



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

WLD Office (937) 739-4445 Email: westernlakes@wocumc.org

WLD Important Information Volume 38-December 20, 2024

Click on the video below for a Christmas Message
from Bishop Hee-Soo Jung



Jots From Jim...

It was a tight schedule. I had no time to spare. I walked into Great Clips to get my haircut, which is not much of a job, and I was number one on the waitlist. I was escorted directly to the chair. The young lady cutting my hair was polite and friendly and we struck up a conversation. Halfway thru the haircut she dropped a bombshell. She said out loud, with clippers going across my scalp, "I am a Tennessee fan."

I should have gotten up out of the chair with half a haircut and been on my way. But I was trapped. Instantly I said, "Oh my." And before I could proceed with evangelistic efforts to convert her into a Buckeye fan she said, "But I won't be a sore loser." **Fascinating.** It was three days before the game and she was already planning on how to lose.

As we wrap up 2024 as the Western Lakes District I am proud of all 92 churches who have celebrated a variety of "wins" throughout the year. A baptism, a mission project, a deeper relationship with the Lord, forgiveness, healing, bringing hope to a stranger: all stories from across our district that witness to how the Gospel has "won."

Recently I presided over a meeting where the vote was a tie. More than one hundred people voted and it was evenly divided. I said, "There are no winners or losers tonight. It is



a tie.” Afterwards a very polite parishioner came up to me and said, “I need to correct you on one thing: You said there are no winners or losers tonight. I disagree. Tonight, everybody is a winner.” I graciously and profoundly agreed. In Christ, we all win.

I was reminded during my haircut that I need to be on guard not to anticipate “losing” but claim the “victory” in Christ. The year 2025 will continue to be a time of winning for those who put their faith in the Lord. May we all approach the coming year not anticipating the “loss” but being part of the “win.”

The Gospel will not be defeated. Victory was birthed in a manger, personified thru crucifixion, and proclaimed in resurrection. All that remains is for it to be shared everyday, everywhere, throughout the new year.

My wife, Nancy, and I wish you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. Together may we proclaim the victory we have in Jesus.

Jim

PS And may God bless the Buckeyes Saturday evening as they play the Tennessee Volunteers. The winner gets to play in the Rose Bowl. As a sign of my faith in victory I have purchased plane tickets, hotel, and Rose Bowl parade tickets. Game tickets pending.

Thank You For Your Apportionments

Thank you to 21 Western Lakes District churches who have already paid 100% of their apportionments for 2024! This was calculated as the end of November. There are more congregations who are on track to give 100% by the end of the calendar year.

Your apportionment dollars are wisely used in so many ways to support Conference and General Church ministries, World Service, North Central Jurisdiction, and Conference/District staffing and operations. In addition, they contribute to the Ministerial Education, Black College, Africa University, General Administration, Episcopal, and Interdenominational Cooperative Funds.

Thank you so much to these Western Lakes District churches who have paid their 2024 apportionments in full: *Casstown, Concord, Kingscreek, Lima Trinity, Mercer, Middle Point, Mt Zion, New Dover, Rhinehart, Ridgeway, Roundhead, Rum Creek, South Charleston, South Solon, St. Paris, Unionville Center, Van Wert First, Versailles, West Liberty, York Center, and Zion.*

East and West Ohio Conferences To Commemorate MLK Day on January 19th

The East and West Ohio Conferences of The United Methodist Church are coming together to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a joint worship service on Sunday, January 19, 2025, at Garfield Memorial United Methodist Church in Pepper Pike. 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 service, scheduled from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., will open with gathering music at 3:45 p.m. and feature retired Bishop Julius C. Trimble, General Secretary of the General Board of Church & Society of The United Methodist Church as the keynote speaker. Known for his commitment to justice and reconciliation, Bishop Trimble will offer a message of inspiration and challenge.

Music will be provided by Garfield Memorial UMC's praise band, setting the tone for a meaningful and uplifting gathering. The service will be live-streamed, allowing broader access for those unable to attend in-person.

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

This event, which is free and open to the public, aims to inspire participants to carry forward Dr. King's God-given vision of unity and hope. "Our hope is that people will leave this worship experience inspired to build on Dr. King's vision of beloved community," organizers said.

Join us as we celebrate the legacy of Dr. King and seek to embody his dream for a bold faith and hopeful future.

Join Us For The Day of Service January 20th

Join the East and West Ohio Conferences of the United Methodist Church as we honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of service across all 10 districts. This is an opportunity for individuals, families, and communities to unite and embody the spirit of love, justice, and service Dr. King championed.

Whether through volunteering at a local food pantry, assisting with community clean-up efforts, mentoring youth, or supporting other impactful projects, everyone can make a difference.

Let's turn this National Day of Remembrance into a day of action! Visit Day of Service for service opportunity suggestions in your area, or gather your family and friends to create your own opportunity to serve. We can continue Dr. King's dream of building a beloved community together.

[VIEW THE MISSION SITES HERE](#)

Bishop Announces Day on the District Events

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung has announced Day on District gatherings for clergy and laity. The theme is "Healing and Restoration in Community," with the scripture Mark 2:1-12 as a guiding principle.



Clergy sessions will begin at 10am and conclude at 3:30pm. Bishop Jung highly encourages all clergy to attend as district strategy and visioning will be part of the agenda. If you cannot attend the date assigned to your district, please contact your district superintendent and select another district event to attend.

Laity sessions will begin with dinner at 5pm and will conclude by 8:30pm. The schedule includes worship, Bible study led by Bishop Jung and a visioning and ministry conversation.

Mark your calendar - registration is coming soon ---

- Maumee River District – Maumee UMC, Saturday January 25
- Olentangy River District – Stonybrook UMC, Saturday, February 1
- **Western Lakes District - Bellefontaine First UMC, Monday, February 3**
- Hocking River District – The Plains, Saturday, February 8
- Scioto River District – Walnut Street UMC, Thursday, February 20
- Great Miami River District – Monroe UMC, Saturday, February 22

ERT Training in January

The eight-hour basic class ERT training will teach you how to assist survivors of natural

disasters in their time of need. You 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. FEMA recognizes this training to enter a disaster scene. The recertification class will end at 1:00pm and is only for those who have completed the basic course and are within one year of the date their badge expired. Cost is \$40 for the basic class; \$35 for recertification.

Deadline to Register: Monday, January 6

NOTE: A background check is required to receive an ERT badge from UMCOR. You will receive a link to run a background check with UMCOR when you register online. Please complete the background check prior to the class. Your badge cannot be processed without a current background check on file with UMCOR.

Date: Sat, 01/11/2025 - 08:00 - 4:00

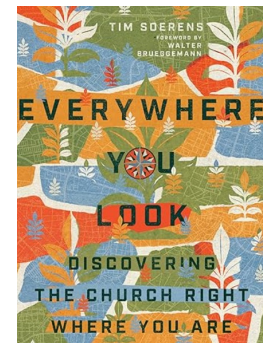
North Broadway United Methodist Church
48 E N Broadway St, Columbus, OH 43214
Contact Mariellyn Grace at mgrace@wocumc.org
Price \$40.00

[Register Now!](#)

Expanding Connection Book Club

Join the Expanding Connection Book Club for a Zoom discussion of, "Everywhere You Look" with the author, Tim Soerens on January 7, 2025.

Everywhere You Look examines why the emerging generation is opting out of the church in large numbers. Are they dismayed at what appears to be their options for participation? Is church really necessary anymore?



Tim Soerens sees this unsettled state of affairs as an extraordinary opportunity: the church, he says, is on the edge of a new possibility at the very moment so much of it feels like it's falling apart. In his extensive travels in all kinds of neighborhoods, Soerens has seen the beginnings of this movement firsthand.

You are invited to read the book and join the discussion with the author and others January 7th at 7pm. [Click here](#) for more information.

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.

In 2025, 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.

"I would recommend a Laity Discernment Retreat to someone who is searching or has questions about how they can serve their community or their church. It can help guide them through the process, provide resources and help provide a sense of peace about what they can be doing right now." -Twila Boyd, 2019 participant

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

• [Register Now!](#)

For more information, contact Kim LaRue at kimlarue@powellumc.org.

Leadership Training 2025

Registration Now Open!

Plan to join us on Zoom if you'll be serving on Finance, S/PPRC or Trustees, or to explore the One Board Leadership Model.

These one-hour training sessions are for new and seasoned leaders. They will help you understand the duties and responsibilities of

Finance, S/PPRC, Trustees, and the One Board Leadership Model, respectively. Each session will include time for Q&A so you can serve effectively in your role.



Live on Zoom from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.:

- **Finance:** Tuesday, Jan 28, 2025
- **S/PPRC:** Wednesday, Jan 29, 2025
- **Trustees:** Friday, Jan 31, 2025
- **One Board Leadership Model:** Tuesday, Feb 4, 2025

recordings will be available on
westohioumc.newcenter.com

The sessions are scheduled as follows. Please use the link below to register for the sessions that pertain to your role.

- **Finance:** Tuesday, Jan 28, 2025
- **S/PPRC:** Wednesday, Jan 29, 2025
- **Trustees:** Friday, Jan 31, 2025
- **One Board Leadership Model:** Tuesday, Feb 4, 2025

[Register for one or more of the training sessions here](#)

Please Note:

- All sessions will take place on Zoom from 10:30 - 11:30 am on the designated date.
- Please register if you can attend live OR if you'd like to receive access to the recording.
- Each session will last one hour.
- No in-person Leadership Training Day will take place in early 2025.
- All sessions will be recorded and available on the [West Ohio Conference Learning Platform](#).

[Register for the 2025 Leadership Training](#)

Creation Care Book Study

God's first recorded act is creation and the stewardship of the Earth. Do you struggle to connect your trash with your faith journey? You have the opportunity to restore God's creation in community with others! Let's talk about why this matters and your next step.

Bring a copy of Garbage Theology by Caleb Cray Haynes.

Co-sponsored by Christ Church Green Team and EEN on Wednesdays at 7 pm starting Jan 22 for 6 weeks. Please register at the Eventbrite listed

here: <https://creationcarebookstudy.eventbrite.com>



Scholarship Information Available

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) Scholarships offers financial aid to United Methodist students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. Every year, an average of \$4.5 million is awarded to help students in the United States and abroad pursue their dreams through higher education. With this financial aid, GBHEM is opening pathways for students of all backgrounds to earn their degrees and serve as the

next generation of leaders for the church and the world.

GBHEM scholarship applications open in January each year. You may only submit one application per year, which will be screened for all possible eligible programs. You may indicate on the first page of your application which of the below listed programs you would most like to be considered for. Scholarship programs are divided into three categories:

- **General Scholarships**
- **HBCU Scholarships**
- **Ministry as a Career Scholarships**

Let us remember in prayer those grieving the loss of their loved one, and remember in thanksgiving the life and ministry of:

Rev. Jerry D. Wortham, age 91 of Lebanon, Ohio passed away peacefully on Monday, December 09, 2024, at Otterbein Lebanon. Jerry was born in Delta, Colorado on August 31, 1933, the son of Jerry B. and Clara (nee Streett) Wortham. Jerry life was his ministry as a Pastor in the United Methodist Church. He earned his undergraduate degree from Asbury University and his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. As an ordained pastor Jerry served these churches within the West Ohio Conference: Essex & Mt Olivet (S) 1955; Casstown-Bethel (S) 1958; Aldersgate (C) 1960; Mt Victory (L) 1963; Cole Grove Memorial (P) 1965; Nast Trinity (C) 1971; Maynard Ave (CN) 1979; St Mark's (L) 1981; West Milton (DN) 1987; Hartzell (C) 1991

Jerry was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his loving wife, Mary (nee Culp) Wortham; children Jay (Lori) Wortham, John (Sheila) Wortham, and Mary Beth (John) Rutherford; step-children Karen (Billy) Colyer and Terri (Joel) Boyette; 5 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren; sister and brother-in-law Judith and Mel DeWitt; as well as many other family members and friends.

The funeral was Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 12:30 PM, at Stine Funeral Home of Lebanon. Jerry was laid to rest in Arlington Memorial Gardens in Mt. Healthy, Ohio.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to The Boy Scouts of America Dan Beard Council or the Parkinson's Research Foundation.

Paul W. Miller

Rev. Paul W. Miller, 100, of Van Wert, Ohio, passed away peacefully at 11:12 am on Monday, December 16, 2024, at Vancrest of Van Wert. Born on August 3, 1924, in Wetzell, Ohio, to Henry A. and Mary (Wisher) Miller, Paul lived a remarkable life filled with service, compassion, and dedication to others. He married the former Lorraine Clear who preceded him in death on October 11, 2014.

A proud veteran of the United States Army, Paul courageously served in World War II in the South Pacific, embodying the values of bravery and commitment to his country. Following his military service, Paul answered the call to ministry becoming a clergyman in the United Methodist Church, touching the lives of countless individuals across many congregations in northwest Ohio. Known affectionately as the "People's Pastor," his unwavering commitment to caring for others became his life's work. Paul devoted his time and energy to ministering to nursing home and hospice patients, providing comfort and companionship in their times of need.

He was a member of the Van Wert American Legion and First United Methodist Church in Van Wert.

Paul is survived by his son, Bruce (Sandy) Miller of Ft Wayne; his brother, Richard "Dick" Miller of Van Wert; 7 grandchildren; 21 great grandchildren; 11 great great grandchildren; and 1 great great great grandchild.

In addition to his wife, Lorraine Miller, he was preceded in death by his parents, Henry and

Mary; daughter, Paulette Burnett; an infant son, Brian Miller; brother, Rev. Carl W. Miller; and sisters, Margaret Claypool Slusser, Nellie Adams and infant Ruby Miller.

Funeral services will be held in honor of Paul's life and contributions to our community at 10:30 am on Friday, December 20, 2024, at First United Methodist Church, in Van Wert, with Pastors Gus Christo-Baker and Christian Taylor, Officiating. Burial will immediately follow in Middle Creek Cemetery, Grover Hill, Ohio. Visitation will be from 2:00-7:00 pm on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at Alspach-Gearhart Funeral Home & Crematory, Van Wert. Also, one hour prior to services Friday at the church.

Online condolences may be expressed at www.alspachgearhart.com. Arrangements have been entrusted to Alspach-Gearhart Funeral Home & Crematory, 722 S. Washington St, Van Wert, Ohio.

2024-2025 Appointments

2024 Appointments

The list of pastoral appointments beginning January 1, 2024, can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Please refer back to these lists as they are updated frequently.



West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church | 32 Wesley Boulevard | Worthington, OH 43085 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!