



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

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

WLD Important Information



Jots From Jim...

Nancy and I give thanks for all the blessings which abound in the Western Lakes District. For the many ways the Gospel of Jesus Christ is shared is a tremendous witness to the heart and soul of the thousands of United Methodists who make the WLD their home. From our home to your homes we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. And as the coming weeks bring about the beginning of Advent may this new liturgical year bring us once again into the life and heart and reality of a living Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jim

Cuba Mission Trip 2024

Join Rev. Jim Wilson on a humanitarian mission trip to Cuba January 29-February 3, 2024. The all-inclusive price includes roundtrip airfare, housing, transportation, meals, interpreter, guide, and sightseeing. Visit local congregations, discover mission connections for your church, and help build relationships with the Cuban people. This life-changing missional experience is limited to 12 people. The cost is \$1950.00. Deadline to register is December 22, 2023. Flight will originate out of Columbus, Ohio.

Western Lakes District Clergy Christmas Luncheon

“Eve Before The Eve Celebration”

Rev. Jim & Nancy Wilson invite the clergy and their families to be their guests for lunch at La Palma Mexican Restaurant, 1629 E. State Route 29, Urbana, Ohio on Saturday, December 23 at 12:00 Noon. Join them for food, fellowship, and a drawing for a variety of door prizes. The grand prize drawing is a free mission trip for two to Nicaragua in 2024. Must be present to win. Use the following link to RSVP. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E48A4A629A1F5C70-46333493-western>

West Ohio Freedom Schools Continue to Inspire Students in Communities

My favorite story from this year is about one of our third graders who almost had to repeat because he did not pass the spring third grade reading test. After consulting with his mom, the principal recommended that the scholar still participate in our Freedom School for his

reading help, in addition to the supplemental summer school the school district was holding. The scholar was so pleased that he could still do Freedom School, and when he re-tested and passed, he came running into the church and gave us huge hugs and told us "thank you" for giving him tools to help him focus and for helping him pass and making him a better reader. This one story made all the chaos worth it.

– **Rev. Angie Sherer, Monfort Heights Freedom School**

In the summer of 2023, six West Ohio CDF Freedom Schools spent six weeks helping over 350 students in their communities become better readers. In addition, CDF Freedom Schools aim to improve students' self-esteem and generate more positive attitudes toward learning. This year's CDF Freedom Schools included

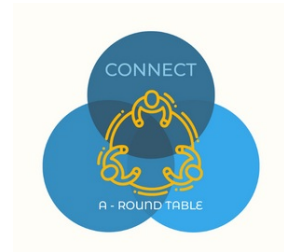
- All People Freedom Schools, Columbus
- Asbury North Freedom School, Columbus
- Covenant Freedom School, Springfield
- Licking County Freedom School,
- Monroe Street Neighborhood Center Freedom School, Toledo
- Monfort Heights Freedom School, Cincinnati

[Read more...](#)

Events

Connect A-Round Table November 29th

Sharing around a table is one of the most uniquely human things we do. No other creature consumes its food at a table. When we share around the table with each other, we are reminded that food is more than fuel.



Gathering around a table is the most important place of human connection; fellowship while sharing a meal. We shouldn't be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it's worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion.

Connect A-Round Table is a time to gather on zoom, share a meal together, and connect over subjects that peak interest. Each Connect session includes a 45-minute round table discussion with a panel discussion followed by a Q&A. The session will conclude with creating actionable steps to the topic being discussed. Everyone is encouraged to bring a meal with them to each session.

Our first Connect A-Round Table is scheduled for Wednesday, November 29 at 6:00 pm. The topic for that evening is call. Each of us has a calling but do we know what it is? Come to learn more about what a call is, learn how to identify your call and the call in others.

If there is a topic you are interested in, please submit those ideas to jcarter@wocumc.org.

[Click here to register](#)



West Ohio Circuit Ministry Fosters Collaboration

One of the beautiful aspects of the United Methodist Church is our connection. To help foster collaboration and continue to expand our mission, two districts began inviting local congregations into *Circuit Ministry*. We're now expanding the reach of Circuits throughout the annual conference.

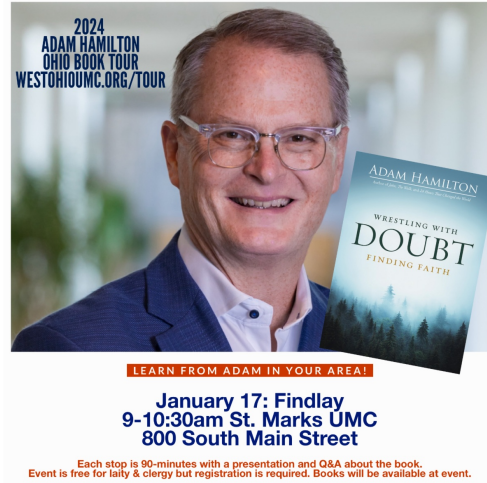
Circuit Ministry brings together a geographic group of congregations to focus on our mission of making disciples. West Ohio began introducing circuits in late 2022 in the greater Cincinnati and greater Columbus areas.

Five core values were identified for Circuit Ministry. These include collaboration (Acts 4:43-37), community (Acts 2:43-47), capacity building (Acts 2:37-42), compassion (Acts 6:1-6), and courage (Acts 9:10-19). Circuits begin to form with a willingness to embrace the first value, *collaboration*.

[Read more...](#)

Adam Hamilton is Coming to Findlay with a Discipleship Opportunity for Clergy and Laity

Rev. Adam Hamilton is touring Ohio with the release of his upcoming book, "Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith." This is an incredible opportunity to learn from a successful author of church resources and pastor of one of the most influential churches in America, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. Each stop will be 90 minutes with a short presentation followed by a Q & A about the book. The event is free, but registration is required. Books will be available to purchase on site.



JANUARY 17, 2024

FINDLAY: St Marks UMC | 800 S Main Street, Findlay | 9-10:30AM

[Click here to register](#)

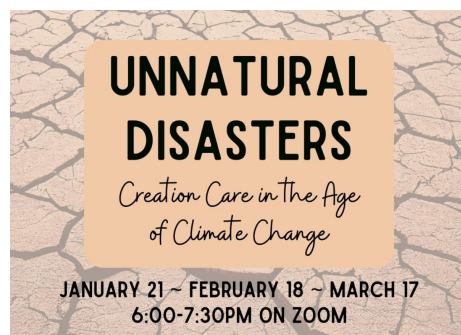
About Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith (releases December, 2023)
Does your faith make room for questions?

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

In Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith, join best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton as he discusses some of our most significant sources of doubt and shows how a steady trust in God can emerge from them. You will delve into questions like:

"Does God exist? How can I know?" "Is the Bible true?" "Why do prayers go unanswered?"

Hamilton approaches these sources of doubt with honesty and insight, drawing on the rich wisdom of the Bible, Christian tradition, and his experience walking with thousands of people on their spiritual journey. Whether you're a longtime Christian or someone brand new to faith, this book will lead you to a trust in God that is unafraid of hard questions. Wrestle with doubt and find faith—belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers.



Register Now for "Unnatural Disasters" Documentary Series

Floods. Hurricanes. Wildfires. Droughts. As the planet warms around us, causing disasters such as these to become more extreme and more common, how can people of faith take better care of God's creation? "Unnatural Disasters" is a series of three documentaries that will take you to places around the country where people are finding creative ways to care for the planet in the midst of devastating disasters. Sponsored by the East Ohio and West

Ohio Conference, this virtual event is free and open to the public.

- January 21, 6-7:30PM: Flooding in Detroit
- February 18, 6-7:30PM: Hurricanes in Puerto Rico
- March 17, 6-7:30PM: Wildfires in Northern California

Register here for all three!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOmXwEkqhXZoDAFzu-ybMXHpfd6-KIKSndYcy6G4EPDquRvg/viewform>

NYT Bestseller Kate Bowler to Join Bishop Palmer for Clinic

New York Times bestselling author and award-winning podcast host, Kate Bowler will be Bishop Palmer's guest on his Leadership Clinic on Thursday, January 25. Bowler is the author of "Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved."



The week of this clinic, Bowler's latest book, "Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day! Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens", will be released and will be given to each person registered for the clinic.

To learn more about Kate or to register for this online clinic, [click here](#).

Basic & Recert ERT Classes to be offered January 13 in Columbus

UMCOR's Early Response Team (ERT) Basic class will be offered on Saturday, January 13, 8:00 am-4:00 pm at North Broadway UMC in Columbus. A four-hour recertification class will also be offered. West Ohio ERT trainers will teach participants how to assist survivors of natural disasters in their time of need. Trainees will learn how to provide a caring, Christian presence while taking steps to prevent further damage to the family's personal property. Skills that are taught include tarping, debris removal, mucking out flooded homes, etc. FEMA recognizes this training to enter a disaster scene. A background check is required, and a link to complete this will be provided upon registration. Cost is \$40 for the Basic class or \$35 for recertification. *ERT members are not required to be United Methodist but must deploy with a United Methodist-led team.* For more information or to register, click here: <https://www.westohiounc.org/event/early-response-team-training-recert-nbumc>.



Confirmation Event With Bishop Palmer March 3

Save the Date -Attention all confirmation teachers, students, and church leaders! On March 3, 2024, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer will be hosting a very special confirmation event for all confirmands of West Ohio.

To register for updates about this event or ask questions, contact Director of Camps, Retreats, and Next Gen Engagement Rev. Ann Marie Carley amcarley@wocumc.org. More details around this special event will be coming soon!

Join a Mexico VIM Team Journey in 2024

Each year, the West Ohio Conference sends five to six Volunteers in Mission teams to the Oriental Conference in Mexico. There, they work with a ministry called Manos Juntas - Hands Together - which has a variety of outreach programs, including a daycare center,

children's home, after school programs, community center, retreat center, construction ministry, and medical clinic. While West Ohio teams are best known as medical teams, there are plenty of other opportunities for ministry with Manos Juntas!

Teams can take part in construction projects, run a VBS program, or hang out with kids at the children's home!

[Read more...](#)

Resources

Receive Free Steaming for Advent Studies When You Sign Up for Amplify Media

Whether you want to experience Advent through the sights, sounds, and smells of the season, or explore the events surrounding Jesus' birth from the points of view of those biblical figures who *don't* take center stage, you can invite your congregation or small groups to encounter the season differently this year with these new studies from Matt Rawle and West Ohio's Rachel Billups!

Click here to preview [Experiencing Christmas](#) or [An Unlikely Advent](#). Then, subscribe to access these studies and hundreds more resources for Advent and beyond.

[Click here to subscribe...](#)

Explore Podcasts from Across the Connection

Across the connection, United Methodist clergy, laity and agencies have created and produced podcasts covering various topics.

Last month, *Times Like These*, a podcast of the West Ohio Conference Communications Team, participated with other UM podcasts in a *podcast- a -thon* sponsored by United Methodist Communications. The event showcased the diversity of programming through this media.

The audio version of participating podcasts are available for you to explore and become familiar with the different programs available.

[Click here for audio of participating podcasts from the Podcast-a-thon](#)

Creation Care In West Ohio Conference

Since 2008, the WOC has passed resolutions encouraging local church establishment of Green Teams, advocacy for environmental justice, support for Fossil Free UMC, and net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. As the Creation Care Task Force promotes these activities within the Conference, it seeks to determine what is already being done in local churches and where additional efforts are needed. To that end, we are asking local churches to share what they are already doing (Green Team, church garden, renewable energy, environmental advocacy, energy audits, Wild Church, etc) and what they plan to do in the near future. Send short descriptions of your efforts to the Task Force lead Bob at bobdowns@sbcglobal.net, for compilation and sharing at <https://www.westohioumc.org/climate-justice>. Also, if you are interested in joining the Task Force, notify Bob Downs at the email above.

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.

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