



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

WLD Office (937) 739-4445 Email: westernlakes@wocumc.org

WLD Important Information



Jots From Jim...

Cars with hazard lights flashing. Cars on the side of the road. Cars stopped in the middle of the road. Total chaos. Surely something tragic had happened.

However, in Yosemite National Park it is nothing more than a “Bear Jam.” These happen when a motorist sees a bear, stops to take pictures of the bear, and causes every other car coming by to do the same. This year while vacationing in Yosemite National Park we participated in several “Bear Jams.” One “Jam” was created by the mother bear and two cubs playing in a meadow. It was fun to watch how crazy tourists can be getting too close to a mother bear and cubs. Mercy.

As I watched the bears, and the people creating chaos in watching the bears, I could not help but think of the church. When was the last time the “church” created a “jam?” I would call it a “Church Jam” when the church so captivates the attention of those passing by that everyone stops to see the church and its engagement with the community.

I wish more “motorists” could see what I see as I travel the district. This is some of what I have seen in the last two weeks: I saw Van Wert First UMC prepare to reach out with assistance to those in need. I saw Springfield High Street UMC have people in need waiting in the church hallway for their turn to take a shower. I saw Springfield Covenant UMC debut their new coffee ministry which empowers people locally and in Africa. I heard about record worship attendance happening at Casstown UMC in Miami County. I saw Ada First UMC blessing kindergartners, 4th graders, high school students, and Ohio Northern University students and others as they go back to school. I saw the field that welcomed thousands of people to celebrate Ginghamburg UMC’s 160th anniversary. I toured the beautiful columbarium at London First UMC in Madison County. This is but to name a few of the exciting and beautiful Christian ministries happening throughout our 6,000 square mile district.

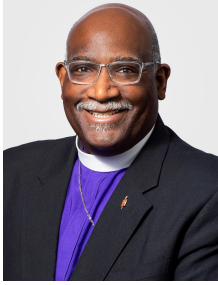
May we strive to “jam” the normal secular flow of life with new, exciting, compassionate, and loving expressions of Christian life and community.

Jim

Looking Forward to the Fall Season

Beloved in Christ Jesus:

It seems like we just adjourned Annual Conference a few days ago. Here we are now, schools are open in most places around the



conference and the push into Fall is in full swing. Please know that the summer has been busier than usual. But we are sustained by the grace and mercy of the God made plain in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By now you have received the call I have issued for a Special Session of the West Ohio Annual Conference on Saturday October 28. I expect that it will be a full day replete with opportunity, for worship, thoughtful conversation and decision making. Several of the action items that will be before the conference will set the course for a foreseeable future.

Please be sure to do your part to prepare for meaningful participation. The first step is prayer.

As we turn into Fall, I look forward to what will likely be my last series of district visitations. I have named this series: **“Grace Upon Grace” – Fall Tour**. These district gatherings will have two key components: Teaching on the Means of Grace and Organizing the work of the new districts. Our time together will include Reaffirmation of Our Baptismal Vows and Celebration of Holy Communion. The gatherings will begin at 6:30 PM and all are welcome. The dates and locations are listed below. I cannot wait to join you and your District Superintendent for an exciting evening of worshipful work. You will be hearing more as we enter September.

Tuesday, 9/26/2023
Western Lakes District - Springfield, High Street

Tuesday, 10/3/2023
Maumee River District - Bowling Green, First

Tuesday, 10/10/2023
Olentangy River District - Westerville, Messiah

Tuesday, 10/17/2023
Hocking River District - Athens, The Plains

Thursday, 10/19/2023
Great Miami District - West Chester, Faith Community

Tuesday, 10/24/2023
Scioto River District -Chillicothe, Trinity

All the best in Christ Jesus,
Bishop Gregory V. Palmer

The West Ohio Conference special called Annual Conference - Saturday, October 28, 2023

Paragraph 603.5 of The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church outlines the provisions by which a Special Session of the Annual Conference may be called “by the bishop with concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents.”

From Bishop Palmer -

Having the unanimous concurrence of the district superintendents, I am calling a **Special Session of the West Ohio Annual Conference on Saturday, October 28, 2023, at 9:00 am at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, Tipp City, Ohio**, for the following purposes:

- To act on the requests of churches to disaffiliate under the provisions of paragraph 2553 of The Book of Discipline.
- To approve the 2024 West Ohio Conference Budget.
- To receive a report and act on any recommendation(s) from the Transformative Discipleship Lead Team (Connectional Ministries) and the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference regarding West Ohio Camps.
- Elections to fill vacancies in the delegations to Jurisdictional Conference.

Clergy and Lay Members who were elected as representatives for the June 2023 Annual Conference remain members for the October special called Annual Conference.

Registration for this special Annual Conference will end on October 1st, and **all clergy members, lay members and guests must register.**

Because electronic voting devices will be used and we must order those ahead of Annual Conference, **pre-registration will be required so that we can ensure we have enough voting devices available. You must pre-register in order to vote at Annual Conference.** Only those that register will receive devices to vote.

We will be electing delegates for Jurisdictional Conference, and more information about how to serve as a delegate can be found [here](#).

[Click Here For More Details and The Registration Page Link](#)

General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegate Election Information

The postponed 2020 General Conference will be held April 23-May 4, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina & the North Central Jurisdictional Conference will be held July 10-13, 2024, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The laity and clergy, who were elected at the 2019 West Ohio Annual Conference, remain a part of the 2024 West Ohio Conference General/Jurisdictional delegation. However, for a variety of reasons, some of the delegates, laity and clergy, are no longer available or desire to be a part of the delegation.

Therefore, at the upcoming called West Ohio Annual Conference on October 28, 2023, at Ginghamburg UMC in Tipp City, we will be electing seven (7) lay delegates, two lay alternates, and two clergy alternates to Jurisdictional Conference to complete the West Ohio delegation.

Clergy and Laity interested must submit a bio by ***Friday, September 8, 2023.***

[Click here for more information.](#)

Opportunities to Serve in Conference Leadership

As we approach the fall and prepare for a new quadrennium, our West Ohio Nominations Team is excited about the wonderful opportunities for clergy and laity to serve in conference leadership.

If you are interested in using your skills and experience to serve on our teams, boards, and committees, please fill out and submit a Self-Interest Application on the Conference website.

We invite pastors to apply and to identify and encourage members of their congregations who have the gifts and interest to fill the self-interest forms online. We are eager to hear from you and to learn in which areas you would like to serve. As we advance the mission of the church, we rejoice in having opportunities for growth and impact through service.

[Click Here For More Information on Conference Committee and Nominations](#)

[Click Here To Complete The Interest Form](#)



BISHOPS' RETREAT
BLACK CLERGY
2023

PREACH! PREACHER, Preach!

A JOINT RETREAT FOR THE BLACK CLERGY OF THE EAST OHIO CONFERENCE
AND THE WEST OHIO CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Bishop's Retreat With Black Clergy Oct 4-6, 2023

Registration is open for a joint retreat for the Black clergy of the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church hosted by Bishop Tracy S. Malone and Bishop Gregory V. Palmer.

The theme of this year's retreat is "Preach! Preacher, Preach!" and features guest facilitator the Rev. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Ph.D. (with a team from WomanPreach! Inc.) Rev. Dr. Bridgeman is the dean and vice president for Academic Affairs at Methodist Theological School in Ohio and the founder, president, and CEO of WomanPreach! Inc.

Registration includes the following meals:

- Dinner on Wednesday
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Thursday
- Breakfast and lunch on Friday

Overnight accommodations for Wednesday and Thursday nights are for rooms at Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Melanie Thomas, EOCUMC Connectional Ministries office administrative assistant, via e-mail at mthomas@eocumc.com or via phone at (330) 499-3972 ext. 102. [Click here](#) to register

New HealthFlex Plan Coming January 1, 2024

The new *HealthFlex* Plan is coming January 1, 2024. *HealthFlex* is rapidly gaining popularity, thanks to the collaboration between West Ohio Board of Pension and Health and Wespath Benefits and Investment.

This innovative program offers comprehensive health and wellness solutions for WOC-eligible active clergy (non-retired), conference/district employees, and their families. To learn more about this change, how it works, key concepts, and essential dates for upcoming education sessions, click below for more information and follow relevant materials to clarify any queries and to supplement your learning.

Our next scheduled communication will cover the tools listed below to get you thinking about "how to shop" the benefits plan menu and apply your "premium credits" to cover the cost or reap the savings of your benefit plan elections:

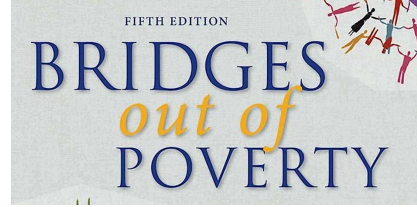
- HealthFlex "premium credit" dollar amounts.
- Premium rates for multiple healthcare plans.
- Summary plan descriptions for the various benefit plan options.
- Information and resources specifically for Medicare-age working clergy.
- Enrollment automation process and service enhancements.
- October Annual Open Enrollment meetings and timeline.

[Read more...](#)

Bridges Out of Poverty Virtual Cohort

Beginning September- Wednesdays

This cohort hosted by Missions and Community Engagement in the East Ohio Conference of the UMC will begin this fall! This is an in depth book study of the 5th Edition Bridges out of Poverty Strategies for Professionals and Communities. Participants will meet via Zoom to read, discuss and investigate opportunities for Bridges implementation within their communities. Participants will meet twice a month, on Wednesdays over lunch (11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) for 6 months, September 2023-March 2024. The cohort is free, however, purchase of Bridges books is required for all participants.



[Learn more and register via Eventbrite](#)

Generosity Summit

The Foundation invites West Ohio clergy, church leaders, and lay persons to attend the inaugural **Generosity Summit**, September 11-12, at Deer Creek State Park. The one-and-a-half-day conference features expert speakers from around the connection on the topics of stewardship, clergy finance, planned giving, and much more. Sponsors of the Summit include Wespath and Horizons Stewardship.

Registration is online with a fee of \$100 per person which includes all meals. More information on topics and speakers can be found at <https://umfwestohio.org/generosity-summit-2023/>. Registration deadline is September 1.

Housing for the Summit is still available at Deer Creek State Park Lodge. Access to the discounted UMFWO block of rooms now closes on August 14 and can only be reserved by calling 740-869-2020 and asking for the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio block or referencing code UNIT. A limited number of rooms may still be available after August 14 at regular rates.

For questions or more information, contact Susan Black at sblack@wocumc.org.

Events



Date of Festival of Sharing:

Friday/Saturday, September 29-30, 2023

The annual Festival of Sharing will be collecting kits the month of September. For more information on the several kinds of kits that you and your church can pack, please go to the [FOS website](#). There you will find the list of different kits needed and the packaging instructions for those kits. The kits should be dropped off at one of the locations below between September 18 and September 22, 2023

Drop Off Sites:

Defiance St. Paul's UMC, 400 Wayne Ave., Defiance 419-782-3751, Mon - Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm (Please call ahead)

Findlay Journey at Christ, 225 W. Bigelow Ave, Findlay, 419-422-6662, Mon - Fri 9:00am - noon, (Please call ahead)

Spencerville Trinity, 119 N. Main St., Spencerville, 419-647-4451, Mon - Fri, 9:00am - noon (Please call ahead)

NWP District Office, 910 E. Third St. Ottawa, 800-589-7828, Mon - Wed, 9:00am - 3:00pm (Please call ahead to make drop off arrangements)

Van Wert First UMC, 113 W. Central Ave., Van Wert 419-238-0631, Mon - Thu, 8:30am - 1:30pm & Friday 8:30am - noon (Please call ahead)

Dates for the kits to be dropped off to the locations above will be: September 18 - September 22 or what works best for your location, but these dates will be communicated in the newsletters - always best to call ahead first to be sure and use the above list details.

OHIO UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

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A new United Methodist initiative for East Ohio and West Ohio to empower churches and transform communities.

Explore the intersection of community and congregational development and connect with others engaged in this work. You don't have to do this alone! Join the movement!



Learn more and register
you and your team at
OhioUMCDC.org

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SEPT.
21-23
2023

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Columbus,
Ohio

THIS IS FOR YOU!
DREAMERS
PRACTITIONERS
CURIOUS
EXPERIENCED

 SCHOOL OF NURSING
Indiana University



ADVANCE CARE PLANNING WORKSHOP

*Learn how to talk to your loved ones about your
values, goals, and preferences for future medical care*

Pick Your Day
September 23
October 21
November 18

Saturday
1-4pm



Registration
ruth.myers@adaumc.org
or (419) 634-4626

Childcare available
for those registered

Hosted by Ada First United Methodist Church
301 N. Main St., Ada, OH 45810

Please join us! Ada First United Methodist Church will host an Advance Care Planning Workshop facilitated by Deacon Ruth Myers for her doctoral nursing degree as faith community outreach. The workshop involves viewing video scenarios and answering questions relating to choices at the end of life. This workshop is designed for adults at any age or stage of health and is free and open to the public. You're invited to one of these workshops and can come alone or bring family or loved ones. Please register by scanning the QR code above or contact Ruth Myers or the church office, as listed in the information above.

Bible Land Exploration with Bishop Gregory Palmer and the West

Ohio Conference | Feb. 12- 21, 2024 -10 days The Holy Land

Join Bishop Gregory & Cynthia Palmer as they set off on a Bible Land Exploration in the Holy Land.

"Experiencing the Holy Land with fellow pilgrims in community adds immeasurably to the learning. Knowledge and devotion are so much more when we do it together."

- Bishop Palmer

[Click here for more information.](#)

Resources

Unclaimed Funds Found for United Methodist Churches

Did you know you can conduct a free search through <https://www.missingmoney.com/app/claim-search> to see if your church has any outstanding unclaimed funds? This service is linked directly to the Ohio Department of Commerce Division of Unclaimed Funds and the entire process is free.

Our search of "UMC" uncovered nearly 50 Ohio United Methodist Churches with unclaimed funds. When searching, try using varied parameters i.e., church name with UMC or church name with United Methodist. Or try just UMC. Also, select Ohio to narrow down the results.

If a claim is found, a one-page application is required along with documentation. You will receive instructions on what documents are needed to prove the claim is valid i.e., photo ID, Tax ID, proof of address etc. Their toll-free number is listed on the instructions if you have questions. Once complete, send the application and pertinent documents by mail directly to the Ohio Department of Commerce.

You may receive a request for additional information. Please be patient, as they hold the burden of ensuring they release funds to the correct person/s. If the claim is approved, you will receive a check by mail.

Don't miss this opportunity to receive funds that are due to your church.

Hospitality Tips for the 21st Century

Many of us sit in the church sanctuary on Sunday mornings with an eye turned toward the door, hoping that new visitors will enter. This might not happen as frequently as we'd like.

"To really be hospitable to our neighbors who aren't connected to the church, and probably never will be in its current form, we need to figure out how to create pockets of hospitality to be more inclusive and connect with more people," says The [Rev. Michael Beck](#), pastor, professor, author, consultant and Director of [Fresh Expressions](#) at Discipleship Ministries.

Beck shares time-tested tips that all United Methodists should consider when learning how to be more welcoming. [Read more...](#)



Proud to Be #BeUMC

As Christians, we are people of God who are called to follow Jesus in making the world a better place. As United Methodists, we embrace our Wesleyan heritage and live into the mission to #BeUMC and become the church our communities need us to be.

The #BeUMC campaign is rooted in these key messaging themes:

- Disciple Making

- Belonging and Inclusion
- Influence, Connection and Impact
- Experience of God through The UMC

Stay tuned to NewsNET, westohioumc.org and our social media channels as fellow West Ohio clergy and laity share why they are United Methodists.

[Click here for #BeUMC Resources](#)



Ask The UMC Series Available

Ask The UMC offers a series of questions and answers to help clear up some common misperceptions or misinformation around disaffiliation.

[Ask The UMC Series: Is The United Methodist Church really...?](#)

2023-2024 Appointments

The list of pastoral appointments beginning July 1, 2023 can be accessed [clicking here](#).

Please refer back to these lists as they are updated frequently.

Western Lakes District | 32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington, OH 43085

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