



Great Miami River District

News from The United Methodist Church

News and Notes --- January 29, 2025

Suzanne Says...

A lot has happened in our country and around the world over the last week and a half. Regardless of your political stance or viewpoint, the changes have raised lots of questions and created a lot of instability and fear, particularly in vulnerable populations in our communities.

I can imagine that there is a lot of confusion on the part of those who seek to be faithful followers of Jesus, yet who are hearing very different narratives about what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, and a part of the work of the church in the world. How do we navigate the intersection of faith and politics?

During this time, as United Methodists, I encourage us to turn to prayer and scripture, and to the resources of our denomination to grow in our understanding and practice of what we believe and how we can faithfully respond, navigate, and lead the church. [Continue reading](#)



Who do you want to nominate for the Harry Denman Award?

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award program honors United Methodists in each annual conference whose exceptional ministry of evangelism – expressed in Word (what), Sign (why), and Deed (how) – brings people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. To read more, [click here](#).



Nominations are now being accepted for the 2025 Harry Denman Evangelism Award: [click here](#) to download and complete the form with your nomination. Please submit the form and supporting documents to mgrace@wocumc.org, or mail them to West Ohio Conference, Attn. Mariellyn Grace, 32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington, OH 43085. Nominations are due by March 15, 2025.

Wesley Foundation of Cincinnati is Celebrating 100 years of ministry!

Wesley Foundation is having a big birthday this year and they are looking for Wesley alumni to share stories and memories. Please post on your socials and include the hashtag **#CincyWesley100**.



Executive Director Rev. Becky Schofield Motter, Wesley's Board of Directors, and students are so very grateful to the many churches and individuals who have supported them over the years. You have an open invitation to their upcoming celebrations. Please save these dates to join them: April 5, June 7 and the Saturday of UC's homecoming (date TBD). Look for details

to come soon.

UMCOR U.S. Latest Responses

UMCOR and its partners are responding to disasters across the globe every day. Please join us in prayer for the affected areas. In addition, consider giving to UMCOR U.S. Disaster Response to support these efforts.



In response to the effects of Hurricane Helene in North Carolina and surrounding states, UMCOR-trained Early Response Teams (ERTs) are coordinating efforts to support the removal of debris, tarping of roofs, and cleaning out of homes in hard-hit areas. If you'd like to help with a West Ohio team going to Western North Carolina July 15-20, [click here](#) to learn more. In California, UMCOR has provided evacuee support like food and essential supplies as well as support for volunteer efforts and other relief activities.

Help is still needed! [Click here](#) to learn more and financially support UMCOR's work. [Click here](#) for an insert about the California wildfires for your church bulletin/newsletter.

EVENTS

#STILLINMISSION

Are you interested in learning more about United Methodist missionaries? Do you wonder what day-to-day life is like in mission? #STILLINMISSION is a monthly Zoom event hosted by Global Ministries where you can hear first-hand experience from missionaries about their call to mission and the communities they serve. Join us to see how missionaries share God's love in partnership with communities around the world.



On February 6 at 8pm, #STILLINMISSION will interview Lester & Deborah Dornon who serve together in Nepal. Les is the General Practitioner & Training Coordinator and Debbie serves as the Expatriates Support Officer. Middletown First UMC is their home church. They are supported by many churches in Southwest Ohio.

You'll also hear from Mamei Sombo Lansana who serves as a Mission Advocate for Young Adult Mission Service with the General Board of Global Ministries and C. Wieck who serves as the Coordinator for English Language Programming with the Southeast Asia Mission Initiative. Yu-ting Chiu serves as Support Staff for Communications with the Christian Conference of Asia in Thailand.

United Methodist Missionaries are an extension of the church's work in the world. Join the Zoom event and learn more about their work. Registration is limited. [Click here to join.](#)

Winter Youth Gathering at Stonybrook UMC

Register now for the West Ohio Winter Youth Gathering, happening on Friday, February 7 from 6-9:30pm at [Stonybrook United Methodist Church](#). This will be an exciting event filled with food, games, worship, small groups, and plenty of opportunities to connect with friends and make new ones.



[Click here](#) to secure your spot today. Questions? Contact Rev. Justin Williams at pastorjustinwilliams@gmail.com.

2025 Virtual Laity Discernment Retreats

Do you feel God's call on your life but are uncertain how to discern that call or what to do next? If so, then this is the Retreat for you!



At the Laity Discernment Retreats, we will talk about call, discernment and what it means to be "called by our baptism." We will learn ways to intentionally enter into a time of prayer about discernment and we will discover Spiritual Rhythms that can help guide our journey. We will also discuss the variety of ways Laity can serve both in our churches and in our communities.

The virtual laity discernment retreat will consist of two, two-hour ZOOM sessions, followed 6 weeks later by a two-hour ZOOM debriefing. In the 6 weeks between sessions, there will be opportunities to read, reflect, and practice Spiritual Rhythms that will lead you to a better understanding of your own call. [Register Now!](#)

Dates (please plan to attend all 3 sessions):

- Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 6:30-8:30pm
- Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 6:30-8:30pm
- Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 6:30-8:30pm

For more information, contact Kim LaRue at kimlarue@powellumc.org.

Bishop Jung's Day on the District Events Great Miami River District - February 22, 2025 Monroe United Methodist Church



Bishop Hee-Soo Jung invites you to a Day on the District gathering for clergy and laity. The theme is "Healing and Restoration in Community," with the scripture [Mark 2:1-12](#) as a guiding principle.

It will be a full day of events at Monroe UMC, 206 East Ave, Monroe. **Clergy** will meet from 10am-3:30pm with a meal provided. Bishop Jung highly encourages all clergy to attend as district strategy and visioning will be part of the agenda. If you cannot attend our event on February 22nd, please select another district event to attend.

Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen's Installation Service as the new Great Miami River Superintendent will take place from 4-5:15pm.

Laity will begin their time with Bishop Jung with dinner at 5:30pm (**note the time change**). The schedule includes Bible study led by Bishop Jung and a visioning and ministry conversation. This session will conclude by 8:30pm.

Registration is now live for the event. [Click here to register.](#)

If unable to attend on February 22, please consider:

- Olentangy River District – Stonybrook UMC, Saturday, February 1
- Western Lakes District - Bellefontaine First UMC, Monday, February 3
- Hocking River District – The Plains, Saturday, February 8
- Scioto River District – Walnut Street UMC, Thursday, February 20

Rescheduled Event - East and West Ohio Conferences MLK Commemoration

Due to the arctic cold weather this weekend, the service celebrating the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has been rescheduled for Sunday, February 23 from 4-6pm.



The event will take place at [Garfield Memorial United Methodist Church](#), Cleveland. Themed

“Living the Dream: Bold Faith, Hopeful Future,” the event hosted by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung will focus on building Dr. King’s vision of a beloved community rooted in justice, love, and hope. The keynote speaker will be retired Bishop Julius C. Trimble, general secretary of the General Board of Church & Society.

Schooler Institute on Preaching features Leah Schade February 25 & 26

Fractures in the foundations of our democracy tear the fabric of our churches and confront preachers with difficult decisions about navigating politics, religion and congregational life.

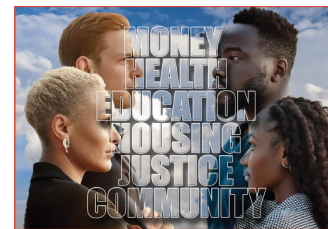
Author, speaker and educator Leah Schade will introduce a method for engaging issues of public concern at Methodist Theological School in Ohio’s 2025 Schooler Institute on Preaching.



Under the theme “Ministry in a House Divided: Navigating Faith, the Church, and the Public Square,” the Schooler Institute will take place Feb. 25 and 26 on the MTSO Campus, 3081 Columbus Pike in Delaware, Ohio. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Equality in Action: Building Bridges for Racial Equity - A Forum

The Great Miami River District STOP Racism, Violence and Silence Team is hosting a forum based on The State of Black Cincinnati Journey to Parity. It will be held at [New Vision United Methodist Church](#) in Cincinnati on Sunday, March 2 from 2:30-5:30pm. You are invited to be part of the conversation. [Click here](#) to sign up.



Clergy Spouse Retreat

Spouses of clergy from across many denominations are invited to a retreat March 7-9 at Wanake Camp and Retreat Center in Beach City, OH. The theme of this year’s retreat is drawn from the words of Psalm 93---

“The crashing waves of the sea are loud and powerful, but the Lord Above is even more powerful.”



This retreat will be a time of fellowship, support, fun, and worship for clergy spouses, who hold a unique position in the life of the Church.

The cost of the retreat is \$135. If you are the spouse of a United Methodist Church clergyperson, the cost is just \$100 thanks to a generous donation from the East Ohio Conference. First-time clergy retreat attendees are eligible for a \$50 discount. To receive the discount code, please [e-mail Jeannette Burkhardt](#). The deadline to register is Friday, February 21. [Click here](#) to be redirected to the East Ohio Conference website to register.

TRAINING & RESOURCES

UMCom Online Trainings

From how to create a Facebook group to a course on welcoming people to your church to online giving, United Methodist Communications offers a variety of courses that can help your church communicate better with your community. And the best part? They're all free! [Click here to see their offerings.](#)



2025 Leadership Training

Next year's leadership training events will be held on Zoom and will offer trainings for Finance, S/PPRC and Trustees members. They will help you understand the duties and responsibilities of each of these committees, whether you are a seasoned veteran or new to the team. In addition, if your church wants to explore a different type of leadership board, there will be training on the One Board Leadership Model. Each session will take place from 10:30-11:30am.



Mark your calendar for these dates:

- S/PPRC: Wednesday, Jan 29, 2025
- Trustees: Friday, Jan 31, 2025
- One Board Leadership Model: Tuesday, Feb 4, 2025

Can't attend? All sessions will be recorded and available on the West Ohio Conference Learning Platform. [Register for one or more of the training sessions here](#)

West Ohio Green Church Training is February 23

The West Ohio Conference is excited to present the first Green Church Training for local churches on February 23, from 4-7pm at the Urban Farm Church, 3901 Maize Road, Columbus.



Green Church Training provides a solid foundation for moving your church toward green solutions. The training includes Biblical, Wesleyan, and United Methodist teachings on creation care; tips for forming a Green Team at your church; and plenty of ideas and suggestions for creative ways to green your church - plus time to plan and dream with your church team! The training must be attended by at least two people from each church (either two lay or one lay, one clergy). After completing the training, churches will either create a Green Team (if they do not already have one) or complete a green project at their church.

The cost of the training is \$50 for a church team of two people (additional church members are welcome to attend at \$10 per person). Scholarships are available for churches with financial need. Please register all participants from your church at the same time. For more information, contact mgrace@wocumc.org. [Click here to register here](#).

Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Team Leader Training

Are you planning a mission journey in 2025 or beyond? Consider this leader training being held at Aley UMC on March 8, 2025. With an experienced team leader as instructor, you will learn how to plan and lead a mission experience in Ohio, the United States, or around the world. You will also be provided with checklists, timelines, team forms, and practical resources for nurturing the spiritual life of your team. A background check is required. [Click here](#) to learn more and register.



Resources for Celebrating Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time to celebrate the contributions of Black Americans, reflect on our shared history, and commit ourselves to the ongoing work of racial justice. As United Methodists, we are called to stand against racism. Our Book of Discipline of The

United Methodist Church and our Book of Resolutions affirm our commitment to racial justice and reconciliation. Pastors, congregations, and faith communities are encouraged to use this time to deepen your understanding and take tangible steps toward justice.



Resources are available from the General Board of Church and Society and the General Commission on Race and Religion. In addition, the East Ohio Conference has developed Sunday school lessons for children to equip them with historical knowledge and a theological framework for racial justice called *All in God's Image*. [Click here](#) to review these resources and more.

Scout Sunday Resources

Scouting Ministries has new resources for Scout Sunday 2025, aiming to enhance the community's experience. Scout Sunday is a great opportunity for the church and the Scouts to meet. It is the church's premier opportunity to engage with the community. It's when we open our doors to share time with the Scouts and their leaders. While many scouts are already part of the congregation, Scout Sunday encourages them to wear their uniforms in support of the Scouting Ministry. It gives them a place to serve and be engaged in their commitment to reverence.



To commemorate this unique investment in youth, the United Methodist Men have introduced the 2025 Scout Sunday Patch. [Order the patch here](#). They also have free [2025 Scout Sunday Liturgy resources](#) to assist with your Scout Sunday.

10 Reasons Churches Aren't Attracting People Who Need Jesus - Phil Maynard from his book *Engage!: A Key to Kingdom Impact*

Why are our churches empty and our communities full of people who need Jesus? There are, of course, a wide variety of responses to this question. Part of the answer is that our culture is decidedly less Christian or at least less interested in the church or other forms of organized religion. While most people believe in God and consider themselves to be spiritual, fewer and fewer are religious... [continue reading](#).



GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

GMD Youth Summer Trip Grants

"The past few years have made it all the more clear how much youth long for and need connections to God and each other that church, youth group, and mission trips offer. Covid made it clear how much disparity and need there is in our world. Near and far there has been a clear call for the church to help with issues of homelessness, food insecurity, care for the environment, poverty, dismantling racism, rebuilding after natural disasters, sharing the gospel in word and deed....the list is long."

-Rev. Justin Fuhrmann, Great Miami River District Strategy Committee Chair

Due to these clear needs and with an expanded understanding of what a 'youth summer trip' means, the Great Miami River Mission Foundation is offering \$1000 youth mission and spiritual development grants to local churches. The application process opened on Friday, January 10 and ends Friday, March 14, 2025.



[Click here for the application](#) or visit our website: [District Grants | West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church](#).

Lakeside Clergy Renewal Scholarships

As people of faith, keeping “Sabbath” is essential to maintaining one’s relationship with God. For clergy to truly have a Sabbath, it is often necessary to get away from home! However, the cost of travel is always a consideration.



Lakeside Chautauqua provides a place and also helps with the cost. United Methodist clergy may apply for a Renewal Scholarship that will provide hotel lodging (up to 3 nights) in the Fountain Inn. You are invited to take time with God along the beautiful shores of Lake Erie for rest and renewal. You can use this unstructured time for prayer, planning, and mediation. The time is yours. Lakeside Chautauqua provides accommodation free of charge. [Click here](#) for the application due February 15, 2025

UM Foundation of Ohio VBS Mini Grants

Applications for VBS mini-grants will open on January 27, thanks to the generosity of a major donor who invested her resources into honoring her family’s legacy through an endowment with the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio. Grants of \$250-\$1000 will be available for curriculum materials, supplies, staff costs, or other expenses related to the production of Vacation Bible School programs in West Ohio churches.



Applications are due by February 28, with the opportunity to attend a special zoom seminar on February 5 at 1pm to discuss how to submit a competitive VBS grant application. Additional consideration will be given to those serving rural and underserved communities. Contact Maddy DeWitt at 380-223-9229 or mdewitt@wocumc.org for more information. VBS Grant Seminar Zoom Link: <https://wocumc.zoom.us/j/88190772238>

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry Scholarships

GBHEM Scholarships offer financial aid to United Methodist students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. Every year, an average of \$4 million is awarded to help students in the United States and abroad pursue their dreams through higher education.



Scholarship programs are divided into three categories and one application gives you access to all:

- [General Scholarships](#)
- [HBCU Scholarships](#)
- [Ministry as a Career Scholarships](#)

To apply, [click here](#) and submit by the March 31, 2025 deadline.

United Methodist Higher Education Foundation Scholarships

Each year, UMHEF invites students to apply for scholarships to help pay for college or seminary. A nonprofit foundation, UMHEF awards \$2+ million annually to students attending United



Methodist-related schools.

Applications for the 2025-2026 academic year will be received until April 1, 2025. [Click here](#) for more information and to apply.

Foundation for Evangelism Grants

The Foundation for Evangelism Equipping the Local Church grant initiative seeks to empower pastors, laity, and smaller local congregations to dream, take risks, and partner with God in the transformation of lives and communities.

Grants will be "awarded to small and medium church congregations, or clusters of churches working together, in a Wesleyan-tradition denomination. The grant is intended to help launch an experiment or initiative to share the Gospel in word and deed, build relationships, and invite others into a discipleship journey with Jesus."

For the 2025 grant cycle, up to 50 grants of \$5,000 or \$10,000 will be awarded. Applications are open through February. [Click here](#) for more information.



LOCAL CHURCH AND MINISTRY PARTNER EVENTS



Church of the Saviour UMC
Couples Date Night
February 8
Click [here](#) for more details



Hyde Park Community UMC
Young Adult Financial Workshop
POSTPONED
Click [here](#) for more details

CLASSIFIEDS

[Click here](#) to view/respond to the ads below
[Click here](#) to submit your own classified ad or event

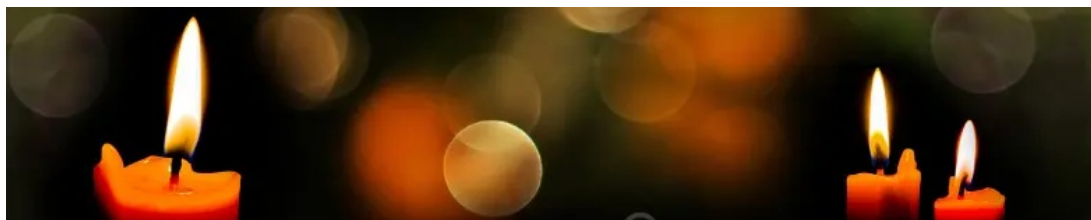
Employment

Youth Director - *Ware's Chapel UMC*
Instrumentalist - *Aldersgate UMC*
Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries - *Shiloh UMC*
Administrative Assistant - *Aley UMC*



CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

Notices of deceased clergy and clergy spouses are posted on the West Ohio Conference website under "Celebrations and Life." [Click here to view.](#)



Great Miami River District | 7388 E Kemper Road | Cincinnati, OH 45249 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!
