



News
from Year of Covenant Facilitator George O'Reilly
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Constancy and Change

As people of faith we have the great privilege of relying on the Constancy of God. In Hebrews 13, the writer quotes a promise found in Deuteronomy — “I will never leave you or forsake you” — as a way to remind readers about how our God is so faithful. And I too can join in and declare this is true. Oh, there have been times when I did not know what was going to happen next, certainly. But time and again when things got to the point where something had to happen, God has shown up.

In Ohio Conference I have at times not been certain what direction things were going to take, but again, by the Spirit's work, good things have arisen at times when I least expected it or through means I would not have personally chosen. Frankly, I see this as a time of hopefulness in Ohio Conference. I sense a new desire to do good things together, a searching for a path forward together, a discovery again that in the Ohio Conference we are meeting the people of God. I think this is a good time here.

Amid my growing confidence there has also been change. And the most dramatic change for me has come on me rather suddenly in just the most recent weeks. From the very beginning with Ohio Conference, I knew my time was intended to be temporary. I was here as a “transitional person” to help the Conference through some struggles and difficulties. And since this is the type of work I have been doing for the past eight years or so, I was all right with that.

Along with the expected pattern of temporary work, at the Conference level we of course encountered significant budgetary constraints. And so my time was moved to half-time. This would not be unusual in such a case, and the right decisions were made in that regard. But as the weeks went by, I began to search for the next thing which would “fill the gaps” and help make ends meet. Nothing really materialized.

Not long ago I became aware of a temporary position as a pastoral associate which seemed quite well suited for my situation. And so I applied, thinking a couple of months would likely transpire before this was finalized, and knowing I likely was not the only one considering the possibility. I have been in this position before.

To my surprise, this process has moved at a very rapid pace. Within just a few weeks I had interviewed with a team and been offered a place in their ministry. And so I have just started June 15 as pastoral associate at First Mennonite Church of Bluffton, Ohio. It is just the kind of thing I was looking for next, and I have been very warmly welcomed into the ministry endeavors they are hoping I can help them address.

My connections with Ohio Conference will of course decrease. I do intend to help with the Year of Covenant on a contract basis with some days here and there to help convey what I have learned and to help others who will be working at some parts of next steps.

I admit that I have grown very fond of the folks I have met in Ohio Conference. I do that actually, every time I work with a group of people, and this time has been no exception. I have much appreciation and affection for you all. But you will no doubt see much less of me in the days ahead.

I pray for our Lord's rich, full blessings on your continuing endeavors. I pray especially for the Spirit to have freedom to convey to you the sustaining power of God and the discernment to know where God is calling Ohio Conference next. You may see me helping some here and there. But be at peace. It is not about me. God has given many faithful spiritually mature persons and leaders to Ohio Conference. So despite the change, lay hold again of the constancy of God. God will show up often and in surprising ways and times.

In Christ,
Pastor George O'Reilly

