

2009 Lay Speakers Pastor of the Year:



**Rev. Karen
Burtner
Graham**

The Rev. Karen Burtner Graham is the pastor of Church of the Redeemer in Cleveland Heights, a church with a strong tradition of active lay speaking. There are currently 11 lay speakers who are active in all aspects of church leadership and are a wonderful asset to the ministry of the church. Throughout her ministry Rev. Graham has supported and encouraged lay speaking within the churches she has served. She has been part of the teaching team for both the Canal (formerly Akron) and North Coast District Training Events.

Karen is the mother of three children. Her son Andrew is married and is pursuing a Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University, and her son Alexander, also married, is in an Ph.D. program at Indiana University. Her daughter, Grace, graduated from Cleveland Heights High School in June. Karen's father, Dr. Hugh Burtner, is a retired elder within the East Ohio Conference.

2009 marks Karen's 25th anniversary in ordained ministry in the East Ohio Annual Conference. Her previous appointments include: Tiro (Mid-Ohio),

Mogadore (Canal), and Streetsboro (Canal). Karen has also served on numerous District and Conference Committees. She is currently the vice-chairperson of the East Ohio Episcopacy Committee, and the chairperson of the North Coast District Finance and Administration Committee, as well as the convener of her Conference Compass Group. She is also the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for United Campus Protestant Ministries.

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2009 Co-Lay Speaker of the Year: Rubye Johnson

Mrs. Rubye Johnson is a life long Methodist and has been a member of St. Paul UMC in Cleveland, Ohio for over 20 years. She is a long time Certified Lay Speaker and has been a member of the North Coast District Lay Speaking Committee for 12 years.

Rubye's nominating pastor, Rev. Angela D. Lewis, wrote the following: "Ever since I have been here at St. Paul UMC, Mrs. Johnson has been one of the strongest and hardest working members

of the church. She volunteers at most of the functions sponsored by the church. She was serving as Lay Leader when I arrived, and I believe she was in that position for almost 7 years. Rubye was the chair of the Council on Ministry until we changed it to a Church Council. She now serves as the co-chair of the Church Council. She is the liaison to our Adopt a School program. Mrs. Johnson does these things and many more in the life of the church. She has a great relationship with the people in the church. To a degree she has become one of the mothers of the

church. She loves her church without question. Mrs. Johnson most importantly loves the Lord."

Rubye has found Lay Speaking to be a joy filled journey over the years, and she knows how important it is to continue doing the work of the Lord after the training is complete. Making Disciples for Christ is something she holds as a high priority in her life. She is a true Lay Speaker at heart and her heart is always open to the Lord.



North Coast District and East Ohio Youth

All Youth Ohio Weekend: October 30-November 1

Youth of Ohio United! - YOU 09, a spiritual formation event offered by East and West Ohio Conferences, at the Aladdin Shrine Center in Columbus. Youth will gather to explore the faith that unites us through worship, Bible study, great concerts, and friend-making activities. Full details will be announced soon.