



Great Miami River District

News and Notes --- August 6, 2025

Faith, Hope and Love Abound in the Great Miami River District

Happy August! It's hard to believe it's time for school supply drives, backpack blessings, and program year kickoff events.

As I have traveled around the district for One on Ones and worship this summer, both in person and virtually, I have seen the many ways that you are reaching out to and blessing your communities in these ways and so many more. Thank you!



The weeks have flown by as I have spent many of my days in One on Ones. Between pastor visits at their churches this spring and One on Ones in various central locations this summer, I've completed meetings with about 80 of our pastors who are serving in local church or extension ministry in the Great Miami River District. I am looking forward to visiting with the rest during August and September.

If you are a pastor in the district and haven't signed up for a One on One yet, please reach out to Nancy Newton (nnewton@wocumc.org) to set it up. If you are a pastor or PPRC chair and haven't completed your pastoral evaluation (due June 1), please be sure to do so and email it to Nancy as soon as possible.

During each One on One, we review the PPRC's and Pastor's evaluations, the status of the three sets of forms for the year (year-end, mid-year, and charge conference), church financial stability and apportionments, benefit and cluster participation, continuing education opportunities and plans, and anything else that comes up along the way. The time is full and meaningful.

Here are a few takeaways from my meetings so far:

- We have amazing pastors who are giving their all as they lead with faith, hope, and love during times that require significant adaptive leadership.
- We have many churches that have stabilized after Covid and disaffiliation and are growing. Several are in the midst of successful capital campaigns, and several are planning for upcoming campaigns.
- Both traditional and modern worship services are growing and include diverse ages.
- Our churches care deeply about the UMC connection, and most are on track to pay their apportionments in full this year or to increase their percentage paid from last year. Thank you for your faithfulness!
- Our lay and clergy leaders have a deep desire to reach a younger generation. They are struggling, however, with how to do so when life is full of opportunities and attractional ministry doesn't work like it used to.
- Church size or budget doesn't make as much difference in church health and the size of the children and youth programs as we might think.
- Clergy find being a part of a cluster very meaningful. We have many that have been together for years and we will begin several new cluster groups this fall. More details will be out soon.

God is working in so many wonderful ways through the churches in our district. Thank you so much for your leadership and being a part of the ways that God is transforming lives and communities in this part of Ohio and the world!

Ice Cream Social, Ministry Fair and Pre-Charge Conference Briefing: Wednesday, August 20, 2025

All clergy and laity in the Great Miami River District are invited to a multi-purpose event on August 20th.

- **4-7pm: Ice Cream Social** We'll have a Johnny's Creamy Whip Ultimate Ice Cream Truck serving up all your favorites - cones, cups, sundaes, shaved ice and more.
- **4-7 pm: Ministry Partners** Table displays will be set up with various conference and district ministry teams sharing their work. Learn about Disaster Response, Creation Care, GMD Grants, Rural Church Advocacy and more. You'll be able to ask questions and learn how you can get involved.
- **5pm: Pre-Charge Conference Briefing** This will be a short meeting in the Brecon Sanctuary for those who are involved in completing the annual charge conference documents. We'll explain how charge conferences will be held this year and how to easily fill out and submit your documents online.

Be sure to mark your calendar for August 20th. We'll be outside on the grounds and in the picnic shelter where the district office is located at Brecon UMC, 7388 E. Kemper Rd, Cincinnati. If you'd like to have a ministry table, contact Nancy: nnewton@wocumc.org or 513.421.2057.



Connecting with West Ohio Campus Ministries

As your graduating high school seniors or young adults prepare to take their next steps in college and beyond, the collegiate ministers of West Ohio want to ensure they know they're not walking into this new season alone. The United Methodist connection is a gift—and one way we live that out is by helping young adults find welcoming communities of faith when they arrive on campus.



Whether they're attending a large university, a small college, or entering a trade program, there are UMC churches and campus ministries ready to walk with them, offering belonging, spiritual support, and a place to grow.



Rev. Ann Marie Carley is the Director of Engagement with Children, Youth, and Young Adults for the Ohio Episcopal Area. She'd love to help your student find a local connection in their new setting where they will be seen, heard, supported and nurtured. You can reach her at amcarley@wocumc.org or 380-223-9369. Or, scan the QR code to be taken to an interest form where you can provide your student's contact information and answer a few short questions that will help Ann Marie and her team ensure a warm welcome and a great experience this school year.

Learn about all the ways students have been connecting and serving this summer by reading the [August edition of West Ohio's Emerging Generations Connections newsletter](#). In it you'll also find direct contact information for many of Ohio's campus ministers.

Lait Sunday is a special observance in the United Methodist Church that celebrates the ministry of all Christians, emphasizing that everyone is called to participate in God's mission. It is traditionally observed on the third Sunday in October (this year, October 19th) and serves as a reminder of the vital role that laypersons play in the church and community.

Ministries of the laity include lay leaders, lay servants, Sunday school teachers, small group Bible study leaders, deaconesses, home missionaries, and other significant forms of ministry.

For the 2025 to 2028 quadrennium, the theme is "Together By Grace," with a specific focus for 2025 on "Be Strong in the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:16). This theme encourages laypersons to embrace their spiritual strength and actively engage in ministry. [Click here](#) for resources provided by Discipleship Ministries.



Festival of Sharing

The Festival of Sharing is a yearly service opportunity for United Methodists to prepare kits for hygiene, school, and cleanup to be delivered to those in need.

Kit collection is taking place at First Community Church in Columbus again this year on Friday, September 26th from 3-5pm and Saturday, September 27th from 9-11am.



We will once again be collecting kits at churches in our district so you don't have to make the drive to Columbus with your donation. Visit the [FOS website](#) to find the list of kits needed and the packaging instructions for each one. **The item list for the hygiene kits has changed!** [Click here](#) for the current list.

Drop-off locations in our district:

- **Great Miami River District office** - 7388 E Kemper Rd, Cincinnati: September 2-18 Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays only between 9a-4p. Contact Nancy before delivery 513.421.2057 / nnewton@wocumc.org
- **Hamilton First UMC** - 225 Ludlow St, Hamilton: September 15, 16, 17 between 9a-1p. Contact Lynn before you go or to make arrangements outside of the listed dates: 513.303.4204 / bigbluelynnie@aol.com
- **Lebanon Community Methodist Church** - 122 E Silver St, Lebanon: September 15-19 between 9a-3p. Contact Kris before delivery at 513.932.4834 / lcmc@lebcmc.org.
- **Mt Moriah UMC** - 681 Mount Moriah Drive, Cincinnati: September 21-24 between 1-4pm. Contact Sara before delivery at 513.752.1333 / office@mtmoriahumc.org.
- **Normandy UMC** - 450 W Alex Bell Rd, Dayton: September 22-24 between 9a-3p. Contact Tara before you go at 937.470.7133 / contact@normandyumc.org
- **Westwood UMC** - 3460 Epworth Ave, Cincinnati: September 22 between 8a-4p. Contact Julie before you go at 513.661.3139 / julie@westwoodunitedmethodist.org

TRAINING & EVENTS

Tee Up for Transformation Golf Outing

Saturday, October 11, 2025, 8am | Bent Tree Golf Club | Sunbury, Ohio

What do golf clubs, good food, and God's mission have in common? They're all part of the swing at Discipleship Ministries' First Annual Golf Outing, and you're invited!



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.

There are several ways to participate:

- Register to Golf – All skill levels welcome!
- Become a Sponsor - [learn more about tiers](#)
- Donate to Discipleship Ministries - [here](#)
- Form a Foursome – Bring friends, coworkers, or church members
- Compete for Prizes – Longest drive, closest to the pin & more

[Click here to learn more.](#)

“A Week Well-Spent” Clergy Can Earn 4 CEUs at Back to Church Week September 15-20

Both the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio (UMFWO) and the Office of Ministry for the Ohio Episcopal Area have educational events planned in northern Ohio the week of September 15. Through available sponsorship funds and special overnight accommodations, clergy can attend both the *Generosity Summit* in Toledo September 15-16 and the *School of Ministry* in Sandusky September 18-20 for little to no cost.



Generosity Summit

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 for more information.

Note: the deadline to make an overnight reservation at Maumee Bay and get the group rate is tomorrow, August 7. [Click here to register for the event and book your room.](#)

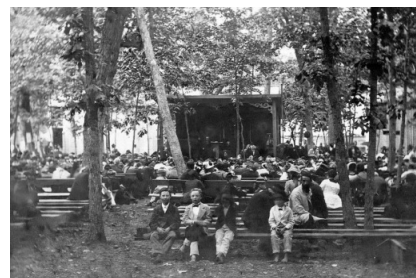
Scholarships are available from both the UMFOW and the Methodist Foundation of Ohio to cover the cost of the registration, which includes meals. For more information on the scholarship from the UMFOW, contact Susan Black at sblack@wocumc.org to apply. For more information on the scholarship from the Methodist Foundation of Ohio e-mail Brian Sheetz at brian@eoumf.org.

All-Ohio School of Ministry on Beloved Community: Reimagining Connection

The East and West Ohio Annual Conferences are coming together to co-host a transformative School of Ministry on September 18–20 at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Sandusky. This inaugural collaboration invites all active East Ohio and West Ohio Conference clergy to gather for a time of bold imagination, meaningful dialogue, and renewed connection. Together, we will envision the future of the United Methodist witness in Ohio, rooted in beloved community, shared purpose, and deep spiritual formation. [Click here](#) to learn more. To apply for special MEF funds, please [click here](#) and complete the form.

National Historic Camp Meeting Celebration TOMORROW - August 7, 7:30pm

The first-ever National Historic Camp Meeting Celebration is taking place on August 7. This is a joint online celebration with churches in Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Mississippi, New York and New Jersey.



The program features an organ, choirs and an historic portrayal of Methodist evangelist Amanda Berry Smith, portrayed by actress Deadra Hubbard. Choirs from Ocean Grove, Martha's Vineyard and Lakeside Chautauqua will present special music. Guest preacher is Bishop Greg Palmer.

[Click here to read more and get the link to the broadcast](#)

To follow along during the celebration, [download the hymns](#) and [download the program](#).

CLM Academy Retreat: September 5-6, 2025

The 2026 Certified Lay Minister Academy Retreat will be held September 5-6 at the West Ohio Conference Center in Worthington.

Beginning on Friday from 6-8:30pm, the retreat will offer an informational session for those not enrolled in the Academy but interested in becoming a Certified Lay Minister. You will learn about the Certified Lay Minister Academy and hear from West Ohio CLMs as they share their ministry journey. Other CLMs currently serving in West Ohio are invited to attend.

On Saturday, from 9am-3:30pm, the Academy kicks off with two courses: Spiritual Disciplines and Cultural Competency. The day will offer opportunities to explore the Academy further, reflect, and enjoy time together. The weekend concludes with worship and communion.

[Get more information by clicking here.](#)

Contact Kathy Moore at kathymoore@wocumc.org with any questions.



Ohio Laypersons invited to Statewide Laity Convocation: August 15-16

All laity in the East and West Ohio Conferences of the UMC are invited to participate in a Laity Convocation hosted by Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, scheduled for August 15-16, at Worthington UMC.



This Laity Convocation is for laypersons all over Ohio to come together to celebrate our faith and community! This event is designed for all members of the church who are not ordained clergy - that's you, the laity! It will be a time to connect with fellow church members, participate in workshops, and grow in your faith. [Click here](#) for more information.

August Expanding Connection Book Club

The Expanding Connection Book Club has selected five children's books from the United Women in Faith's Reading Program for the August book discussion.

Book titles include *Sitti's Bird: A Gaza Story*, *The Tower of Life*, *Berry Song*, *Until Someone Listens*, and *Love is Loud*. All titles will engage readers in real-life current topics. There is sure to be a lively discussion!



Join the group on Zoom, Tuesday, August 19 from 7-8:30 pm. Contact Julie Carter (jcarter@wocumc.org) with questions.

Green Church Training August 20, 2025

Greening your church property doesn't have to feel overwhelming. Green Church Training can help set your church on the path toward better stewardship of God's creation.

A three-hour training is being held at Ashland UMC on Wednesday, August 20 from 4-7pm. It will cover the basics, like where to find biblical and United Methodist support for creation care; how to form a Green Team at your church; and project ideas for how to get started. Most importantly, the training gives time and space for your church to dream about what might be possible! [Click here to register.](#)



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.



Check out the new classes that have been added to the schedule. Most are offered online via Zoom unless indicated. Click each link to learn more and sign up:

- **Olentangy River District** [Leading Worship](#) (In person September 12-13)
- **Hocking River District** [Introduction to Lay Servant Ministries: The BASIC course](#) (September 12-13)
- **Great Miami River District** [Social Justice in Everyday Life: A Look at the Social Principles of the UMC](#) (September 21, 23, 25, 28, 30)
- **Hocking River District** [Loving People and Planet in God's Name](#) (October 31-November 1)
- **Olentangy River District** [Called to Preach](#) (In person November 8 and 15)

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

2026 Local Church Mission Grants - Apply today!

Because of the faithful generosity and long-term vision of those who gave toward our Mission Foundation endowment, we have the great blessing of being able to offer grant funds to both local churches and United Methodist related ministry agencies in our district.



Through the Local Church Mission grants, we desire to fund ministries and projects that further the mission of the church and that are in alignment with the strategic directives of Scripture, the United Methodist Church, the West Ohio Conference, and the Great Miami River District.

Applications are available for local churches and partner agencies to apply for a grant for 2026. [Click here](#) for the church grant application, due September 5. The partner/agency grant application is due October 3. [Click here](#) for the agency grant application. You can also find them on the our website: www.westohioumc.org/greatmiamiriver under "Resources", "Grants".

If you have any questions or need any help with the grant application process, please contact Rev. Justin M. Fuhrmann, Great Miami River District Grants Committee Chair, at jfuhrma@hotmail.com or by phone at 847-913-4190.

Racial Ethnic Local Church Concerns

Discipleship Ministries is receiving applications for their Ministries Racial Ethnic Local Church Grants (RELCC) through September 30, 2025. The purpose of the grant is to provide funding to strengthen the ethnic local church through leadership training, small groups, worship, stewardship, and spiritual formation as they engage in developing disciple-making systems inside the church walls as well as in the community.

Priority is given to new programs/ministries that move churches to places where disciples are formed, grow, and make new disciples of Jesus Christ who will transform the world. [Click here to learn more.](#)



LOCAL CHURCH AND MINISTRY PARTNER EVENTS



Gem City Church Collective
Meal Packing Serve Event
August 16
Click [here](#) for more details



Hyde Park Community UMC*Enneagram*
Type Discovery
August 23-24
Click [here](#) for more details

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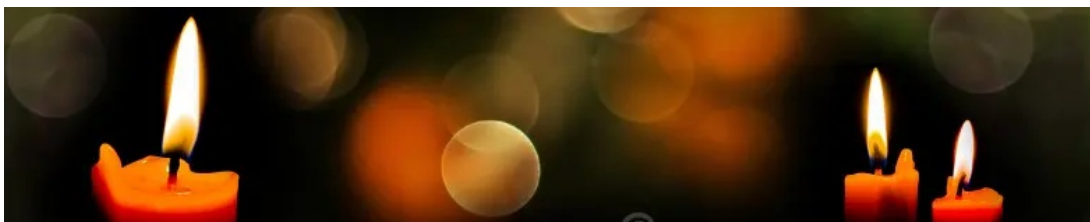
Employment

Director of Administration and Finance - *Church of the Saviour*
Financial Coordinator - *Church of the Saviour*
Discipleship Director - *Friendship UMC*
Next Gen Pastor - *Faith Community UMC*
Director of Student Ministries - *Christ Kettering UMC*
Modern Worship Leader - *Sulphur Grove UMC*
Preschool Director - *Sharonville UMC*
Choir Director - *Mt Healthy UMC*
Associate Director - *Wesley Foundation in Cincinnati*
Youth Pastor - *Sharonville UMC*
Worship Assistant - *Christ UMC*
Ministry Assistant - *Memorial UMC*

For Sale

Clergy Robe and Stoles

CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE



Notices of other deceased clergy and clergy spouses from across West Ohio may be viewed by [clicking here](#).

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

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