

Annual Report of the Associations General Minister
Rev. Dr. Rita M Root
November 4, 2017

My heart is full of gratitude as I write this last report to you as your Associations General Minister. When I first accepted the call five years ago, I knew this would be my last call moving into retirement and I thought then, as I still do, what a wonderful capstone to twenty-five years of ordained ministry. I have not been disappointed.

When we first began this journey, you had a vision that two associations could share a common staff and still be effective in ministry. The motivation, as it often is, was financial for the most part. I report to you today that we have been able to move beyond the financial considerations and see this collaboration as less about money and more about mutual ministry. That is a tribute to your willingness to be open to changes and my persistence in asking the questions that needed to be asked.

I list first the accomplishments that have marked our time together; you will note that I begin with the financial and move to the programmatic. Freeing resources up for ministry is essential in healthy organizations.

- Financial best practices put in place that have assured clean audit reports for the past five years
- Review and revision of all contracts resulting in substantial cost savings
- A budgeting process that engages all the participants in ministry
- Development of written policies that guide our common ministries
- Staffing patterns and positions that are flexible and size appropriate for our organization
- A church vitality program that engages local congregations
- A Coaching program that provides expertise in all aspects of congregational life
- The Northeast Ohio School of Ministry which now includes an Ordination Track for those persons seeking ordination through Multiple Paths to Ordination
- One Council governing both associations
- One Committee on Ministry serving both associations
- Healthy Practices for Ministry training events that are relevant for today's ministry
- Prophetic Witness Teams addressing issues of social justice
- A commitment to Social Impact Investing
- A true sense of partnership between our two associations

Ministry, as life, is a journey. I am confident that the members of our two associations, via their elected leadership, will continue to vision and respond to the shifting landscape and needs of its member congregations. I would urge you to continue to deepen this partnership as you seek to empower local congregations and authorized ministers.

You have been a blessing to me. I retire from active ministry at the end of December 2017 ready to turn the page to the next stage of my life's journey.

Rev. Dr. Rita M Root