities of inclusion and belonging.

Amen.



Accessibility Grant Reports:

- Excitement runs high at **Staunton UMC!** Pastor Mark Armstrong reports that work began on the accessible restroom installation inside the church on October 27!
- **Rushsylvania's** pastor April Phillips reports the work process has been 'incredibly slow,' but looks forward to moving forward soon.

Announcement of new grant recipient's coming soon!

COMING IN 2023: June 26-29: Institute on Theology & Disability, Waco TX

SPIRITUAL GIFTS RETREAT

UMC Deaconess Sherri Buehl reports: "As a Church & Community Engagement Coordinator for Flat Rock Homes, I am blessed with opportunities to lead retreats, workshops, and to advocate for the ministry of ODMC partner, Flat Rock Homes. I recently had the honor of presenting a day retreat for the United Women in Faith of Stonybrook UMC, Gahanna, Ohio.

I shared the ministry and mission of Flat Rock Homes (www.flatrockhomes.org) followed by "The Gift That Keeps on Giving." We learned that God created us with gifts and abilities and expects us to use these gifts to further God's work. The women completed a gifts assessment, shared their findings with the group, and



discussed how they may use their gifts in their daily lives. A group activity offered a visual illustration of how our gifts are meant to work together, intertwined for us to have the best possible outcome. I would gladly share "The Gifts that Keep on Giving" retreat with your church or group." Contact Sbuehl@flatrockhomes.org for

further information and to schedule your retreat.



RESOURCES! Please click on the following links for valuable information

- [The Biggest Barrier I Face Is Ableism](#)
- [Why church leaders can — and must — address their own mental health \(religionnews.com\)](#)
- [Captions are like audio](#)
- Hearing Health Matters: [Those things on the side of our head](#)
- Yatosha Deaf Ministry: [farm training](#)
- Deaf Link: [children & elders day](#)
- Smart Hearing: [Choosing OTC Hearing Aids](#)
- [Disability Arts Now – ARTnews.com](#)

- [Inclusion is culture](#)
- Invisible Disabilities Association: [Time to believe](#)
- Art in America: [Nothing about us without us: disability arts now](#)

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY

Begin planning now for the WOC Disability Awareness Sunday, May 7, 2023! (Other dates are acceptable, if necessary). ODMC's speaker's bureau is available with resources and skillful presenters! Contact one of the following for more information:

Rose at RDarling@flatrockhomes.org

ODMC co-directors Rev. Zach Holler and Rev. Mimi Luebbers

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FLAT ROCK INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR ZOOM CHRISTMAS CAROLING ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 FROM 11:30 TO 12:30! ODMC'S VERY OWN PERSONAL SANTA WILL BE PRESENT AS WE ALL ENJOY A KICKOFF TO ADVENT THROUGH SONGS OF THE SEASON! CONTACT ROSE AT rdarling@flatrockhomes.org FOR THE ZOOM INVITE!

