



In Case You Missed This News:

- ◇ Information on General Conference, LSM 2 **East Ohio Conference and West Ohio Conference to Share an Episcopal Leader Effective September 1**
For Immediate Release: January 24, 2024
From: The Offices of Communications from the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference
A special-called session of the North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church was held on Tuesday, January 23 “for the sole purpose of approving new episcopal areas for episcopal assignments to be effective September 1, 2024.”
- ◇ Dessert & Dialogue, WOC Website and 3
- ◇ Statistics, Online Giving, ERT Classes 4 Delegates to this special-called NCJ Jurisdictional Conference voted to form two new episcopal areas, one to include the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference, and one to include the Northern Illinois Conference and the Wisconsin Conference. The two conferences in each new episcopal area will share one bishop.
- ◇ Scholarships, Aging Well 5
- ◇ Confirmation Event w/ Bishop, Wespath Investments, Bishop’s Leadership Clinic 6 By the action of the special session, the North Central Jurisdiction will transition from nine to seven episcopal areas. The North Central Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy assigns the bishops to the episcopal areas and all assignments will be announced at the NCJ Jurisdictional Conference July 10-13 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The new episcopal areas and the bishop assignments to each of the seven episcopal areas will be effective September 1.
- ◇ Save the Dates 7 Executive staff leaders and members of the Committee on the Episcopacy in both the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference have been engaged in strategic conversations to explore the sharing of an episcopal leader since the NCJ Committee on the Episcopacy proposed the possibility during the 2022 Jurisdictional Conference.
“I and Bishop Palmer convened a leadership team that has been working to identify the key administrative matters that need to be addressed and to examine the best practices of other episcopal areas where shared episcopal leadership has worked well. This work will continue as we prepare the conferences for this transition,” said Bishop Tracy S. Malone, resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference.

“I am confident the people of the East and West Ohio Conferences are well suited to be served by one bishop with a single eye to living the mission of ‘making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,’” said Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, resident bishop of the West Ohio Conference.

LSM Classes Being Offered Around the Conference

Basic Course being offered in February
February 23-24, 2024 -Via Zoom
Friday evening: 6:30-9 PM; Saturday 8:30-5 PM
Instructors: Harry and Ann Peat



This course is foundational for all courses in Lay Servant Ministries. Lay Servant Ministries will give you a variety of opportunities to serve your local and the greater church. The ministries of Lay Servanthood are Leading, Caring, and Communicating. We can all find a calling in one or more of these areas of ministry. This class will familiarize you with these areas of ministry and give you a chance to explore each one. Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course Participant's Book available at Cokesbury or Amazon.

Advanced Course: Discover Your Spiritual Gifts being offered in April
April 19 - 20 2024 - Via Zoom
Friday eve: 6:30-9 PM and Saturday 8:30 AM -5PM
Cost for Classes: \$15.00 per participant zoom
Instructors: Harry and Ann Peat

The early church knew about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts flowing from the Holy Spirit through the believer. Today, the church is still discovering this. Learn more about how your spiritual gifts support your lay servant ministries. This course is one of the required courses for Lay Speakers. Be sure to purchase and read the book, "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts" by Charles V. Bryant prior to the class. Please purchase the book from either Cokesbury or Amazon.

Registration Opens March 1

INFORMATION ON GENERAL CONFERENCE 2024

The much-anticipated United Methodist Church General Conference will be held April 23-May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina. In preparation for this event, Bishop Palmer will be holding an online Town Hall to answer some of the questions West Ohioans have regarding this important work.

The next webinar will be held on Tuesday, March 19th, at 7:00 PM.

Registration now open!!

Some of the topics will include:

- What is the General Conference and how does it impact the local church?
- How does legislation get to the General Conference?
- Who votes at General Conference?
- Who attends the General Conference?
- What are the General Agencies of The United Methodist Church?

Tuesday, March 19th at 7:00 pm.

To Register: <https://www.westohioumc.org/conference/event/road-general-conference-town-hall-march-19>

PHONE NUMBER FOR HOCKING RIVER DISTRICT OFFICE:
(740) 677-0136

Dessert and Dialogue

We are grateful for your leadership in the Hocking River District! This is an important time of transition and cultivating a Christ-centered community is vital to moving forward focused on our mission. It is also important that we know the responsibilities and tasks that we are called to do as we move forward. These discussions are important training. If you are a

Board of Trustees member, a member of the S/PPRC Committee, or a Finance Committee member it is important that you attend.

For information on **Board of Trustees or Finance Committee:**

Thursday, March 7 from 6-8pm, Hopewell UMC, 11742 Gower Rd, Glenford.

Or

Wednesday, March 13 from 6-8pm, McArthur First UMC, 200 S. Market St, McArthur.

For information on **S/PPRC Committee:**

Thursday, March 21 from 6-8pm, The Coolville UMC, 25460 Main St, Coolville.

Or

Tuesday, March 26 from 6-8pm, Bethany UMC, 159 Adams St, Corning.

If you are a pastor, please make certain that you or someone from your church attends these trainings!



Using the Conference Website for Annual Reporting and More

You can find many needed forms and documents for your reporting requirements by visiting westhioumc.org ! Log in to your account and view the top of the page. There are 7 choices across the top of the page:

About Us Ministries Leadership Stewardship & Finance News & Media Resources Events

The little arrow next to each provides a drop-down menu with many choices.

One example is **Stewardship & Finance** Choices include **Church Administration**, for instance.

By clicking on **Church Administration**, you will have access to **2023 Annual Report Form**, **2024 Minimum Salary Guide**, **End of Year Reports**, and **Local Church Resources**, to name a few.

By then clicking on **Local Church Resources**, you can obtain information on Choosing a Parsonage or Housing Allowance, Internal Controls, Records Retention, Parsonage Standards, and more!

Annual Reports are due on June 1st!

<https://www.westhioumc.org/stewardship-finance/2024-annual-report-forms>

2023 Statistical Reporting

2023 statistical reporting information was recently emailed out to pastors, treasurers, administrative council/leadership team chairs, and church office administrators. These reports are due by April 15th, and online submission is preferred. Providing accurate information is essential, as this reporting affects how your 2025 apportionments are calculated. You can access all information that you need to complete those reports at

<https://www.westohioumc.org/stewardship-finance/end-year-reports> For questions around these reports contact Jack Frost, jfrost@wocumc.org.

Didn't receive this information via email? Please update your church's leadership contact information, either in MyChurch account or by calling or emailing the Hocking River District office!



Free Easter Templates to Boost Giving

Vanco, our online giving partner, is offering a free Easter Giving Kit to simplify promoting giving on Easter Sunday. This kit is filled with a variety of templates to help your church spread awareness about how your members and visitors can support your causes. Elevate contributions and engagement effortlessly this year with these ready-to-use templates! Visit this site:

<https://www.vancopayments.com/egiving/asset-how-to-increase-tithes-and-offerings-this-easter-sunday>

Basic & Recert ERT Class to be offered March 2 in Beaver Creek

UMCOR's Early Response Team (ERT) Basic class will be offered on Saturday, March 2, 8:00 am-4:00 pm at Aley UMC in Beaver Creek. 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.westohioumc.org/event/early-response-team-training-recert-ale-y-umc>

Join us on zoom for the next Connect A-Round table on Wednesday, February 28th at 10 am. We will have brunch together while we hear from experts who will engage us in conversation around aging well.

Exploring Options for Aging Well

We invite you to join Peg Carmany, Jennifer Wessel and team from Life Enriching Communities to learn:

1. How to map out your future regarding your own goals
2. The importance of putting a plan in place for you and your loved ones

The benefits of aging in place vs. the benefits of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC)

Date

Wed, 02/28/2024 - 10:00 - Wed, 02/28/2024 - 11:00

Event Sponsored By

Connectional Ministries

Location Name

Zoom

Contact

Julie Carter

Email

jcarter@wocumc.org

Price

\$0.00

Event URL

[Register Here](#)



The deadline to apply for scholarships from the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation is March 1. Don't miss your chance at more money to attend United Methodist-related colleges, universities, and seminaries. Now's the time to begin or complete an application! Visit <https://umhef.org/apply> to learn about eligibility, available award programs, & application instructions.

As a reminder, here are some quick facts about UMHEF scholarships:

- UMHEF awards more than \$2 million in scholarships every year! Open to students who plan to attend a United Methodist-related college, university, or seminary. See the list [here](#).
- Students must be a member of one of these churches for at least a year prior to applying: The United Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the AME Zion Church, or the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Students whose churches have disaffiliated from The UMC are also welcome to apply.
- Scholarships are available to undergraduates, graduate students, and Doctor of Ministry students.

(Other doctoral students are not currently eligible.)

The two main UMHEF scholarship programs include the [UM Dollars for Scholars](#) matching award program and the traditionally competitive [General Named Endowed Program](#).

Other [specialty awards](#) are also available.

Deadline to Apply: March 1, 2024



Save the Date! Confirmation Event With Bishop Palmer March 3, 2024

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.

[Registration is now open via WestOhioUMC.org!](https://westohioumc.org)

If you have questions, contact Rev. Ann Marie Carley amcarley@wocumc.org.



Foundation Program for February: Wespath Institutional Investments Town Hall Feb. 20 6:00 p.m. Online [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Join representatives from WII as they bring you up to speed on 2023 in review, changes in the markets for 2024, and answer your specific questions about endowment management.



Bryan Stevenson of "Just Mercy" Leadership Clinic March 11 - Online

Bryan Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a human rights organization will be the featured guest for Bishop Palmer's Leadership Clinic on March 11, 2024.

Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults. Mr. Stevenson has received over 50 honorary doctoral degrees and numerous awards.

He is the author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, *Just Mercy*, which was named by Time Magazine as one of the ten Best Books of the year. *Just Mercy* was adapted as a major motion picture. Mr. Stevenson is also the subject of the Emmy Award-winning HBO documentary True Justice. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government.

The first 200 to register will receive a copy of *Just Mercy*.

<https://westohioumc.org/clinics>



UPCOMING EVENTS:

SAVE THE DATE!

Hocking River District Clergy/Spouse Retreat Friday, April 12- Sunday, April 14, 2024 Burr Oak State Park



Rev. Dr. Dan Wells and Jacqui Wells will be our retreat leaders. We look forward to a time a renewal and refreshment as individuals and/or couples in life and ministry.

To register, contact the district office!

Hocking River District “Dessert and Dialogue: Serving on a Staff/Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (S/PPRC)”

**Coming to a church near you!
Pastors and PRC members should plan to attend. See page 3 of this
newsletter for dates and locations.**

West Ohio Annual Conference Session

Wednesday, May 29 - Saturday, June 1, 2024
Capital University, Bexley OH

STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS!



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Office Hours: M-F 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

E-Mails: Office - hockingriverdistrict@wocumc.org

Mark Chow, DS - mchow@wocumc.org

Barbara Conover, Office Admin. - bconover@wocumc.org