



Great Miami River District

News from The United Methodist Church

News and Notes --- April 2, 2025



Celebrating a new church in our district - Bethlehem Bhutanese UMC!

"Yesterday [Sunday, March 30th] marked an historic moment as we celebrated the launch of Bethlehem Bhutanese United Methodist Church in Cincinnati—Ohio's first ever Bhutanese UM congregation.

This vibrant new church adds a beautiful thread to the rich tapestry of United Methodism, embodying the diversity and unity of God's family.

The Bhutanese community in Ohio traces its roots to the early 1990s, when political and ethnic tensions in Bhutan forced many ethnic Nepali Bhutanese to flee. After enduring decades in refugee camps in Nepal, they began resettling in the US in 2008 through a national refugee initiative. Thankfully Ohio became a welcoming home for thousands, with Cincinnati emerging as a key hub for this resilient community. Over time, these families built lives grounded in culture, faith, and hope—leading to the founding of Bethlehem Bhutanese UMC.

This congregation is a gift, not only to Cincinnati but to the entire UMC connection. Their deep faith, rich cultural identity, and dedication to community remind us that the Church shines brightest when it reflects the global body of Christ.

We give thanks for the nearly 150 people, including city officials who gathered yesterday to celebrate this milestone. Every number has a name, every name has a story, and every story matters to God.

Thank you Forest Chapel UMC and Rev. Kabamba Kiboko for nurturing this community and following the Spirit.

Join us in welcoming this new chapter in our UMC story—where love, faith, and community continue to flourish."

Spring Celebration

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, May 13th for the Spring Celebration and District Conference. We will gather at [The John Wesley United Methodist Church](#) at 7pm for this annual event.



All are invited including clergy, lay members to Annual Conference, and district officers. We will recognize those being ordained and commissioned, new local pastors, retirees and many more. We will also elect members to our district leadership teams. The church is located at 1927 W. Kemper Rd, Cincinnati 45240.

Congratulations to our new Certified Lay Ministers!

A certified lay minister is a certified lay servant, who is called and equipped to conduct public worship, care for the congregation, assist in program leadership, develop new and existing faith communities, preach the Word, lead small groups, or establish community outreach ministries as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person." (§1268).



On Saturday, March 22, participants of the Certified Lay Ministry Academy completed their final course and celebrated their accomplishment with a worship service at the conference office in Worthington.

Six CLMs graduated from this year's academy including three from our district: Sandra Combs, Eric Prater and Karen Bustamante (L to R above) pictured with Jayne Lash, CLM and District co-lay leader, wearing yellow.

[Click here](#) to learn more or contact the Director of Lay Servant Ministries, Kathy Moore at kathymoore@wocumc.org.

Serve Ohio and Beyond this Summer

Looking for a summer service opportunity for your church or youth group? Consider one of West Ohio's Volunteers in Mission sites!

- [Good Works](#) - Make a tangible difference in the lives of people experiencing homelessness in the Athens area.
- [Jackson Area Ministry](#) - Build wheelchair ramps or make home repairs for those living in poverty in and around Jackson, OH.
- [Urban Farm Church](#) - Weed, water, and harvest fresh, organic produce while learning about sustainable farming practices in Columbus, OH.



Looking for something different? [Visit the West Ohio Mission Opportunities webpage](#) to begin planning your next mission experience or email Mariellyn Grace: mgrace@wocumc.org, for more information.

Nicaragua Service Opportunity

Join volunteers from [Summit United Methodist Church](#) in Lebanon on a short term mission to Nicaragua the week of June 14-21. You will serve with long-time ministry partners

at the Castillo Outreach Center and Harvest Community Christian School. Tasks include light construction, painting, project work, children & youth programming, and food ministries. For more information contact Mike McGinty at 513.265.6546 or mikemcginty4@gmail.com.



Annual Conference is May 28-31, 2025

Have you registered yet?

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. [Learn more.](#)

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. [Members can register by clicking here.](#) The deadline is May 1st.



Members at large are needed to represent the Great Miami River District. If you are interested in serving, please contact Nancy Newton at nnewton@wocumc.org.



As we do every year at Annual Conference, West Ohio Disaster Response Ministries will be collecting kits and supplies for Midwest Mission Distribution Center, a cooperating depot in the UMCOR relief supply network. However, this year's collection will also include Bishop Jung's **Hands of Hope Challenge**, where we see which district can contribute the most items! All kits and supplies [on this webpage](#) will be accepted. Let's make sure we welcome Bishop Jung with Hands of Hope!

Supplies will be collected on May 29 and May 30 at the Midwest Mission truck on site at the Capital Center. In order for your donation to count towards our district's total, you'll need to [FILL OUT THIS FORM](#) and give it to the Midwest Mission personnel at the truck. If you have questions or need more information, email Mariellyn Grace.

[Hands of Hope Challenge Flyer](#)
[Midwest Mission Flyer](#)

Earth Day: Resources for Creation Care

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally through earthday.org (formerly Earth Day Network) and includes 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.



Observance of this day is an opportunity for churches to learn how to be better caretakers of our planet. To help, Discipleship Ministries has compiled some resources for you to use including worship liturgy and educational resources. [Click here to read more.](#)

Emerging Generations Resources

Some new and exciting things are happening within the area of Emerging Generations.

- There is a new [Emerging Generations tab](#) on the West Ohio Conference website. This is where you can find information about ministries connected to children, youth, and young adults. Check back often as this page continues to grow.



- Looking for a [Family Ministry based Lenten Devotional](#)? It's on the Emerging Gen website ready for your congregation and is available in several different languages.
- [Emerging Generations Connections](#) is a new monthly newsletter for those working with children, youth, and young adults to connect with upcoming events, resources, and support one another through stories of celebration.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for the Emerging Generations Connection email or would like assistance in any other area that engages children, youth, or young adults, contact Rev. Ann Marie Carley, West Ohio Director of Camps, Retreats, and Next Gen Engagement at amcarley@wocumc.org or 380-223-9369.

TRAINING & EVENTS

District Confirmation Connection is April 6, 2025

You must register by tomorrow!

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.](#)

Blueprint for Wellness Health Screening May 7 at the West Ohio Conference Center

Are you covered by the Conference health insurance plan? If so, you may want to consider participating in the Blueprint for Wellness Health Screening event on May 7th at the conference office in Worthington. Screenings will be offered between 7:30-11:30am.



The BFW health screenings, which include blood drawing and measurements such as waist circumference, are an opportunity for Healthflex participants to earn \$100.

Registration is strongly encouraged through your Personify Health® account or by calling 855-623-9355. [Click here for more information.](#) Registration closes on April 22, 2025.

Generosity Summit 2025

The United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio is offering a Generosity Summit September 15-16. The event will be sponsored by Wespath Institutional Investments and Horizons Stewardship.

UMFWO's signature two-day educational event will be held at Maumee Bay State Park Lodge and Conference Center in Toledo. Attendees have the opportunity to participate in high quality educational programs and warm fellowship during the conference and then take advantage of the many indoor and outdoor activities available at the resort.



The goal of the Summit is to provide excellent teaching on topics related to UMFOW's educational programs and resources including stewardship, legacy giving, investments, financial literacy, and other related topics relevant to church leaders.

[Click here](#) to learn more and register. Your registration fee includes all meals and a one-night stay at the lodge. More information including sponsorship opportunities is available by contacting Susan Black at sblack@wocumc.org or 380-223-9257.

Discipleship Bootcamp **May 15, Stonybrook UMC**

DISCIPLESHIP BOOTCAMP
From Curious to Committed:
Curating a Discipleship Pathway

Join leaders from Resurrection UMC in Kansas City on May 15 for "Discipleship Bootcamp." Brought to you by the Office of Missional Church Development, this one day training is designed to help ministry leaders create intentional pathways that guide people from curiosity to commitment in their faith.

Discipleship is more than a program — it's a journey. Through an encouraging opening session, practical breakout workshops, and an engaging Q&A/brainstorming session, you'll gain valuable insights on reaching the non-religious, strengthening small groups, and empowering young adults. Together, we'll explore strategies for fostering deeper connections and multiplying discipleship efforts in your ministry.

Come ready to celebrate, connect, and leave equipped with fresh ideas to inspire spiritual growth in your community! Seating is limited to the first 120 people. [Click here to register.](#)

Super Serve Saturday - A Monthly Serve Opportunity

Hyde Park Community UMC and the Great Miami River District offer monthly community serve opportunities from September through May. This day of service provides 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.



S3 takes place on the 3rd Saturday of the month. Our next opportunity to serve is on Holy Saturday, April 19. There are 3 volunteer activities for people to choose from at two locations - New Life Furniture Bank and Wesley Foundation in Cincinnati. [Click here to see what they are and sign up for April 19.](#) Remember, there's something for every age and ability - no superpowers necessary - just a willing, humble and flexible spirit and heart for all!

We'd like 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 that could use a helping hand, contact Nancy at 513.421.2057.

Lay Servant Ministries

Lay Servant Ministries is one of the most significant lay

leadership development programs available within the United Methodist connection. Through this equipping and empowering system, lay servants have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples.



Classes are scheduled now for 2025. They are all either on

Zoom or offer a hybrid opportunity so no travel is required. Click

each link to learn more and sign up:

- Olentangy River District – [Introduction to Lay Servant Ministries: The BASIC course](#) (April 4-5)
- Olentangy River District – [Discover Your Spiritual Gifts](#) (May 16-17)
- Hocking River District – [Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts](#) (June 6-7)
- Great Miami River – [Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia through a Spiritual Lens](#) (June 16, 19, 23, 26, 30)
- Hocking River District – [Introduction to Lay Servant Ministries: The BASIC course](#) (September 12-13)
- Hocking River District – [Loving People and Planet in God's Name](#) (October 31-November 1)

Green Church Training April 23, 2025

The East Ohio Conference is excited to present Green Church Training on Sunday, February 23, from 4:00pm-7:00pm at Ashland UMC 220 Sandusky St, Ashland.

Green Church Training includes Biblical, Wesleyan, and United Methodist teachings on creation care and provides a solid foundation for moving your church toward green solutions.



The training must be attended by at least two people from each church. After completing the training, churches will either create a Green Team or complete a green project at their church. The cost of the training is \$50 for a church team of two people. [Register here by April 15.](#)

Love Thy Self: Vicarious Trauma Self-Care Workshop

Our lives are constantly being bombarded with images and experiences of seismic shifts, suffering, loss, chaos, and hopelessness to change the situation. Whether being done to us or around us, our inevitable absorption of these “traumatic stressors” shows up in our psyche, behaviors, and relationships in unhealthy ways. The bottom line is that showing up as our best selves in ministry and service takes self-care.



A 2-hour workshop taking place on April 11 at 12pm will help prepare you to recognize the mental and emotional signs that indicate the need for some self-care in the face of exposure to life's traumatic stressors. You will walk away with education, tools, and practices for self-protection against vicarious trauma and for healing from it when experiences overwhelm.

Presenter: Dr. Camisha Chambers

Host: Mercer County Reentry Coalition Register: [click here](#)

Early Response Team Training April 12, 2025 at Aley UMC

Early Response Team Training is an eight-hour basic class designed to teach ways to assist survivors of natural disasters in their time



of need.

Attendees will learn how to provide a Christian presence while taking steps to prevent further damage to the family's personal property; this may include tarping, debris removal, cleaning out flooded homes, etc. The cost is \$40/person. [Register here](#) no later than April 8

Expanding Connection Book Club

You are invited to join the Expanding Connection Book Club to read and discuss *Under The Skin* by Linda Villarosa. The virtual discussion will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, April 22, 7-8:30pm.

Under The Skin is written by the award-winning writer at the New York Times Magazine 1619 Project contributor. *Under The Skin* is a landmark book that tells the full story of racial health disparities in America, revealing the toll racism takes on individuals and the health of our nation. [Click here to register.](#)



Ohio Methodist Historical Society Convocation and Annual Meeting, May 2-3, 2025 Ontario United Methodist Church

This year marks the 186th gathering of the Ohio Methodist Historical Society and a weekend of exciting events are planned May 2-3. Highlights include touring the Ohio State Historical Reformatory and the Bible Walk Museum. You don't have to be a member to participate.



The theme is "Telling Our Faith Story". We all have opportunities to tell our faith story, sharing how God has worked in our lives. This weekend's events will highlight several ways to tell our story through art and photography.

For more information, contact [Mary Ann Stotts](#) at 419.295.9559. Learn more here.

LOCAL CHURCH AND MINISTRY PARTNER EVENTS



Epiphany UMC
Measure a Year Cabaret
April 4-5
Click [here](#) for more details



Rev. Jim Waugh on Zoom
When Kids Come Out
April 23 & 30, May 7 & 14
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

Children's Ministry Coordinator - *Hyde Park Community UMC*
Youth Ministry Coordinator - *Hyde Park Community UMC*
Worship Assistant - *Christ UMC*
Ministry Assistant - *Memorial UMC*



Needed

Missing Pulpit - *Epiphany UMC*

Choir Robes - *Middletown Christ UMC*

Available

Upright Piano - must pick up

Choir and Handbell Music- *Resurrection Mason UMC*

CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

[Click to view](#) notices of deceased clergy and clergy spouses from across West Ohio. Please remember in prayer those grieving the loss of their loved one, and remember in thanksgiving their life and ministry.



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

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