



Western Lakes District

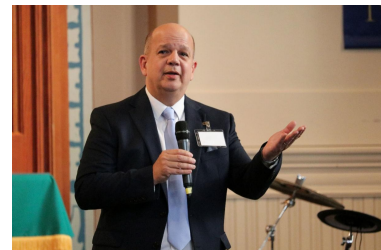
News from The United Methodist Church

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

WLD Important Information Volume 41-February 7, 2025

Rev. Dr. Jim Wilson named Olentangy River District Superintendent effective July 1.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung has announced the appointment of Rev. Dr. Jim Wilson to the Olentangy River District effective July 1.



Bishop Jung said he invited persons to serve on the cabinet whose lives and ministries are grounded in spiritual leadership. He believes flexibility and adaptability are important characteristics for district superintendents.

"We are also blessed by Jim's missional passions and his work with diverse communities in the district," said Bishop Jung.

First appointed by Bishop Gregory V. Palmer in 2022, Jim Wilson currently serves as the Western Lakes District Superintendent. Prior to this role, Wilson served local congregations in West Ohio for 35 years. His pastoral appointments include Jacksonburg, Cairo, Celina Bethany, Troy First, and Church of the Messiah.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in Olentangy River District and look forward to embracing the district's rich diversity. Nancy and I are eager to build meaningful relationships throughout the area," Wilson said.

Active in various leadership roles throughout the annual conference, Wilson served as chairperson of the Annual Conference Planning Committee. Previously, he chaired the West Ohio Annual Conference Worship Committee, served on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and participated in several task forces, education committees, and the former Lima District Superintendency Committee.

Wilson has traveled extensively for mission work. He was instrumental in developing a facility in Nicaragua that now serves more than 130 children with special needs. He has distributed tens of thousands of pounds of rice and beans to churches in Cuba and has been actively involved in food pantries, homeless shelters, and numerous other local missions.

Wilson credits the church for transforming his life, stating that his faith in Jesus was both birthed and nurtured within the church.

He graduated from Thornville Sheridan High School in 1982 and earned a bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism from The Ohio State University in 1986. He holds a Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary (1990) and a Doctor of Ministry from United Seminary (1994).

His wife, Nancy, is a fourth-grade teacher for Columbus City Schools. They are the parents of an adult son, Chase. Their son Bradley passed away in 2009 after a lifetime of special needs challenges. Infant sons JC (1988) and Dominic (1997) also passed away.

Bishop Jung Announces Cabinet Appointments

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung intends to appoint the Rev. Wes Souders and the Rev. Don Wilson to the West Ohio Conference Cabinet effective July 1. Souders will serve the Scioto River District while Wilson will serve the Western Lakes District.



“I have invited these pastors to serve on the Cabinet because their lives and ministries are grounded in spiritual leadership. Their integrity and adaptability will be great blessings to their districts and the Cabinet,” said Bishop Jung. According to the bishop, the two new superintendents were selected through a communal discernment process.

Rev. Wes Souders

Wes didn't grow up in The United Methodist Church, but after dedicating his life to Christ in 1992 at Central UMC in Springfield, he found his home there. He first felt called to ministry in 1997. Souders believes his primary calling is to help people fall in love with God and respond to that love through mission. Passionate about lay leadership, Wes strives to empower and equip laity to engage in meaningful ministry within their communities and beyond.

“I am humbled and nervously excited that Bishop Jung has chosen me to serve the church as a district superintendent,” Souders said. “As followers of Jesus, I believe our best days are ahead of us.”

He was born and raised in Springfield, Ohio, and graduated from South High School in 1985. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts/Public Relations from Ohio Northern University in 1989.

Souders spent several years working in teaching and sales before launching marketing divisions for two different companies in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 2003, he transitioned from the business world to ministry, beginning his Master of Divinity studies at United Theological Seminary in Dayton. He graduated in 2006 and was commissioned that same year. In 2009, he was ordained as an Elder.

His pastoral journey includes serving as Associate Pastor at St. Mark's in Fairfield, Lead Pastor at Jacksonburg, and Pastor at Chillicothe-Trinity. He has been actively involved in the District and Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry, serving in leadership roles, including Chair and Co-Chair of District Committees. Additionally, he is a member of the Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation.

Married to Jenny, a retired high school guidance counselor, they are the parents of an adult son, Benjamin.

Rev. Don Wilson

Rev. Wilson is originally from South Carolina, where he grew up on a family farm in Lake City. Raised in a Christian household by his parents alongside his three brothers and four sisters, he learned the values of hard work, honesty, and dedication at an early age.

As a teenager, Don became a professing believer and discerned his call to ministry during undergraduate school. With years of service experience, he became an ordained Elder in The United Methodist Church. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Francis Marion University, specializing in Psychology and History, and earned his Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary.

Rev. Wilson's ministry has taken him around the world. As a Mission Intern with the General Board of Global Ministries, he served in Zambia and Zimbabwe, gaining valuable international experience. He also worked as a church and community worker in Little Rock, Arkansas, serving at Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church and with

the Better Community Developers program. His pastoral journey has included congregations in Fort Smith and Little Rock, AR; Dayton, Columbus, and Cincinnati, OH. He currently serves as pastor of Covenant United Methodist Church in Springfield.

Rev. Wilson aims to create inclusive faith communities that welcome individuals regardless of race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, mental capacity, or physical ability.

“It is a great honor for me to receive the invitation from Bishop Jung to serve God and the church in this capacity. I look forward to the joys and challenges that await and welcome your prayers,” said Rev. Wilson.

He is the father of an adult son, Caleb, and grandfather to Charles Jethro Wilson. Caleb and his wife, Christina Joy, are expecting another son in March.

GO AWARDS Celebrate Innovation In Ministry

Last Sunday evening, 95 churches in the West Ohio Conference received more than \$650,000 in grants celebrating innovation in ministry. The Bishop’s Go Awards recognized over 120 new ministries throughout the conference.



Music filled the air. “God is on the move in West Ohio,” said Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, who greeted each award recipient.

“When we care, when we love, when we really relate to each other, when we are confident in Christ Jesus, we can be the hands of God. We can be ambassadors of Jesus Christ. We can be seed planters in the world,” he said.

Congratulations to all of our Western Lakes District churches!

[Click here](#) to read more.

United Methodists See Loss, Offer Relief

As wind-blown wildfires ravage Los Angeles County, United Methodists are doing what they can to offer shelter and address immediate needs.



They are also starting to count their own losses — which include the destruction of church members’ homes and the buildings of at least two United Methodist churches.

“I’ve never seen anything like it in my life, and I’ve been through two earthquakes and other fires,” said the Rev. Garth Gilliam, superintendent of the [California-Pacific Conference](#)’s North District. “I’ve never seen the vast scope of blocks and blocks of homes just gone.”

[Read more](#) from Heather Hahn, United Methodist Communications

To support this and other U.S. disaster response and recovery efforts, [donate to UMCOR here](#).

Nominate for the Harry Denman Award?

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award program honors United Methodists in each annual conference whose exceptional ministry of evangelism – expressed in Word (what), Sign

(why), and Deed (how) – brings people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. To read more, [click here](#).

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2025 Harry Denman Evangelism Award: [click here](#) to download and complete the form with your nomination. Please submit the form and supporting documents to mgrace@wocumc.org, or mail them to West Ohio Conference, Attn. Mariellyn Grace, 32 Wesley Blvd, Worthington, OH 43085. Nominations are due by March 15, 2025.

West Ohio Green Church Training is February 23

The West Ohio Conference is excited to present the first Green Church Training for local churches, coming Sunday, February 23, 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! The training must be attended by at least two people from each church (either two lay or one lay, one clergy). After completing the training, churches will either create a Green Team (if they do not already have one) or complete a green project at their church. Cost of the training is \$50 for a church team of two people (additional church members are welcome to attend at \$10 per person). Scholarships are available for churches with financial need. Please register all participants from your church at the same time. For more information, contact mgrace@wocumc.org. Register here: [Green Church Training - February 23 | West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church](#)



Resources for Celebrating Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time to celebrate the contributions of Black Americans, reflect on our shared history, and commit ourselves to the ongoing work of racial justice. As United Methodists, we are called to stand against racism. Our Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church and our Book of Resolutions affirm our commitment to racial justice and reconciliation. Pastors, congregations, and faith communities are encouraged to use this time to deepen your understanding and take tangible steps toward justice.

Resources are available from the General Board of Church and Society and the General Commission on Race and Religion. In addition, the East Ohio Conference has developed Sunday school lessons for children to equip them with historical knowledge and a theological framework for racial justice called *All in God's Image*. [Click here](#) to review these resources and more.

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

Carpool To the MLK Event February 23

Did you want to attend the MLK event on Feb 23, 2025 and didn't want to drive alone? We have an option for you.

CARPOOLING with three easy steps:

- Review options below
- Click on District/Church that works best for you.
- Register (please provide contact info for updates)
-

TRANSPORTED BY VAN - (ONE LOCATION AVAILABLE) GMR District, New Vision UMC, 4400 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, 45229 - use same steps as carpooling

We have collected a few churches along with their addresses that are graciously allowing us to use their parking lots to carpool from. When signing up, please provide your full name, a phone number and email address so you can be reached to be provided info the Friday before.

The address of the event is: Garfileld Memorial UMC, 3650 Lander Rd, Cleveland, OH 44124 Please notice in the location on the registration section that we have provided the approximate driving time it should take from the location you have chosen to Cleveland.

Should you have any questions, please email Lesley Moore at lmoore@wocumc.org

[Sign up to carpool here](#)

New Emerging Generations Resources

With a new year, some new and exciting things are happening within the area of Emerging Generations.

• We have an [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 will grow as the year goes on.

• Looking for a [Family Ministry based Lenten Devotional](#)? We've got that on the Emerging Gen website ready for your congregation. If you need this resource in a different language, we are happy to provide you with that as well.

• [Emerging Generations Connections](#) is a new monthly way 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, Director of Camps, Retreats, and Next Gen Engagement for the West Ohio Conference (amcarley@wocumc.org or 380-223-9369).





ALL IN COMMUNITY

Wellness Wednesdays

PROVIDED BY:



LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH II ONLINE

12:30-1:30PM (ZOOM ROOM OPENS @ 11:30AM)

ZOOM REGISTRATION:

[HTTPS://WOCUMC.ZOOM.US/MEETING/REGISTER/5TOA3DKASQGAMW6T7B3XGA](https://wocumc.zoom.us/join/5toA3dKaSQGAmw6T7b3XGA)

We cannot do this thing called life without God and without one another. And so, we want to continue undergirding you personally with education, tools and techniques that promote well-being in mind, body, and spirit .

Wellness Wednesdays provide a safe online space, a brave space, to receive a good tip on how to maintain health and well-being in the midst of life's challenges. Focused on living out the Scriptures and being present for those who are impacted by criminal justice systems, this time together provides real-time conversation and relevant education around creative ways to care for ourselves as we co-labor in "doing justice."

Join this online community as we address and uplift the critical need for nurturing among our All In ministry servants and community partners.

Presenter: Dr. Camisha Chambers, AIC Nurturing Communities Coordinator
nurturingcoordinator@gmail.com

Zoom Registration:

<https://wocumc.zoom.us/meeting/register/5toA3dKaSQGAmw6T7b3XGA>

UMCom Online Trainings

From how to create a Facebook group to a course on welcoming people to your church, United Methodist Communications offers a variety of free courses that can help your church communicate better with your community! [FIND COURSES HERE](#)

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**
-

Foundation for Evangelism Grants

Equipping the Local Church Grants from the Foundation for Evangelism will be "awarded to small and medium church congregations, or clusters of churches working together, in a Wesleyan-tradition denomination. The grant is intended to help launch an experiment or initiative to share the Gospel in word and deed, build relationships, and invite others into a discipleship journey with Jesus." Grant awards are \$5,000 or \$10,000 and applications are open through February. Visit their [website](#) 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.

Our 2025 Annual Conference is May 28-31

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. 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. Registration will open on March 1. For more information, [click here](#).

At large members are needed to represent the Western Lakes District. If you are interested in serving, please contact Cortney at creed@wocumc.org.



VIM Team Leader Training March 8

Are you planning a mission journey in 2025 or beyond? Join West Ohio for a Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Team Leader Training! With an experienced team leader as instructor, you will learn how to plan and lead a mission experience in Ohio, the United States, or around the world. You will also be provided with checklists, timelines, team forms, and practical resources for nurturing the spiritual life of your team. A background check is required.

Cost: \$35 (training, materials & lunch)

Deadline to register: March 4

Sat, 03/08/2025 - 09:00 AM - Sat, 03/08/2025 - 01:00 PM

Aley United Methodist Church

4143 Kemp Rd, Beavercreek, OH 45431

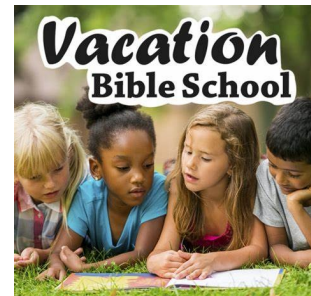
Contact Mariellyn Grace at mgrace@wocumc.org

Price \$35.00

[Register Now!](#)

UM Foundation of Ohio VBS Mini Grants

Applications for VBS mini-grants will open on January 27, thanks to the generosity of a major donor who invested her resources into honoring her family's legacy through an endowment with the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio. Grants of \$250-\$1000 will be available for curriculum materials, supplies, staff costs, or other expenses related to the production of Vacation Bible School programs in West Ohio churches.



Applications are due by February 28. Additional consideration will be given to those serving rural and underserved communities. Contact Maddy DeWitt at 380-223-9229 or mdewitt@wocumc.org for more information. VBS Grant Seminar Zoom Link: <https://wocumc.zoom.us/j/88190772238>

Lakeside Clergy Renewal Scholarships

As people of faith, keeping "Sabbath" is essential to maintaining one's relationship with God. For clergy to truly have a Sabbath, it is often necessary to get away from home! However, the cost of travel is always a consideration.



Lakeside Chautauqua provides a place and also helps with the cost. United Methodist clergy may apply for a Renewal Scholarship that will provide hotel lodging (up to 3 nights) in the Fountain Inn. You are invited to take time with God along the beautiful shores of Lake Erie for rest and renewal. You can use this unstructured time for prayer, planning, and mediation. The time is yours. Lakeside Chautauqua provides accommodation free of charge. [Click here](#) for the application due February 15, 2025

Employment Opportunity - Music/Worship Leader

Asbury United Methodist Church seeks a music leader to lead music at our Sunday services. The person filling this position will work with the pastor and pianist to conduct meaningful, spiritually-enriching services.

Skills: This person will have the vocal skills to lead the congregation in the singing of hymns and perform occasional special music pieces. It is preferred— but not required— that this person can also play an instrument(s) to provide accompaniment with our pianist. While our services are currently more traditional in style, those who have a background in contemporary worship will be considered and are encouraged to apply.

Time Commitment: Sunday mornings from approximately 10:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Other times outside of Sunday services for worship planning and preparation, special services, or church functions may be required as well, but on a limited basis.

Character: The person filling this role should be punctual, come prepared for services, and have a strong sense of professionalism.

Faith Background: Though we are a United Methodist congregation, candidates from other denominations are more than welcome to apply.

Pay Rate: To be determined dependent upon skill level and experience.

Contact: To apply or inquire further, please email Pastor Jordan McKenzie at jlmckenzie@gmail.com. You may also call the church at (937) 964-1370.

Church Information Asbury United Methodist Church is a small but very active congregation in North Hampton, Ohio, approximately ten minutes outside of Springfield. Its mission is to share the love of Jesus with the Northwestern community and beyond.

Ohio Minimum Wage Increases

Please note that **Ohio's minimum wage** has increased from **\$10.45 to \$10.70 per hour**, effective **January 1, 2025**. As a result, **new labor posters** reflecting this increase must be posted by the effective date (January 1, 2025). While these posters can be costly, **free downloadable labor posters** are available. Please see the following link to access and print the required poster. Please post the updated Ohio minimum wage poster as soon as possible.

[Download Ohio Minimum Wage Poster.](#)

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

Rev. Charles Amon Shook passed away November 27, 2024 at the age of 96. Charles was a lifelong preacher and teacher. He grew up in Maryland, but spent his lengthy retirement years in Florida. During his professional life, he served churches in Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Florida (Cedar Grove, Baltimore Conf 1951; In School, Memorial UMC, Beverly MA 1954; Buckeystown, Baltimore Conf 1958; Dept Children Publishing Genl Bd Ed, Baltimore Conf 1960; Faculty, Boston Univ School of Theol, Baltimore Conf 1966; Dayton Christ, WOC 1972; Epworth (T) 1978; Ch of the Saviour (C) 1986). He also taught at the Boston University School of Theology, where he earned a PhD.

For forty years, Charlie was married to Katherine Olewiler. They were the parents of four children, Karen, Steve, Cyndia and Jeff. In 2003, he married Lois Finley. In so doing, he also united with popular "Mama Lo" and her children, Scott and Susan. Charlie's major interests were religion, music, literature, and sports. He was also fascinated by games and puzzles of every variety. In their retirement years, Charlie and Lois were active members of the Longboat Island Chapel, where Charlie did much of his teaching and preaching.

A memorial service was held on December 15th, 2024 at the chapel on the campus of Boston University School of Theology. The family asks that donations be made to the Longboat Island Chapel 6200 Gulf of Mexico Dr., Longboat Key, FL 34228.

2025 Appointments

Appointments

The list of pastoral appointments beginning January 1, 2025, 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

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