Hocking River District UMC

Hocking River District Headlines

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Hocking River District Office Closed August 3-5 For Attendance at 2026 SCD Conference

SCD 2026: See, Create, Disciple
August 2-5, 2026

SCD is the UMC's largest training and resourcing event for revitalization, fresh expressions, new churches, and leadership development. And Ohio is hosting this exciting event in Columbus this summer!

Be inspired by plenary speaker, author, and leader, Rev. Carey Nieuwhof who says, "If you care about the future of the church, this gathering is for you because we're not just talking about what's changing… we're talking about how to lead through it. At SCD, we're going to dig into what it looks like to see where God is already moving, create new pathways for people to meet Jesus, and disciple in ways that actually form lives, not just fill rooms."

What you can expect:

- 50+ practitioners leading breakouts across ministry and leadership topics
- Bishops and denominational leaders from across the globe
- Practical tools you can take home and apply immediately

Hocking River District has a team going—
Maybe someone from YOUR church!

Coming up Next:

Celebrating Faithful Stewardship

As we move through the year, we celebrate and give thanks for the congregations that are on track to pay 100% of their apportionments by year-end. The commitment, generosity, and support of local churches further the shared ministry & mission of the United Methodist Church.

Faithfull stewardship allows congregations to connect with the conference and the world to fund ministries that reach beyond the church walls. New church starts, outreach ministries, disaster response, and so many more are supported through apportionment giving.

To all the churches on track to reach this milestone - **THANK YOU!** Your faithfulness helps to continue sharing the love of Christ in meaningful ways.

Let us join in celebrating the churches in our district who have already paid 100% of their apportionments:

Amesville	Bates	Centenary (Gallia)	Centenary (Washington)
Chester	Clark's Chapel	Connett	Fultonham
Glouster First	Poston	Junction City Good Shepherd	Rockbridge
Salem Center	Shade	Smith Chapel	South Harvey
Tunnel	Union	Tuppers Plains St. Paul	Warren Chapel
Webb's Chapel	Zanesville Grace		

We also have many churches who are currently at 50% and on track for 100% by year-end:

Athens First	Canaanville	Gibisonville-Mt.Olive	Fairview
Hopewell	New Marshfield	Rock Springs	Thornville

(as of June 30, 2026)

Coming up Next:

Regional Charge Conferences are being scheduled for this fall at a church near you! I will be emailing an invitation to your church and pastor soon!

charge-conference-form-complete-packet 2026.pdf

All churches are to attend a regional charge conference and bring their completed paperwork. All charge conferences will be completed before Thanksgiving.

FOR CLERGY:

Check out this link for a little good news!
Discipleship Ministries | Clergy, This May Be My Best Tip Yet!

UMFWO Offering Clergy Development Grants This Fall

Earlier this year, the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio launched a new grant program which included a spring grants cycle that focused on children, youth, and young adults; and an upcoming fall grant cycle focused on clergy development. The fall grant cycle opens on Sept. 1 and offers three types of individual grants: 1) individual grants for provisional and ordained clergy seeking funds for travel, personal or renewal leave; 2) individual grants for LLPs seeking funds for completing Course of Study, continuing education, training or coaching; and 3) individual grants for provisional or ordained clergy seeking funds for education or personal development opportunities including coaching. The grant award range is $500-$3500 with an average grant amount of $1000. Final grant amounts will depend on the number of applications and level of need.
More information is available here. Questions can be sent to UMFWO Program Manager Maddy DeWitt at mdewitt@wocumc.org.

Grant Category	*Grant*	*Grant Cycle*	*Description*	*Funded By*	*Grant Award Range*
Clergy Development	Travel & Renewal Grants	Fall	Support for provisional & ordained clergy who are seeking support for a time of personal renewal, spiritual transformation, or ministry rejuvenation.	UMFWO	$500-$3000
Clergy Development	LLP Continuing Education & Spiritual Discernment Grants	Fall	Support for LLP's who are completing Course of Study; pursuing continuing education or specialized training programs; or seeking coaching support.	UMFWO & Frazer Endowment Fund	$850-$3500
Clergy Development	Higher Education & Spiritual Discernment Grants	Fall	Support for provisional & ordained clergy who are pursuing higher education, specialized training, or coaching support.	UMFWO & Frazer Endowment Fund	$850-$3500

Festival of Sharing CWS cwsglobal.org

Fighting hunger and poverty. Promoting peace and justice

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE FESTIVAL OF SHARING

Each fall, generous people from across Ohio come together for the Festival of Sharing. Congregations, families and volunteers assemble kits filled with practical supplies and heartfelt care for neighbors facing difficult times. Together, these simple acts of compassion become something powerful — sharing hope with people who need it most.

The 2026 Festival of Sharing will be held on

Friday, October 2, 2026, 3 pm - 5 pm
Saturday, October 3, 2026, 9 - 11 am
First Community Church—North Campus
3777 Dublin Road
Columbus, OH 43221
DROP OFF LOCATION FOR OUR DISTRICT IS THE HOCKING RIVER DISTRICT OFFICE AT 47 JOHNSON ROAD, THE PLAINS. PLEASE CALL 740-677-0136 TO ARRANGE A TIME BEFORE SEPTEMBER 25.

Assemble Kits | Festival of Sharing

Green Church Training is August 30 at Urban Farm Church

Would your church like to learn how to better care for God's creation? Are you interested in installing LED's, starting a pollinator or community garden, getting your church to recycle more, or in exploring solar?

The Green Church Training is a great place to start! This 3-hour in-person training will give your church a solid foundation for moving towards green solutions while making sure you have the tools to get started and make a difference!

The next training will take place on **Sunday, August 30**, from **4-7pm** at the **Urban Farm Church in Columbus**. Cost for a church team of 2 people is $50 and scholarships are available. For more information or to register, enter the following in your browser: https://www.westohioumc.org/event/green-church-training-urban-farm-church

COURSE OF STUDY FOR LICENSED LOCAL PASTORS UPDATED BY GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

Course of Study is a required theological and leadership education program for licensed local pastors. Students engage diverse content that includes church history, Bible exegesis, pastoral care, evangelism, UM polity, UM doctrine and more. The 20 core courses are facilitated in ways that help students apply what they learn to the ministry context they serve. Students benefit from engaging content guided by committed instructors, with an emphasis on peer-learning resulting in a solid foundation of theory and practice.

Garrett Seminary and **Methodist Theological School in Ohio** are collaborating to form the **Great Lakes Course of Study program,** expanding the support and resources they offer United Methodist students who seek to become licensed local pastors. The Great Lakes Course of Study will begin serving students in the Fall of 2026. This collaboration has been done in consultation with the **General Board of Higher Education and Ministry** (GBHEM), which prescribes the Course of Study for The United Methodist Church.

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry also has **Course of Study options** for all Seminaries that offer the program. There are many options to fit busy schedules. Click **HERE** for the **Course of Study Catalog.**

For those who have complete the 20-course program, there are Advanced Courses available as well.

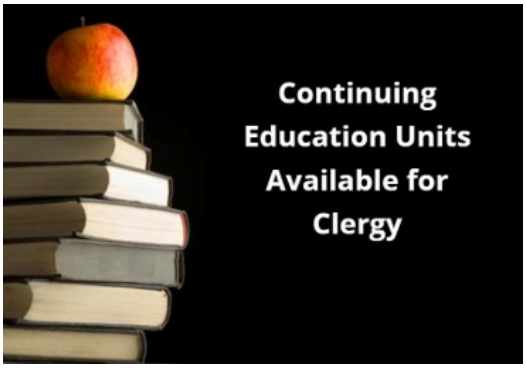
If you have questions, please reach out to Susan Thomas, West Ohio Office of Ministry Specialist - sthomas@wocumc.org

Announcement from Board of Higher Education & Ministry regarding COS curriculum changes.

CLERGY CONTINUING EDUCATION AVAILABLE

ClergyEducation.com is a resource for clergy and church leaders, offering CEUs accepted by most United Methodist annual conferences.

Class instructors are noted authors, clergypersons, and leaders from throughout the denomination.



Upcoming Courses | Clergy Education

FOR LAITY:

Events specifically designed for leaders of the church who are NOT clergy:

A Tax Message from the General Council on Finance and Administration

The IRS recently issued new rules for group tax exemption rulings—the first major update in more than four decades. These changes don't affect day-to-day operations or tax-exempt status for United Methodist churches, but they do require the General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church to send this annual notice to all UMC churches with the included *link to an IRS document* that explains our tax-exempt status.

Churches (and other core UMC entities like conferences and general agencies) that need to prove their tax-exempt status can still rely on letters from GCFA documenting their inclusion in the UMC group ruling. They can request a new letter at *umgroupruling.org*. GCFA will continue to provide information there and in annual messages like this one.

Churches do not have to do anything new. Some church-related organizations (such as foundations, camps, and other affiliated entities) that are included in the group ruling will be contacted directly by GCFA. If the related organization files a Form 990, 990 EZ, or 990-N, GCFA will need to collect additional information every year to follow the updated rules. GCFA is contacting those groups with more information.

Lay Servant Ministries Classes Available

- Great Miami River District: ***Leading Public Prayer*** - August 16, 18, 20, 23, 26 ONLINE
- Hocking River District: ***The BASIC Course*** - August 21 & 22 IN-PERSON
- Great Miami River District - ***Social Justice in Everyday Life*** - October 4, 6, 8, 11, 13 ONLINE
- Hocking River District: ***Teaching Biblical Faith: Leading Small Group Bible Studies*** - October 30 & 31 HYBRID
- Olentangy River District: ***Living Our United Methodist Beliefs, Heritage*** - November 1, 3, 5, 8, 10 ONLINE
- Western Lakes District: ***Come! I Will Tell You a Story, An Introduction to Biblical Storytelling*** - November 6-7 ONLINE
- Hocking River District: ***Ministry with the Forgotten*** - November 20 & 21 IN-PERSON

Register for Lakeside Stewardship Conference - Early Bird Registration Extended

Lakeside Chautauqua is hosting a three-day stewardship and financial wellness conference this August, sponsored in part by the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio and the Methodist Foundation of Ohio.

Early Bird Registration for this event is now open for the event being held August 10-12, 2026. The event hosts expect both clergy and laity, regardless of experience in stewardship, to deepen their understanding of faithful stewardship as a result of attending. The conference schedule includes workshops and presentations from experienced voices including the Executive Directors of both Ohio foundations, to explore how generosity, sustainability and mission can thrive together.

The event will occur during Lakeside's summer season and attendees can take advantage of all Lakeside has to offer during their stay. Each summer, the community hosts more than 3,000 programs and activities, including concerts, special events, educational lectures and everyday opportunities for leisure, such as swimming, biking and enjoying Lake Erie.

Stewardship and Financial Wellness Conference

Keynote Presenter: Rev. Dr. Stan Copeland is the head of "Church Difference Makers" and a former 27-year Senior Pastor of Lovers Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, one of the most prominent congregations in the denomination. While Copeland has impressive credentials (his church raised $55 million in 5 capital campaigns and he grew the endowment from $2.2 to $30 million), he is a very down-to-earth guy. The principles he lives by are applicable to congregations and ministries of all sizes. Copeland will be leading a dialogue about "The Stewardship Streams to Generosity."

Registration: Registration for the Stewardship & Financial Wellness Conference is $395 before May 15, which includes two overnights, five meals and conference registration. After May 15, the registration fee is $445. If your spouse or partner is visiting during the conference, you can purchase the meals and admissions to Lakeside for $195.

About Lakeside Chautauqua: Lakeside Chautauqua is a family destination that has pioneered the act of nurturing mind, body and spirit since 1873. As one of the most popular Chautauqua communities in the U.S., Lakeside offers a rich variety of spiritual, educational, cultural arts and recreational opportunities.

If you need to change your electronic record with the West Ohio Conference, PLEASE contact the Hocking River District Office at 740-677-0136.
Creating a new account creates problems for registration for Annual Conference and other events. If your primary email address or phone number is changed, or you have moved, or gotten married, etc., we need to use the original record and make changes there.
Call or email me with any changes, and I am happy to make updates!

If you have historic churches listed on the National Register of Historic Places , here is a grant opportunity. Ohio History Fund Grants - Ohio History Connection. Opens mid-July.

Southeast Ohio Health and Wellness Foundation Fund - Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

https://appalachianohio.org/opportunities/grants/grant-opportunities/

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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

E-Mail: Office - hockingriver@wocumc.org

Mark Chow, DS - mchow@wocumc.org

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OHIO EPISCOPAL AREA
East & West Ohio Conferences
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ABUNDANT GRACE

Ohio School of Ministry
"Abundant Grace: Fed by Christ, Sent to Feed the World | August 31-Sept 2
The East & West Ohio Annual Conferences are planning a three-day gathering together for worship, learning, conversation and renewal at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky - and you're invited!
Mark your calendar for now to be renewed at Christ's table, equipped for faithful ministry, and strengthened in community to share God's abundant love with a world in need. ***Flyer***
Click here to register

Community Potluck Meal

Bring your family and a dish or dessert to share.

Thursday, August 20, 6 PM
Gilman UMC
312 Gilman Ave. Marietta Ohio

Free concert 7 PM
Local Gospel Group 2 X 2
sponsored by the United Methodist Churches of Marietta, and Belpre, Ohio! · beat the heat! ♪