

Dear CSEOA friends,

In the words of a friend of mine, Tony Robinson, UCC pastor and author:

"Church, you're amazing!"

And to Central Southeast Ohio Association, I add:

"You are not only amazing, I am honored to serve in ministry with you!"

Having been in and around CSE and the Ohio Conference for many years, I have seen your faithful service. I know some of the outstanding ways you find, individually and as congregations, to live and broadcast the love of God, the inclusive nature of who we are as the United Church of Christ, and the hospitality that comes from knowing yourselves welcomed and graced by an ever forgiving, loving God. What a blessing to be a part of your life!

I know, too, more is unfolding all the time! I know your congregation, just this week perhaps, will discern yet more ways, small or large, to be the church. Thank you! Your witness is amazing, inspiring!

As you go about your daily and weekly ministries, let me assure you that you matter, and that people beyond your imagining are grateful for your faithful support and service. Some of those people serve with me (and you!) on CSEOA's Council and Departments, in affinity groups and committees. Some are on your Association and Conference and National staff. People across the nation and around the world are touched by your ministries, your OCWM support, your empowering of agencies and missions both locally and far beyond our borders, even our knowing. I assure you, as one who has traveled to most parts of our denomination and beyond, I am certain of that truth.

Thank you! Bless you!

This past weekend, your Association Council had a full day retreat. We have new members to orient and faithfully continuing members to remind us of our story, our vision, our ways of being. In weeks to come, I'll share more of the tremendous inspiration that comes from being a part of that group. I'll also share the ways in which we hope to be of service, following your great witness and example. For now, just know we are hard at work, partnering with the ministries you are already accomplishing and discerning God's further ways forward for our Association.

Blessings, and gratitude,
Susan Towner-Larsen
Moderator, Central Southeast Ohio Association