



# Western Lakes District

*News from The United Methodist Church*

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## WLD Important Information

### **Bishop's Retreat With Black Clergy 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](mailto:mthomas@eocumc.com) or via phone at (330) 499-3972 ext. 102. [Click here](#) to register

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### **New HealthFlex Plan Coming January 1, 2024**

The West Ohio Conference will be teaming up with *HealthFlex*, a Wespath healthcare consortium, to provide eligible active clergy, conference/district laity, and their families with top-notch health and wellness programs. This partnership will bring our healthcare offerings and underwriting experience in line with other United Methodist Conferences and will introduce further enhancements.

"The Board of Pension and Health is excited about the upcoming HealthFlex programs and improvements," said Grace Welch, Conference Benefits Officer. "To ensure a smooth shift to the new health plan, it is crucial for participants (and their spouses) to thoroughly review the *HealthFlex* materials and attend the informational sessions. Clear and concise communication is also essential in conveying any program changes and benefits, allowing everyone to make informed decisions," she concluded.

Watch your email, NewsNet, and the conference social media channels for important information and updates about *HealthFlex*, education sessions, open enrollment and more.

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## Bishop's Summer Reading List is Here!

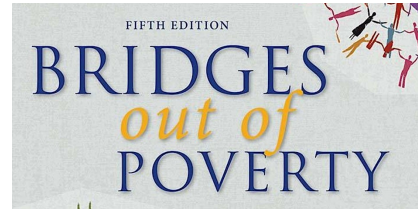
Reading as one way of nurturing both the head and heart is an ongoing process. There are, however, rhythms and cycles of our work and life that create the opportunity to concentrate some of our reading. Below is my current reading list. I hope you will pursue it and find one or more of these volumes useful if you have not already read them. [Here is the list](#)

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### 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](#)

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### 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](mailto:sblack@wocumc.org).

## Events

### Darke County Fair Spiritual Life Center August 19, 2023

For many years the Darke County Fair has had what is called a Spiritual Life Center, which is operated by churches within Darke County throughout the length of the Fair. This year August 19th will be United Methodist Day in the Spiritual Life Center and will be operated by various UMC churches from Darke County from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. If you are at the fair, please stop in and see us!



10:00 am – 12:00 pm: First United Methodist, Greenville: Rev. Gary Blacklidge

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Fort Jefferson UMC: Rev. Bill Davis

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Union City Community UMC: Rev. G. Scott Trittschuh

4:00pm – 6:00 pm: Arcanum Faith UMC: Sharon Troutwine

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm: SonRise UMC (formerly Gordon Grace): Rev. Maggie Sykes

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### **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.

## **Resources**



### **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.

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