



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

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

WLD Important Information



"Grace Upon Grace" – Fall Tour

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.

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

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](#)



The Fresh Starts <Evangelism> Exchange entitled “Evangelism in the Augmented Age” is on September 19th @ Mason UMC in Mason, OH

The Church’s practical theology is currently being lived out within three distinct cultural expressions: Industrial Age, Information Age, and the emerging Augmented Age. Most of our churches gather within Industrial Age thinking—putting money in offering plates, registering worship attendance on a pew pad or registration card, or phone tree reminders for upcoming events. Fewer of our churches are living into Information Age thinking—

online giving, QR codes for worship attendance, and texting or email services to share programmatic information. Fewer still are adopting the current cultural reality of the Augmented Age—auto draft from digital currency gains, geofencing campuses, or intuitive devotion technology.

In this fun, interactive Fresh Starts Exchange, Matt Rawle will both detail why living into the Augmented Age is important for our communities of faith and offer practical and

innovative steps to sharing Jesus within a new, emerging culture. It is only one session lasting from 10am – 3pm. Lunch will be provided by the Cristian Family Credit Union.

Bio: Rev. Matt Rawle is the Lead Pastor at Asbury United Methodist Church in Bossier City, Louisiana and a graduate from the LSU School of Music and Duke Divinity School. He is an international speaker who loves to tell an old story in a new way, especially at the intersection of pop culture and the church. Matt is also the author of *The Heart that Grew Three Sizes*, *The Grace of Les Misérables*, *What Makes a Hero?*, *The Faith of a Mockingbird*, *Hollywood Jesus*, *The Salvation of Doctor Who*, and *The Redemption of Scrooge*. He and his wife Christie have four kids: Isabelle, Annaleigh, Cecilia, and Robert.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

An Opportunity to Practice our Social Principles in Reentry

You are invited to become part of an Ohio United Methodist social holiness collaborative effort to “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” Leaders of All In Community, West Ohio Conference’s justice-involved ministry, invite you to a special meeting on **Tuesday, September 26, at 11:30AM – 12:30PM** to learn about a grant opportunity that puts our social principles into practice across Ohio. This opportunity invites us to act as conveners, collaborators, and connectors for coalition-building around support for men, women and their families upon their return home from an incarceration experience.

As United Methodists, we are called to “*support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection.*” (The Social Community, 162.III)

Does this include people who have been incarcerated, their families, and their victims? **YES**, it does.

Our social holiness also encompasses “*a responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals...We therefore support social climates in which human communities are maintained and strengthened for the sake of all persons and their growth.*” (The Nurturing Community, 161.II)

Does this responsibility extend to our neighbors and loved ones who have been incarcerated, their families, and their victims? **YES**, it does.

We know what happens when we do not act to create continuums of care in our communities for those returning following an incarceration experience. Increased violence, decreased safety, increased basic human needs, decreased human dignity, disenfranchisement, and discrimination are just a few of the social ills we all witness and experience.

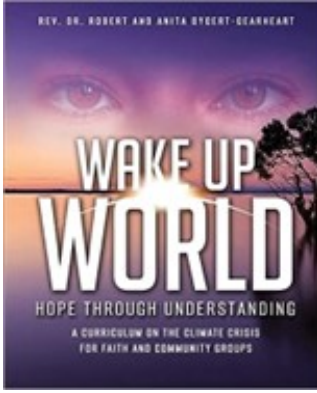
The Good News is that we can change the landscape and create genuine reentry continuums of care when we collaborate and co-labor with others in our community.

Join us on September 26th @ 11:30AM to explore multiple congregations working together to create local reentry continuums of care.

Who should attend? Pastors, mission chairs, and outreach chairs in congregations in the following Western Lakes District counties: **Van Wert, Mercer, Shelby, Logan, Champaign, and Clark.**

Register here to receive a zoom link: <https://forms.gle/UxYedVobzgFookSN9>

Wake Up World Authors Coming to West Ohio



Is your church looking for a way to learn more about creation justice and the climate crisis? *Wake Up World: A Curriculum on the Climate Crisis for Faith and Community Groups* is an ecumenical tool for moving members to a common understanding and motivating meaningful action. Authors Anita and Bob Dygert-Gearheart will be hosting a conversation about the curriculum at Trinity United Methodist Church in Ottawa on Sunday, September 24, from 4:00-5:00pm. During the session, Anita and Bob will introduce the curriculum, answer questions, and share ways it can be used with your congregation. They will also provide information on a new video series on Creation Care that can be used in or before worship services. Trinity UMC is located at 137 N Pratt St, Ottawa, OH. The event will

also be offered by Zoom. For more information or the Zoom link, email Marcella Ciccotelli at umcpastormarcella@gmail.com.

The Fresh Starts <Large Church Ministry> Exchange is on September 21st @ Lewis Center UMC in Columbus.

Our special guest for this exchange is Tony Morgan. There will be two sessions to choose from: a morning session from 9-noon and an afternoon session from 1-4pm. An opt-in lunch will be provided by the Christian Family Credit Union.

Bio: Tony is the Founder and Lead Strategist of The Unstuck Group. Started in 2009, The Unstuck Group has served 500 churches throughout the United States and several countries around the world.



Previously, Tony served on the senior leadership teams of three rapidly growing churches. He has five published books including, *The Unstuck Church*, and, with Amy Anderson, he hosts *The Unstuck Church Podcast* which has thousands of listeners each month. He grew up attending Piqua Grace UMC in our very own Western Lakes District.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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 Wespeth 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...](#)

Fresh Expressions - GHX

Another opportunity to join a GHX Cohort begins this fall on September 15, 2023! GHX is a new approach to revitalization, bridging your established church to those in your community. In the GHX Cohorts clergy and laity teams are trained to dream new ideas for new ministries to connect with people outside the walls of the church. GHX Cohorts last 3 months. There is an in-person opening meeting, 3 coaching sessions via zoom, an in-person closing meeting, followed by a final zoom coaching call.

What are people saying about their experience from the GHX Cohorts?

“Our goal is to make connections in the community, and we are doing it!” ~ Rev. Linda Ward, Bremen UMC

“Our church is continually looking at ways to be out in the community. I don’t believe this would have happened had we not been a part of a GHX Cohort.” ~ Rev. Ruth Carter-Crist, Pandor UMC and Gilboa UMC

“Because of our GHX, I see people who haven’t had some hope or dignity in a long time while we sit down and eat with them. When you give time to someone and actually listen, something happens inside of them.” ~ Rev. Karl Penn, Fort McKinley UMC

It’s time to take church to the people! We encourage teams of 3-4 to register together. (pastor + 2-3 laity). Click here <https://www.westohioumc.org/ghx> for more information or to register!



2024 Go Grant Applications Are Now Available

Go Grants are for passionate individuals and churches eager to explore uncharted territory. We encourage everyone, regardless

of background or experience, to apply. Diversity is key to inspiring fresh perspectives, and we are excited to help nurture churches in their ministry.

Innovative ideas will be considered in the following 7 categories:

- Family Ministries [a ministry supporting families, children, youth, or college aged leaders]
- Emerging Gen Leaders [a ministry led by children, youth, or college aged leaders]
- Inclusion [a ministry focused on hospitality; intentionally including people who are often overlooked]
- Social Transformation [a ministry focused on changing/alleviating institutionalized norms]
- Community Engagement [a ministry focused on cultivating long-term relationships within your community]
- Fresh Expressions/GHX [a new expression of church happening beyond the building]
- Building Bridges [a building enhancement to support better accessibility and connection for those outside of the church building ie. signage, handicap accessibility, media enhancements]

Deadline to submit applications via our [online application](#) is October 1, 2023.

*All Go Grants recipients will be invited and celebrated at Bishop’s Go Awards on February 4, 2024

Events

Ohio PAUMCS recognizes the position of the church administrator as a professional within the church. We provide leadership



and educational opportunities around Ohio and via zoom. The Ohio PAUMCS chapter links church administrators, secretaries, administrative assistants and volunteer staff together to support each other in local ministry.

The Ohio Chapter of PAUMCS is thrilled to extend a warm invitation to all our West and East Ohio Administrators - whether you're from the Conference, District, or a Local Church. We've missed connecting since 2020 due to Covid, and its high time we gather again! Join us for a delightful Lunch & Learn via zoom on September 27, 2023 from 11:30am - 12:30pm. It's a fantastic opportunity to eat your lunch over Zoom with fellow church admins, discover more about PAUMCS, and simply reconnect. We're so looking forward to "seeing" you!

You can register [here](#)

Registration is Now Open for the 2023 Building Bridges Community Experience!

Join us for the annual gathering of the Ohio reentry community on October 4-5. The Building Bridges Community Experience is free to attend. The theme this year is *A Charge to Keep: Hope, Help, & Healing with Returning Neighbors* with a focus on the role of volunteer partners and reentry allies. The October 4 session is all virtual and looks at statewide initiatives, foundational learning, and best practices. October 5 then consists of regional gatherings in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Lima, Toledo, and Youngstown. The goal is for reentry allies, justice professionals, impacted persons, and service providers to become more deeply committed to creating positive reentry experiences by being more deeply connected to each other in community. There are topics, conversations, connections, and collaborative opportunities for everyone who is walking with or serving returning neighbors. You can check out further details about the 2023 Community Experience on the [Building Bridges of Opportunity](#) website. Registration deadline is September 27th. Register [here](#).

Miami County-Are you ready for another volunteer collaboration?

From Sept 21st 2023 -Sept. 30th, 2023 join us to volunteer, support, and fellowship with other non-profits in Miami County.

Also, You are cordially invited to attend our pre kick-off event, "Together Miami County/Declare @APAC" on Sunday September 17th, 2023

4pm/Festival (Inflatables, food, networking, etc)
6pm/Worship (Genuine experience)

Your attendance is greatly appreciated.

For more details click the following: <https://declare.org/togethermiamicounty> and click on "Serve Week".

**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.

Save the Date for an UMCOR Kit Collection!

Midwest Mission Distribution Center is in need of UMCOR Hygiene and Menstrual Hygiene Kits! After sending kits to Maui and other locations hit by disasters, Midwest Mission is in need of more supplies. So get your church, mission team, United Women in Faith circle, or youth group together and make some kits! Hygiene and Menstrual Hygiene Kits will be collected in four locations across the Conference from October 16-November 10. Cleaning kits will also be accepted. More information on locations will be provided at a later date. Instructions for how to assemble kits can be found here:

<https://umcmmission.org/relief-supplies/>.

OHIO UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

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



SEPT.
21-23
2023

Columbus,
Ohio

THIS IS FOR YOU!
DREAMERS
PRACTITIONERS
CURIOUS
EXPERIENCED

The United Methodist Community Development Collaborative is an initiative for East and West Ohio churches and leaders. This collaborative empowers leaders to engage and transform communities with the gospel of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the command to love our neighbors.

At the Launch Gathering, explore the intersection of community and congregational development while connecting with others engaged in this work. You don't have to do this alone! Join the Collaborative and Join the Movement! [Learn more at OhioUMCDC.org](https://www.ohioumcdc.org)



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...](#)

Let us remember in prayer those grieving the loss of their loved one, and remember in thanksgiving the life and ministry of:

Caroline Buckey (nee Cooper), 94 of West Chester, passed away peacefully on September 10, 2023.

Caroline was married to Rev. David A. Buckey for 68 years. During that time she helped support her husband and the churches that he served which were: Church of The Saviour (Cleveland), Min of Ed 1953; Centenary (Cleveland) 1955; Middlefield, Akron 1956; Mason (W) 1960; Columbia Heights (CS) 1963; Zion (T) 1971; Centerville (DS) 1978; Shiloh (C) 1985

Preceded in death by her parents, George and Muriel Cooper and her husband, Rev. David Alden Buckey. Caroline is survived by her two loving sons, David E. (Jean) Buckey and Alan H. (Karen) Buckey, seven grandchildren, David (Amanda) Buckey, Dan Buckey, Caroline (Marshall) Polaris, James Buckey, Mitchell Buckey, Grace Buckey and Kris Buckey, and two great grandchildren, Shelby Buckey and Elliott Polaris.

Services: A visitation will be held on Friday, September 15th from 10:00am-11:00am
Funeral service at 11:00am all at Mueller Funeral Home, 6791 Tylersville Road, Mason, OH 45040. Interment to follow in Rose Hill Cemetery. To view entire obituary click [here](#)

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation In Caroline's name to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) at umcmmission.org/give-to-umcor/ or Global Ministries/ UMOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087-9068.

Mueller Funeral Home is honored to serve the Buckey Family. 513-398-9100

Collection of Music Available

There is a collection of instrumental music (with accompaniments) to pass on to a church that can use it. It is music for brass, woodwind, and string instruments. Please contact

Jeannine at jmiesle@zoomtown.com or call 513-779-6172. The music is located in West Chester.

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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