



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

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WLD Important Information Volume 43-March 7, 2025

Jots From Jim...

There's an old saying which says "If you do not have something good to say then don't say anything at all." Recently President Trump said something like, "There is nothing I can say to make the other side happy." Others quickly add their words into an extremely politicized dialogue. Some will say that silence is violence. Others feel that leaders need to speak out on every injustice happening in the world. Others become so weary with the rhetoric that they quietly tune out of any conversation. Before long all conversation breaks down, frustration boils over, and you feel like writing a "Jots from Jim" is simply not worth it. There's nothing I can say to make everyone happy.



But if I felt called to make everyone feel happy perhaps I should have answered a call to become a circus clown. It would have been much easier to just pass out balloons, wear a wig, and walk in oversized shoes. But I wasn't called to be a clown. I was called to be a pastor.

My Grandpa Wilson once said, "If you make someone laugh today you have done them more good than any doctor can do." I've seen my Dad inherit that same mindset. However, my oldest sister is quick to point out that if nobody is laughing at what you said it might not be as funny as you think it is. Mercy sakes. It wears me out.

I remember standing in front of a congregation as their superintendent saying, "I believe in Jesus Christ just like you do, crucified and risen." Well, that wasn't good enough. Someone shouted out "...and coming again." Ok. Ok. I believe in Jesus Christ, crucified, risen AND coming again. Another night I said, "I have my foot on the Bible just like you do." The harsh rebuttal was, "That's your problem, you only have one foot on the Bible." Ok. Ok. I have both feet, all ten toes, on the Bible.

Need I go on?

Eventually the Christian witness becomes softer until it goes completely silent. What's my answer? During this season of Lent I want to make an intentional effort to speak like Jesus. In other words, I want to pay special attention on the red letters in the Gospels. To speak like Jesus I need to remind myself what Jesus said, how He spoke it, to whom He spoke it to, and do my best to understand why He said what He said.

It won't be easy. When McDonalds continues to give me sweet tea instead of unsweet tea it will take an intentional effort to speak like Jesus. When those folks who drive like fools on the road cut me off it will take a holy focus to speak like Jesus. When I watch the news it will take divine intervention to speak like Jesus as I add my commentary to current events to those who are in my circles.

But if I am successful for the 40 days of Lent to speak more like Jesus did, I know my Easter morning shouts of “He Is Risen” will be a little more pure and holy.

Jesus take the wheel, and my tongue, and help me during this season of Lent to speak like Jesus.

Jim

Our 2025 Annual Conference is May 28-31 Register Now

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 opened 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.

Nominate for the Harry Denman Award? Deadline March 15

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.

Workers' Compensation Trainings

In conjunction with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the West Ohio Conference will host three Zoom meetings about important topics for clergy and local churches.

The next training will be: March 18 - Time: 10:30-11:30

Topics Covered: · Slips, Trips and Falls · Safe Driving

Zoom Link: <https://wocumc.zoom.us/j/85481770294>

[Click here](#) for the entire schedule.

Creating Brave Space

The pillars of restorative justice build upon the what of putting things right through the lens of addressing the universal needs of human dignity. But how do you move to the next step and create an environment that allows for healing to begin?



This month on Ministry Mondays, we will gain an understanding and begin developing the nuanced components needed to help you create a brave space within your own ministry context.

Monday, March 24, beginning at 7:00pm on ZOOM.

ADVANCED REGISTRATION is APPRECIATED

<https://qrco.de/bfmNpW>

Cost: FREE

Questions and requests for the ZOOM link can be directed to Jami Nathan, AIC Ministries Coordinator, by email (jami.nathan.22@gmail.com) or by phone (419-591-9717).

Deacon Formation Event - Building Community - The Font & Table Thursday, March 27 from 10am - 2:30pm

Deacons across all stages of ministry—including provisional, full, and retired—as well as inquiring and certified deacon candidates are invited for a day of learning at the West Ohio Conference Center on March 27. Together, you will explore how deacons serve as bridges in the church and world, particularly in leading through the sacraments and fostering communion.

Your time together will include:

- Interactive sessions and discussions.
- Best practices for engaging in ministry at the font and table.
- Opportunities to connect with other deacons and candidates in a supportive community.

[Register here](#). Hurry! Registration ends March 20th

Learn to Serve - Laity Workshop - April 5th & 12th 9am-noon

- Do you, or have you wanted to, assist in Christian ministry or worship at Church or in your community?
- Would you like an opportunity to discern your possibilities or just get additional information?

A Van Wert area cluster is offering a Learn to Serve workshop, planned with input from the district superintendents and Julie Carter, Director of Faith Formation & Lay Servant Ministry. This training is hopeful in leading laity into increased involvement of our church ministries and conference trainings. If there are questions, please reach out to Rev. Charles Schmunck at schmunce@gmail.com or 419-438-0903.

Pastors, please share this information with laity in your church that you think would benefit from this training.

For more information and Registration form, Click [HERE](#).



Annual Committee Reports are Available Now for Completion by June 1

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee

- The **Local Church Pastor Assessment Form**, which should be completed by the pastor



- The **Pastoral SPRC Assessment form**, which should be completed by the SPRC
- The **SMART Goal Formation Plan Guide**, which should be completed by the pastor and the SPRC together

Trustee Reports

- The **Trustee Legal and Property Report** – This report should be presented at the church's fall annual conference and can be completed online.
- The **Parsonage Inspection** (if applicable) - Note that the Parsonage Inspection Form also requires the signature of the SPRC Chairperson. You can find the parsonage standards [here](#). This report can be completed online.
- An **Accessibility Audit**, which is required in the Book of Discipline. This report can be completed online.
- The **Green Church Audit**, which is required per General Conference action in 2024. This report should be completed then uploaded online.

Church Historian

The West Ohio Conference Commission on Archives and History is requesting that each congregation in the West Ohio Conference submit an updated **Local Church History Survey Form** this spring. If you currently don't have a recorded church history or a Church Historian, please involve your members who may best recall your church's history and start the documentation process.

Finance Committee

Annual Fund Balance Report (Audit). Please take this report and financial review process seriously. When there is mismanagement of funds it is not only the dollar loss that is significant, but the loss of credibility, energy for ministry, and focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ, as well. Remember that *this Fund Balance Report should be done by someone who does not have access to incoming or outgoing funds*.

All report forms can be found by logging on to the West Ohio Conference website and navigating to MyChurch / Annual Reports.

2025 LSM Calendar

We have begun scheduling the lay servant ministry classes for 2025. Classes that are scheduled so far are listed at the following link:

<https://www.westohioumc.org/leadership/lay-servant-ministries-class-schedule>

Some of our upcoming classes and registrations are as follows:

Hocking River District - United Methodist Heritage

(February 28th and March 1st)

[Register Here](#)

Great Miami River – Introduction to Lay Ministry (March 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 2025)

[Register Here](#)

Great Miami River – Public Prayer (March 30, April 1, 3, 6, 8, 2025)

[Register Here](#)

Olentangy River District – Introduction to Lay Ministry: The Basic Course (April 4 and 5, 2025)

[Register Here](#)

Olentangy River District – Discover Your Spiritual Gifts (May 16 & 17)

[Register Here](#)

Hocking River District – Discovering Spiritual Gifts (June 6 & 7, 2025)

[Register Here](#)



Great Miami River - Ministry with the Forgotten - Advanced Course (June 16, 19, 23, 26, 30, 2025)

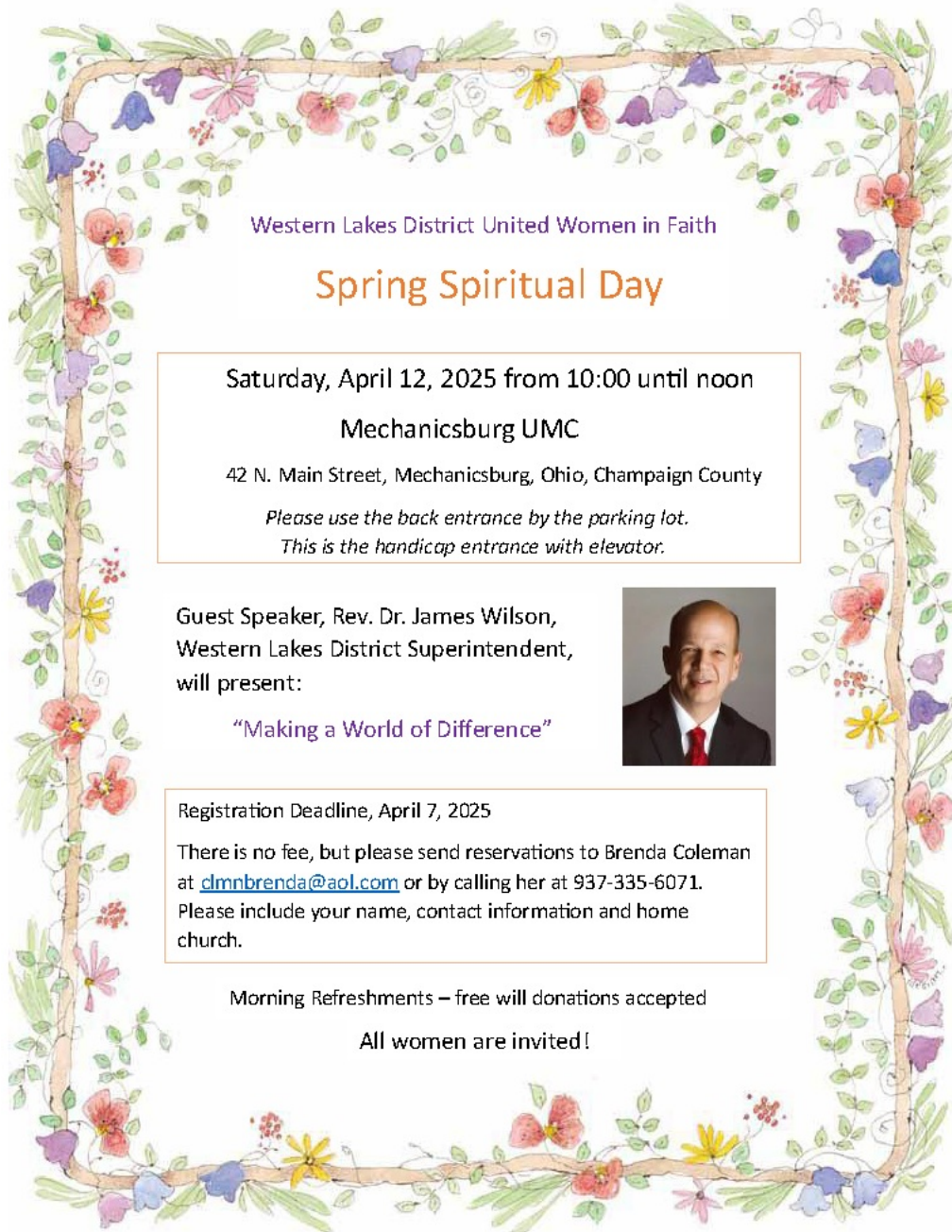
[Register Here](#)

Hocking River District – Basic Course (September 12 and 13, 2025)

[Register Here](#)

Hocking River District – Loving People and Planet in God’s Name (October 31 and November 1, 2025)

[Register Here](#)



Western Lakes District United Women in Faith

Spring Spiritual Day

Saturday, April 12, 2025 from 10:00 until noon


Mechanicsburg UMC

42 N. Main Street, Mechanicsburg, Ohio, Champaign County

*Please use the back entrance by the parking lot.
This is the handicap entrance with elevator.*

Guest Speaker, Rev. Dr. James Wilson,
Western Lakes District Superintendent,
will present:

“Making a World of Difference”



Registration Deadline, April 7, 2025

There is no fee, but please send reservations to Brenda Coleman at clmnbrenda@aol.com or by calling her at 937-335-6071. Please include your name, contact information and home church.

Morning Refreshments – free will donations accepted

All women are invited!

Please register with Brenda Coleman at clmnbrenda@aol.com or by calling 937-335-6071.

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**

Ohio Methodist Historical Society Convocation & Annual Meeting May 2nd & 3rd

What a wonderful opportunity we have to tell our faith story. Telling our faith story gives us an opportunity to share how God has worked in our lives. It is a way to Praise and Honor God. We want to focus on these stories this year and make sure we use all of our senses. We hope you will come join us for an unforgettable experience. We hope that it will inspire you to explore different ways to tell your faith story as well as your Church's faith story.

[More Information](#)

Hands of Hope Challenge

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](#)

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

Barbara J. Stewart, age 79, of Oregon, and formerly of Maumee, Ohio, passed away peacefully on Friday, February 21, 2025. Barbara was born to William and Mildred (Clark)

Moritz in Dayton, Ohio.

Barbara was the wife of Rev. James R. Stewart who served a number of congregations in Kansas and West Ohio (Alexander EUB, Kansas 1964; Mc Cracken, Kansas -Yoked With Alexander EUB 1966; Cherry Grove (C) 1968; Bowling Green Trinity (T) 1984; Waterville (T) 1994; Weston (T) 2005) until he retired 7/1/2001.

As a pastor's wife, she was always very active in the congregations her husband served. She was strong in her Faith leading in everything the J.O.Y. (Jesus, Others, You). Whether the women's groups, craft bazaars, the Ladies Over 80 luncheon at church, or cooking and feeding an army. She was a very faithful caregiver to her parents as they were aging and very much enjoyed being a devoted mother and grandmother.

Barbara is survived by her husband, Rev. James Roby Stewart; children, Jennifer (Todd) Wuertz and Jay (Linda) Stewart; grandchildren, Shelby (Joe) Staudinger, Madison Stewart, and Conner Wuertz; great-grandchild, Kimber; and brother, William Moritz Jr. She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother, Richard Moritz.

A visitation was held at Maumee United Methodist Church, 405 Sackett St., Maumee, OH 43537, Friday, February 28, 2025. Memorial contributions are appreciated to Maumee United Methodist Church.

www.freckchapel.com

Shirley Jean Woodman Dewire passed away on March 2, 2025, at age 89. Shirley is survived by her loving husband, Rev. Dr. Norman E "Ned" Dewire, married in 1957, and by two daughters Cathy (Bill) Gibson, Kettering, Ohio, and Deborah (Peter) Bolmida, Centerville (Dayton) Ohio; cherished Nana to grandchildren Matthew Dewire (Luciana), Rebeka Bolmida (Gus), and Rachael Watchorn (Cory), great grandsons Benjamin Adams, Liam Dewire, and great granddaughter Emily Rae Adams; sister-in-law Janet (Bill) Pfeiffer; nieces Jeanne Elam, Lorri (Greg) Stepp, nephew Bill (Colleen) Pfeiffer.

She was born on June 19, 1935, in Catawba, Ohio to Pern and Emily Davisson Woodman. She was preceded in death by her father, Pern; her mother, Emily; and sister (and brother-in-law) Marilyn Woodman Holleron and Tom Holleron. Shirley was a mother, teacher, and involved in community and church activities. A 1953 graduate of Northeastern High School, Springfield, Ohio, she then graduated from Ohio University (B.S. Ed) in 1957 and did graduate work at Wayne State University (Detroit, MI) and Montclair State University (Montclair, NJ). Shirley and Ned started United Methodist ministry on the Jacksonville Circuit (Athens Co.), 1957-58; then the Charlton City United Methodist Church (Charlton, MA), 1958-1962; and Central United Methodist Church, Detroit, MI 1962-67.

During her first year of marriage, she taught full time in the Glouster School District (Athens County, Ohio). While in Montclair NJ, she was involved in the Essex County YWCA, did volunteer work for the World YWCA, was engaged in community activities, including being a Deacon in the Central Presbyterian Church, and taught in Head Start program in Newark NJ schools. While in Montclair, she began her lifelong entertainment of people from around the world. She and Ned traveled to more than 50 nations, mostly for church work. She taught at United Theological Seminary in Dayton. After moving to Columbus area, she became active in Church World Service (including State Board) and served fifteen years as trustee of United Methodist Children's Home, twelve years a member of the West Ohio Board of Ordained Ministry, and member of local chapter of PEO as well as state board. A lot of social life revolved around the Methodist Theological School in Ohio for twenty years.

Memorial Service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, March 15 at Friendship Village Dublin, 6000 Riverside Drive, Dublin, Ohio. Inurnment will be later at David's Cemetery, Dayton, Ohio. In lieu of flowers, please make contributions, in her name, to the Scholarship Fund at Friendship Village of Dublin or to the Shirley and Ned Dewire Endowed Scholarship in the Patton College at Ohio University (OU Foundation, PO Box 869, Athens, OH 45701

[Read Full Obituary](#)

Pastor Todd Frail passed away March 2, 2025 after a battle with cancer but won the

victory of life over death. Todd was born in Lima, Ohio, on March 7, 1945, to the late Richard and Dorothy (Werking) Frail. He was one of three children, with two sisters, Phyllis (Roger) Born, who predeceased him in 2020, and Donna (John) Osborn, who survives.

Todd graduated from Lima Senior High School in 1963. He was accepted into the school of Architecture at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, graduating in 1967 in General Business. From 1967 to 1970 Todd attended United Theological Seminary in Dayton, graduating with a master's in divinity.

In 1971, Todd met the love of his life, Linda Anderson. They were engaged in October of that year and married on June 24, 1972. Together, they shared a life of service and ministry. Pastor Frail was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church and served for over 50 years, pastoring in different UMC Churches in the West Ohio Conference (Ridge Charge (L) 1968; Ridge-Kemp Charge (L) 1969; Athens First Assoc (A) 1970; Whitehouse Zion (T) 1973; Fremont Trinity (T) 1978; Stonybrook (CN) 1983; Troy First (DN) 1993; Westwood (C) 1997; Findlay St Andrews (F) 2001), where he formed lifelong friendships and shared his evangelistic mission. He retired in the Newark area, where he continued his ministry at First United Methodist Church in Newark.

Todd and Linda embraced life together. They traveled extensively, including memorable trips to Jerusalem with their two sons as a high school graduation gift, and to Hawaii and Germany with their daughter. Linda, a dedicated school teacher, taught in the communities where Todd pastored, and together they impacted the lives of many.

Todd is survived by his loving wife, Linda; two sons, Gabriel and Seth; a daughter, Megan (Eric) Schafer; and four grandchildren, Eowyn and Damien Frail, Memphis and Logan Schafer.

Services for Todd will be held on Friday, March 7, at First United Methodist Church, 88 N. Fifth Street, Newark, Ohio. Visitation will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., with a service immediately following. Donations in Todd's memory may be made to First United Methodist Church in Newark, 88 N. Fifth Street, Newark, Ohio 43055 or to a charity of your choice.

The Newark Chapel of Henderson-Van Atta-Stickle Funeral & Cremation Service is assisting the family with arrangements.

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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