



Great Miami River District

News and Notes --- July 8, 2026

Connecting Across the District

Thank you to all the pastors who have taken the time to meet with District Superintendent Dr Rev Suzanne Allen.

To date, she has met with approximately half of the pastors in the district through one-on-one conversations. These meetings have provided valuable insight into the ministries, challenges, and opportunities within our churches.



If you have not yet scheduled your appointment with Suzanne, there is still time to do so. Please take a moment to review the available days and times [here](#).

As a reminder, all required forms are still due, even if you have already met with Suzanne. This includes audit & trustee reports, PPRC and Self Evaluations, SMART Goals, and Self Profile. Please submit your forms as soon as possible to help us complete our records. Questions can be directed to [Jaime Sparks](#).

Thank you for your time and dedication to serving your congregation and community.

Resources For Pastoral Transitions

Pastors transitioning from one congregation to another should focus on effectively concluding their ministry in the church they are leaving and laying a strong foundation for their successor, while also intentionally building positive relationships and establishing a strong start in their new appointment.



To support an effective leadership transition, there are a variety of resources available [here](#) —including videos, checklists, discussion guides, and practical tools for pastors and church leaders. You may also find "50 Ways to Improve Pastoral Transitions" from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership helpful for tips and reminders. Additionally, consider Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter's "4 Strategies for Building Relationships in New Appointments" for guidance on connecting effectively with a new congregation.

A Message From Bishop Jung



Hee-Soo Jung, Resident Bishop
Ohio Episcopal Area I West Ohio Conference

Dear Beloved Siblings in Christ,
I write this letter out of care and concern for all who are affected by the University Senate's recent determination that Asbury Theological Seminary is no longer on the approved list of theological schools.

I recognize that this news may be unsettling for some of you. Asbury has been a place of cherished relationships and spiritual formation, and we give thanks for the ways

Christ has been proclaimed and leaders have been prepared to serve the Church and the world.

Please hear this clearly: students, candidates, clergy, and alumni connected to Asbury are welcome in the Ohio Episcopal Area. Your call matters. Your formation matters.

This determination does not diminish your place in the life of the Church or our commitment to walk with you in Christian love.

Theological education is sacred work. The United Methodist Church remains committed to education that prepares leaders who are rooted in Christ, theologically diverse, and equipped to build God's beloved community. Therefore, students already enrolled at Asbury may continue their education with the assurance of our support. Should you have any questions, please consult your academic advisor and Rev. Donnetta Peaks in the Ohio Episcopal Area Office of Ministry (dpeaks@wocumc.org) so that your next steps are informed and prayerful.

Grace and peace,
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung
Resident Bishop
Ohio Episcopal Area
East Ohio and West Ohio Conferences
The United Methodist Church

Seeing Church Through a Visitor's Eyes

Every person who walks through church doors brings a unique story. Some are searching for a new church home, some are exploring faith for the first time, and others may be carrying burdens that are difficult to see.



The way visitors are welcomed—through acts of kindness, clear communication, and genuine hospitality—can shape their entire experience.

[This article](#) offers a thoughtful perspective from church visitors themselves, highlighting what helps newcomers feel comfortable, valued, and connected.

TRAININGS & EVENTS

Ministry Meets Management July 15, 2026 | 1:00 pm

Strengthen your leadership with this HR for Church Leaders webinar. Gain valuable tools and insights to better manage employees, resolve workplace conflict, navigate employment law, and cultivate a healthy organizational culture.



Led by Dr. Carine Lopez Velazquez, Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Employee Engagement and Title IX Coordinator at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, this session will explore foundational HR concepts every ministry leader should understand.

Ideal for seminary students, recent graduates, pastors, ministry leaders, and church staff who want practical guidance on the people-management side of ministry.

Learn more and register [here](#)

Green Church Training Sunday, August 30 | 4:00-7:00 pm

The Ohio Episcopal Area will present an in-person Green Church Training on Sunday, August 30, from 4:00-7:00pm 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!

More information and registration can be found [here](#).

Lay Servant Ministries

One of the most significant lay leadership development programs available within the United Methodist connection, **Lay Servant Ministries** equips and empowers lay servants to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples.



Remaining classes for 2026 are listed below. Click each link to learn more or [click here](#) to see a master list of all the courses, descriptions and leaders. Most are offered online via Zoom unless indicated:

- Great Miami River District: [**Leading Public Prayer**](#) - August 16, 18, 20, 23, 26
 - Hocking River District: [**The BASIC Course**](#) - August 21 & 22
 - Great Miami River District - [**Social Justice in Everyday Life**](#) - October 4, 6, 8, 11, 13
 - Hocking River District: [**Teaching Biblical Faith: Leading Small Group Bible Studies**](#) - October 30 & 31
 - Olentangy River District: [**Living Our United Methodist Beliefs, Heritage**](#) - November 1, 3, 5, 8, 10
 - Western Lakes District: [**Come! I Will Tell You a Story, An Introduction to Biblical Storytelling**](#) - November 6-7
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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 for clergy and ministry leaders to worship, reflect, learn, and be renewed. The event will take place at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky - and you're invited!

The theme, "You Feed Them," invites participants to consider how the Church is called to respond faithfully in a time of uncertainty. Mark your calendar 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**](#)

Expanding Connection Book Club July 14, 7pm on Zoom

The Expanding Connection Book Club will be discussing seven children's books in July.:

- Stand as Tall as the Trees: How an Amazonian Community Protected the Rain Forest – Patricia Gualinga and Laura Resau
- The Light She Feels Inside – Gwendolyn Wallace
- A Synagogue Just Like Home – Alice Blumenthal McGinty
- Nell Plants a Tree – Anne Wynter
- The Talk – Alicia D. Williams
- Still Dreaming – Claudia Guadalupe Martinez
- We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know – Traci Sorell



Join the fun conversation with other folks who love children's books and lean into these deep- thinking literature choices. [Click here to read more and get the Zoom link.](#) Questions? Contact Julie Carter – jcarter@wocumc.org.

CANCELED!

Discipleship Ministries' 2nd Annual Golf
Outing
Saturday, August 1, 2026, 2pm



What do golf clubs, good food, and God's mission have in common? They're all part of the swing at Discipleship Ministries' Second Annual Golf Outing, and you're invited! This event is taking place at the Safari Golf Club in Powell, OH and whether you're a seasoned pro or can't remember the last time you picked up a driver, this is your chance to put purpose behind every putt.

Why Golf? Why Now?

When God asked Moses, "What is in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2), God revealed a truth that still applies today: what we already have can be used for a greater purpose. So what's in your hand? Maybe it's a golf club. Maybe it's a generous spirit. Maybe it's both.

Every swing at this event supports ministries that are transforming communities through discipleship, leadership development, worship, and justice-centered outreach. It's not just a game, it's a movement.

[Learn more and register here](#)

Global Leadership Summit August 6-7, 2026

At the 2026 Global Leadership Summit you'll be equipped and inspired to lead where you are, because everyone has influence. This event is one of the most respected leadership development events in the world. 2026 speakers include *Priscilla Shirer*, bestselling author, Bible teacher, and founder of Going Beyond Ministries; *Andy Stanley*, pastor, author, and founder of North Point Ministries in Atlanta; and



Craig Groeschel, New York Time bestselling author and senior pastor of Life.Church, the creator of the YouVersion Bible App.

You don't need a title to benefit from this — everyone carries influence, and this event is designed to equip and challenge you to lead well right where you are. It's also a great opportunity to bring someone in your life who might never walk through a church door but could connect with a conversation about leadership and purpose. [Learn more/register](#) here or click on the image.

Lakeside Stewardship Conference August 10-12, 2026

Lakeside Chautauqua is hosting a three-day stewardship and financial wellness conference this August, offering an inspiring opportunity for both clergy and laity to deepen their understanding of faithful stewardship. The gathering will equip participants with practical tools, fresh perspectives and meaningful connections to strengthen financial leadership within their congregations.



In partnership with church foundations, the conference brings together experienced voices and thoughtful guidance to explore how generosity, sustainability and mission can thrive together.

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. 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.”

[Register Now for the Conference](#)

[Download the Full Schedule](#)

LOCAL CHURCH & MINISTRY PARTNER EVENTS



New Day UMC
Powerful Tools for Caregivers
July 17-August 21
Click [here](#) for more details



Franklin First UMC & Hope UMC
Vacation Bible School
July 29-31
Click [here](#) for more details



Let Your Voice Be Heard

*High electric bills?
Water prices increasing?
Concerned about data centers?*

Join the Zoom Conversation:
<https://bit.ly/OhioDataCentersZoom>
July 8, 11:00am

[More information on Conserve Ohio](#)

Contact Dr. Katelin Hansen: KHansen@4AllPeople.net | 614-954-2427

CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE



Let us remember with thanksgiving the ministry of those who served in West Ohio and pray for those grieving the loss of their loved ones. [Click here](#) to view notices of deceased clergy and clergy spouses.

CLASSIFIEDS

[Click here](#) to view/respond to the ads below

[Click here](#) to submit your own classified ad or event



Employment

Director of Family Ministry - *Jacksonburg UMC*

Music Director and Organist - *Monfort Heights UMC*

Ministry Assistant of Community Outreach, Global Outreach & OTR Campus *Hyde Park Community UMC*

Assistant Director of Faith Formation for Young Adults - *Hyde Park Community UMC*

Organist/Accompanist - *Fairview UMC*

Pianist/Organist - *Brecon UMC*

Bell Choir Director - *Sulphur Grove UMC*

Administrative Assistant - *Hamilton First UMC*

Items Available

UMC latch hook wall hanging - *Great Miami River District office*

Piano - *Oak Hills UMC*

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

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