



# Great Miami River District

*News from The United Methodist Church*

## News and Notes --- February 12, 2025

### The Gift of Confirmation

The Psalm for this coming Sunday is Psalm 1. I still remember most of it, “Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, or sitteth in the seat of scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doeth he meditate day and night...”



Psalm 1 was one of the many items of scripture and doctrine that I had to memorize (in the KJV!) as a 6th grader in confirmation class. I am surprised not only that I remember most of it, but as I think back to that time, by how seriously I took that experience and how much it meant to me then and has ever since.

I also think of the many students I’ve had the opportunity to teach in confirmation classes over the years. I have been impressed by their commitment. Even when I’ve had questions about how seriously they have taken it at any given moment (no, we’re not going to play basketball right now) later they have shared about how much the whole process and making their commitment to the church meant to them. Even my own daughter, who had confirmation online and outside due to Covid, recently mentioned that confirmation was meaningful to her faith development. [continue reading...](#)

### Join us for the District Confirmation Connection gathering!

Confirmation leaders, you are invited to bring your confirmation students to the Confirmation Connection at First UMC in Franklin on April 6 from 3-5:30pm.



Last year’s Confirmation Retreat with Bishop Palmer was a really special event for our students. Many of you have asked whether that event would take place again this year. Due to Bishop Jung’s commitment to the days on the district and visiting all churches in both the East and West Ohio Conference, he will not be able to host the event this year. Instead, we will host these events by District. The students will get to spend time with their District Superintendent and other conference leaders, and have the opportunity to interact with students and leaders from other UM churches in the area to better understand what it means to be a United Methodist.

Hosted by our West Ohio Conference Next Gen Engagement team, students will learn about our UMC connection, participate in a mission project, an art project, worship, food, and fun to bring our connection to life. [Learn more and register here.](#)

**Annual Conference is May 28-31, 2025**

The 56th session of the West Ohio Conference will be held May 28 - May 31, again this year at Capital University in Bexley. This will be the first Ohio Episcopal Area annual conference in which Bishop Hee-Soo Jung presides. The theme for the session is Rise Up, Beloved: Trust in God's Promises, inspired by Mark 5:35-43, where Jesus encourages Jairus, a synagogue leader, to have faith that his deceased daughter will be raised from the dead.



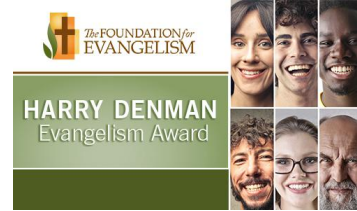
Registration will open on March 1. For more information, [click here](#).

At large members are needed to represent the Great Miami River District. If you are interested in serving, please contact Nancy Newton at [nnewton@wocumc.org](mailto:nnewton@wocumc.org).

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## 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.



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](mailto: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.

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## Statistical End of the Year Reports

Pastors, Treasurers and Administrative Council/Leadership Team Chairs were emailed last week with instructions for completing year end reports. You will need to establish new credentials to access your church's information this year. However, multiple people in the same church can have access, which should make it easier to complete the reports in a timely manner. If you have any questions, contact Jack Frost at [jfrost@wocumc.org](mailto:jfrost@wocumc.org). The deadline to complete your reports is April 18th.



## EVENTS

### 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.



#### **Clergy Session 10am-3:30pm (gathering begins at 9:30)**

Bishop Jung highly encourages all clergy to attend one of the district events. Worship will begin your time together, followed by Bible study. Lunch will be served giving you an hour to chat with colleagues, return phone calls, etc. In the afternoon Bishop Jung will present his district visioning and you'll end the day with Communion. You are asked to stay for Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen's Installation Service. Clergy, [click here](#)

[to register](#) for this event or for the Scioto River event on February 20th.

### **Lay Leader Gathering 2:45-3:45pm**

Julie Carter and staff of the West Ohio Connectional Ministries Team are planning a time of sharing and encouragement with Lay Leaders of our local churches. If you serve as your church's lay leader, you should have received an invitation by email. Our West Ohio Lay Leader, Leslie Hall, as well as one of our District Lay Leaders, Jayne Lash, will be in attendance as well. Please RSVP to Julie: [jcarter@wocumc.org](mailto:jcarter@wocumc.org).



### **Installation Service for Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen 4-5:15pm**

Dr. Allen began her tenure as the Great Miami River Superintendent on January 1st. An installation service is being planned that will recognize the special gifts that set her apart for this work among us and her faithful response to serve the churches, clergy and laity of the Great Miami River District. We in turn, will be asked to encourage and support her in her ministry. *Registration is not needed.*

### **Laity Session 5:30-8:30pm**

All laity in the Great Miami River District are invited to the Installation Service followed by a special dinner at 5:30pm. Bishop Jung will then lead a Bible study also from Mark 2:1-12. This is also a time to ask questions and learn more about Bishop Jung and hear his heart for the Gospel and his plans for his time in Ohio Land. [Click here to register.](#)



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## **Super Serve Saturday - A Monthly Serve Opportunity**

In partnership with Hyde Park Community UMC, the Great Miami River District offers monthly community serve opportunities from September through May. This is a way for families, multiple generations, small groups, youth groups, friends and people of all backgrounds to put their faith into action by serving in the community.

On February 15th there are there are 4 volunteer activities for people to choose from at three locations - New Life Furniture Bank, Wesley Chapel Mission Center, and Meals on Wheels. We are hoping to expand the reach of Super Serve Saturday to all of the counties in the Great Miami River District. If you know of an organization who may want to participate, please contact Nancy at 513.421.2057.



Super Serve Saturdays (S3) take place on the 3rd Saturday of the month. There is something for every age and ability - no superpowers necessary - just a willing, humble and flexible spirit and heart for all! [Click here to sign up](#) to help on February 15.

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## **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](#). **The event starts next week!**

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](mailto:kimlarue@powellumc.org).

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## Rescheduled Event - East and West Ohio Conferences MLK Commemoration

Due to the arctic cold weather, 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. Known for his commitment to justice and reconciliation, Bishop Trimble will offer a message of inspiration and challenge.

Following the service, an informal reception will take place, offering light refreshments and opportunities for fellowship and conversation.

Do you want to go but don't want to drive alone? Consider carpooling to the MLK Event on February 23. New Vision UMC in Cincinnati is providing a van. Other churches have agreed to have their parking lots be meeting sites to carpool. [Click here to see the options and sign up](#). Questions about carpooling? Contact [Lesley Moore](#).

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## 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.

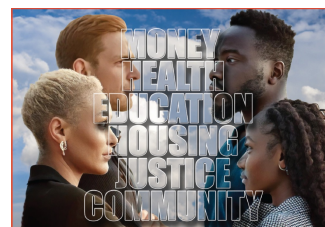


Under the theme “Ministry in a House Divided: Navigating Faith, the Church, and the Public Square,” the Schooler Institute will take place Feb. 25 and 26 on the MTSO Campus, 3081 Columbus Pike in Delaware, Ohio. [Click here to learn more](#).

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## Equality in Action: Building Bridges for Racial Equity

The Great Miami River District STOP Racism, Violence and Silence Team is hosting a program at New Vision United Methodist Church titled “Equality in Action: Building Bridges for Racial Equity”.



It will be based on the recent Urban League 2024 report on the State of Black Cincinnati that covers the equities and inequities impacting efforts to achieve racial parity in the Greater Cincinnati region. Some of areas to be highlighted are housing, education, health and criminal justice. Attendees will be encouraged to get involved with

their time, talents and resources with one of more of their program sponsors. [Click here to sign up.](#)

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## 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](mailto: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

**The new and improved MissionInsite is here!**

# MISSIONINSITE

ACS Technologies has been busy revamping MissionInsite to make their demographic tool more robust. The new system updated February 3rd and is now ready for you to use to gain insight into your community to maximize your impact. You will need to [reset your password](#) to login. If you have questions or issues accessing the system, please contact [misupport@acst.com](mailto:misupport@acst.com).

You'll also want to mark your calendar for next Thursday, February 20th to join in a free webinar for information about navigating the new system, finding features, running reports, and maximizing your use of these tools for your ministry. [Click here to register.](#)

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**Wellness Wednesdays with All In Community**  
**Last Wednesday of the month 12:30-1:30pm**

We cannot do this thing called life without God and without one another. And so, we want to continue undergirding you personally with education, tools and techniques that promote well-being in mind, body, and spirit .



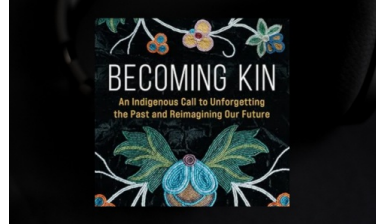
Wellness Wednesdays provide a safe online space, a brave space, to receive a good tip on how to maintain health and well-being in the midst of life's challenges. Focused on living out the Scriptures and being present for those who are impacted by criminal justice systems, this time together provides real-time conversation and relevant education around creative ways to care for ourselves as we co-labor in "doing justice."

Join this online community as we address and uplift the critical need for nurturing among our All In ministry servants and community partners. Presenter: Dr. Camisha Chambers, AIC Nurturing Communities Coordinator. [Click here to register](#) for the February 26th webinar.

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**Expanding Connection Book Club to read**  
**"Becoming Kin"**

The invented history of the Western world is crumbling fast, Anishinaabe writer Patty Krawec says, but we can still honor the bonds between us. Settlers dominated and divided, but Indigenous peoples won't just send them all "home."



Weaving her own story with the story of her ancestors and with the broader themes of creation, replacement, and disappearance, Krawec helps readers see settler colonialism through the eyes of an Indigenous writer.

You are invited to read the book and join the discussion via Zoom on Tuesday, February 18 from 7-8:30 pm. [Click here to learn more and register](#)

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## 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](mailto:mgrace@wocumc.org). [Click here to register here](#)

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## 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.



## 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](#).

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### 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.

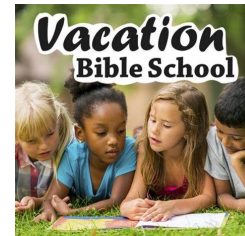


Lakeside Chautauqua provides a place and also helps with the cost. United Methodist clergy may apply for a Renewal Scholarship that will provide hotel lodging (up to 3 nights) in the Fountain Inn. You are invited to take time with God along the beautiful shores of Lake Erie for rest and renewal. You 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](#)

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### 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](mailto:mdewitt@wocumc.org) for more information. VBS Grant Seminar Zoom Link: <https://wocumc.zoom.us/j/88190772238>

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### 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.

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### 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



**Mosaic Church**  
*Swing Low: African American Christianity*  
February 20  
Click [here](#) for more details



**Hyde Park Community UMC**  
*Enneagram Workshop*  
February 28-29  
Click [here](#) for more details

### CLASSIFIEDS

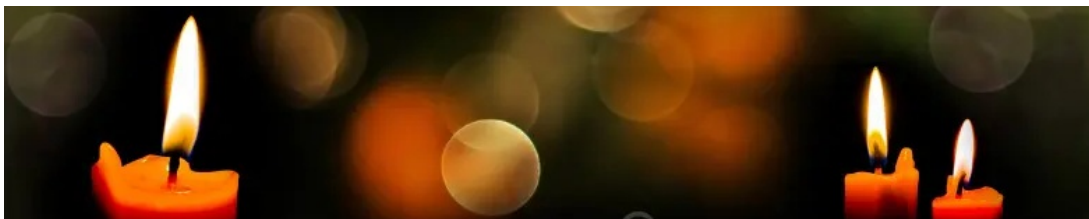
[Click here](#) to view/respond to the ads below  
[Click here](#) to submit your own classified ad or event

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



### 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.](#)





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