



Western Lakes District

News from The United Methodist Church

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

WLD Important Information

Jots From Jim...

I remember going to a new church and in the first six months I was called dictator, betrayer, evil, and foolish. Other than that, we got off to a pretty good start together. Mercy. The names we give and the names we receive speak volumes of who we are and who we want others to be.

Recently I got a new name. "Candy Man." It was said in reference to a recent mission trip I was taking to Cuba. Not knowing the reasons behind why I do what I do in the mission field, this name basically implied that my approach to missions could be much-improved. Can I say it again? Mercy.



I take the name in stride and use it to make myself a better Christian. My "candy" is rice and beans. I have orchestrated the distribution of at least one-half million pounds of rice and beans over the years literally around the world. Did it change systemic poverty? No. Are people still hungry? Yes. Did it make any difference to the kingdom of God? The Candy Man believes it has made a world of difference.

Recently in Cuba we distributed rice to a community hit by a tornado, a high-risk maternity unit, fellow United Methodists in two communities, and several hard-working Cubans who do so much in helping others. A Cuban friend said something like, "You have made a difference today. God will send someone else tomorrow."

Maybe we dream too big. Maybe we over-reach in our efforts to bring about systemic change to so many problems in the world. Can we change things for the good with a little bit of candy for today? Maybe. We are called to be faithful with "TODAY" and allow ourselves to be used by God in God's "DAILY" plans. We are somebody's "tomorrow."

A great song by Sammy Davis, Jr. was "The Candy Man." A portion of the refrain had the words "The Candy Man can cause he mixes it with love and makes the world taste good." There's the key. If you mix it with love it will make the world a better place.

Bottom line? Find your candy. Mix it with love. Give it to the world. Jesus said, "Do you love me? If so, feed my sheep." He didn't call us to psycho-analyze sheep. He did not call us to alphabetize the flock by name and create systems to maximize self-grazing. The Good Lord simply said, "Feed my sheep." Sounds to me like the Candy Man might be a pretty good name after all.

Jim



2024 West Ohio Annual Conference: God is Able

The 55th session of the West Ohio Annual Conference is set to convene from Wednesday, May 29 through Saturday, June 1, 2024, at Capital University in Bexley, Ohio. This year's theme, "God is Able," draws inspiration from Ephesians 3:20-21, promising a gathering that celebrates the limitless power of God.

The conference will offer a rich tapestry of events, with powerful worship experiences at the core. Members will engage in thoughtful reflections on the scripture, exploring the profound message in these verses. A significant aspect of the conference includes voting on crucial business matters that will shape the future of the West Ohio Conference. Members will actively participate in decision-making processes that impact churches within the conference.

Furthermore, the conference will be a time of celebration as it marks the retirement of esteemed Bishop Gregory and Mrs. Cynthia Palmer. Their dedicated service and profound impact on the West Ohio Conference will be honored with heartfelt tributes and expressions of gratitude. The conference will also shine a spotlight on the ordination of clergy, symbolizing a commitment to nurturing new leaders and fostering spiritual growth within The United Methodist Church.

"We are thrilled to come together under the theme 'God is Able,'" said Rev. Lou Seipel, Chair of the Annual Conference Planning Team. "This conference is not just a gathering; it's a testament to our shared commitment to faith, community, and the transformative power of God's grace."

Registration for conference members will open March 5. There will be limited guest seating; however, the conference is expected to be livestreamed on the home page of the West Ohio Conference website: westohioumc.org. More details will be made available in NewsNET, the conference website, and social media channels.



Register Now -Bishop Palmer General Conference Town Hall March 19th

On January 30, Bishop Gregory Palmer held the first of two Town Hall meetings regarding the upcoming General Conference. After his opening comments,

Bishop Palmer answered questions that were submitted by West Ohioans. The second Town Hall is scheduled for March 19th at noon. You may submit your questions to: townhallquestions@wocumc.org

[Watch Video Here](#)

[Register Here for March 19th Zoom](#)

2023 Statistical Reporting

2023 statistical reporting information was recently emailed out to pastors, treasurers, administrative council/leadership team chairs, and church office administrators.

These reports are due by April 15th, and online submission is preferred. Providing accurate information is essential, as this reporting affects how your 2025 apportionments are calculated. You can access all information that you need to complete those reports [here](#).

For questions around these reports contact Jack Frost, jfrost@wocumc.org.

Annual Reporting

The information for the church and clergy Annual Reports has also been updated recently and is available for access. These reports include the Fund Balance Report, Trustee Legal & Property, Parsonage Inspection, Clergy Self-Assessment and SPRC Assessments. They can be found on the district website on the Resource tab or by clicking [HERE](#). They are due June 1st.



Nominations for Denman Award Due March 15

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award, sponsored by The Foundation for Evangelism, honors United Methodists in each Annual Conference whose exceptional ministry of evangelism brings people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. What distinguishes a Harry Denman Evangelism Award recipient is the commitment to consistently introduce others to the Good News of Jesus Christ in all ministry settings. Their ministry is exceptional for the number of new Christ followers who credit encounters with this person as critical in helping to start or reignite their faith journey. One award may be given in each category: clergy, laity, and youth. Click the link below to download the nomination form. Nominations are due March 15.

[More information...](#)

The West Ohio Conference Ministry Intern Program Applications Are Now Open

The West Ohio Conference Ministry Interns (formerly the Next Generations Leadership Ministry Intern Program) is a great opportunity for young adults who are considering ministry as a vocation to discern calls to ministry in a variety of ways. Internship placements are made with innovative and engaging congregations and church leaders throughout the West Ohio Conference. The dates for the Internship are May 29 – July 12. The stipend for the seven-week internship is \$4,000.00 provided by the West Ohio Conference. Applicants must be current college students **who are available for the duration of the Internship** and returning to college during the fall of 2024.

Please encourage students who have expressed a desire to explore a call to ministry and/or service to apply: [West Ohio Conference Ministry Intern Program | West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church \(westohiounc.org\)](#)

The Application Deadline is **March 22, 2024**, 5:00 p.m. For questions, please email Rev. Donnetta Peaks, dpeaks@wocumc.org or call 614-844-6200, 314.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the possibility of being hosted by their home church and mentored by their Pastor/Pastoral team. We do not provide housing accommodations.

West Ohio Conference Ministry Intern Program – Mentor and Host Church Application

The West Ohio Conference Ministry Interns (formerly the Next Generations Leadership Ministry Intern Program) is now taking applications for Mentors/Host Churches for the summer of 2023. For clergy and congregations with a passion for developing young leaders, this is a great opportunity to mentor a young person who has a desire to serve in the church and explore a call to ministry.

The applications are located online at [West Ohio Conference Ministry Intern Program | West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church \(westohiounc.org\)](#) The deadline for the Mentor-Host Church Application is **March 22, 2024**.

For questions, please contact Rev. Donnetta Peaks, dpeaks@wocumc.org or call 614-844-6200, 314.

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

Rev. Douglas J. Upton, 79, of Englewood, FL, passed away on February 18, 2024. He was born October 22, 1944 in Greenville, OH to parents Samuel & Celistia (Folkerth) Upton. Growing up he was active in the EUB Church in Greenville. He graduated from Greenville High School in 1962 and graduated from Ohio Northern University in 1968 with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education. He earned his Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, in 1992.

For 20 years he taught music in public schools in Ohio, including Ada, Pandora-Gilboa, and Lincolnview. He served four years as Executive Director of Youth for Christ of West Central Ohio and as Director of the Contemporaries music group. After attending seminary, he became an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church. Over the next 21 years, he served as pastor of the following Ohio churches: West Leipsic, Bethel, Mt. Victory, Ridgeway, and St. Paris. After retirement he served at Logansport (IN) Memorial Hospital as both a volunteer and chaplain. Over the years, he directed several church choirs and played in local bands. After moving to Florida four years ago, he and his wife, Julie attended and were members of Christ Venice Church. Throughout his life, he enjoyed playing his trumpet and using his musical abilities for the glory of God. Faith, family, and music were most important in his life.

Doug and his beloved wife, Julie, were high school sweethearts and were married for 58 ½ years. He was a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife Julie (Sechler), sons Steve (Christa) Upton and Dave (Jenny) Upton, and daughter Tammy (Jared) Smith. He is also survived by 5 grandchildren: Caleb (Kate) Upton, Nathan Upton, Kelsy (Drew) Campbell, Alyssa Upton, and Sarah Upton. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Cyrus Upton.

Funeral service was held Thursday, February 22 at 5:00pm at Christ Venice Church, 1475 Center Rd, Venice, FL, with visitation from 3:00-5:00pm. Graveside service and burial at Greenville Union Cemetery on Friday, March 1 at 11:00am. Memorial contributions may be given to Alzheimer's Association or Tidewell Hospice.

Mrs. Marjorie Uth passed away on Saturday, February 10, 2024.

Marjorie was preceded in death by her husband, Rev. Ralph E Uth, in 2016.

Rev. Uth and Marjorie served the West Ohio Conference from 1949 until his retirement in 1988. These are the congregations that they served during their years of ministry together: Hoytville Charge 1949; Lewisburg Charge 1953; Ironton, Immanuel 1959; Mt Blanchard 1962; West Jefferson (S) 1965; Mason (W) 1973; Delphos Trinity (L) 1978; Blanchester (W) 1984.

A memorial is being planned for April 27, 2024. [Obituary Link Here](#) Condolences may be sent to: Carol Uth, 3661 Epworth Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45211.

Events

Advanced Course: Discover Your Spiritual Gifts Being Offered

April 19 - 20 2024 - Via Zoom

Friday eve: 6:30-9 PM and Saturday 8:30 AM -5PM

Cost for Classes: \$15.00 per participant zoom

Instructors: Harry and Ann Peat

The early church knew about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts flowing from the Holy Spirit through the

believer. Today, the church is still discovering this. Learn more about how your spiritual gifts support your lay servant ministries. This course is one of the required courses for Lay Speakers.



Be sure to purchase and read the book, "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts" by Charles V. Bryant prior to the class. (using one of the following links, please purchase the text from either Cokesbury - [here](#) or Amazon - [here](#))

[Register Now](#)



United
Women
in Faith

2024 Spring Spiritual Day Western Lakes District

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 10AM-12PM
Bellefontaine First United Methodist Church 201 N.
Main St., Bellefontaine

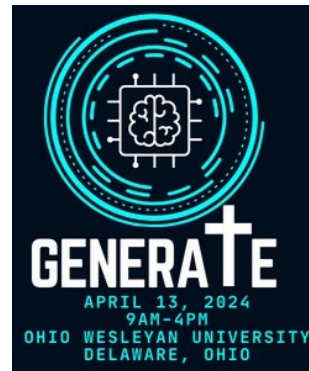
"Moving Forward Together"

Speaker: Pastor Charlotte Hefner Come, Reconnect, Make new friends
Continental breakfast will be served
All women are invited to this FREE event!

Please call Sheila Rowe at 419-230-5361 or email sheilabug100@hotmail.com for reservations by April 8th. Please provide your name, your contact info and your church name.

Is Your Congregation Looking to Grow Younger?

Join us at Generate 2024! In this one-day event, you and your team will generate momentum across generations. Hear from leaders who are experts in generating a culture of intergenerational leadership, worship, and sustainable multiplication. Plan to come away feeling empowered to cultivate a presence for all generations in your church. There are only 300 spots, so space is limited. Questions? Contact Ann Marie Carley (amcarley@wocumc.org) . [Reserve your tickets today](#)



Bryan Stevenson of "Just Mercy" Leadership Clinic March 11 - Online

Bryan Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a human rights organization will be the featured guest for Bishop Palmer's Leadership Clinic on March 11, 2024.

Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults. Mr. Stevenson has received over 50 honorary doctoral degrees and numerous awards.

He is the author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, Just Mercy, which was named by Time Magazine as one of the ten Best Books of the year. Just Mercy was adapted as a major motion picture. Mr. Stevenson is also the subject of the Emmy Award-winning HBO documentary True Justice. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government.

The first 200 to register will receive a copy of Just Mercy.

[Learn more and register at WestOhioUMC.org](https://www.westohioumc.org)



Let's Celebrate John

John G. Medaugh will turn 90 on March 19, and is hosting a celebration on **Saturday, March 16**, in the Meyer Community Room at Otterbein SeniorLife in St. Marys, Ohio, from 2-4.

John joined the Methodist ministry in 1959 and served at Lafayette, Waldo, Marion, Wheelersburg, Lancaster Camp Grounds, Lima Grace on Kibby, and Delphos Trinity, where he retired in 1996. He also served interim appointments after his retirement including Celina St Paul and Cridersville.

2024 Summer Camp Opportunities Offered in Partnership with East Ohio

West Ohio has partnered, once again, with East Ohio Camps to provide churches and families with summer camping opportunities. Former West Ohio campers, and local churches have been mailed 2024 East Ohio summer camping brochures from West Ohio. See the button below for more information.



If you are looking for options outside of East Ohio, we suggest you check out these collaborative West Ohio partners:

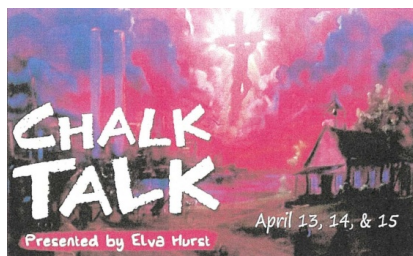
- [United Church of Christ Camp](#) in Bellville, Ohio
- [Michigan United Methodist Camping](#) across Michigan
- [First Community Church Camp](#) in Logan, Ohio

Additional youth options:

- [Senior High Christian Youth Fellowship](#) at Malone University
- [Reach Out](#) for grades 8-12 at Lakeside
- [Lakeside Institute](#) for grades 9-age 20 at Lakeside

If you would like more information about any of the above options, please contact Director of Camps, Retreats, and Next Gen Engagement, Ann Marie Carley (amcarley@gmail.com).

[East Ohio Camps...](#)



Chalk Talk - April 14th

Elva Hurst is a professional artist and author from Lancaster County, PA. Growing up in a large old order Mennonite family, she spent most of her time teaching herself art between chores on the family dairy farm. After graduating 8th grade from her one room school, she discovered the lost performance art of chalk talk.

Watch as Elva takes you and the audience through an inspiring show, sharing her stories through florescent chalk, music, and sound effects. Enjoy the grand finale as colored lights and an ultraviolet black light create beautiful effects on her artwork, ending the show with a memorable experience.

Resources



Beat the Summer Slump with Vanco's Fee-Free Promotion

While your church is busy making plans for a successful Lent and Easter season, summer will be here before we know it. With the joys of summer comes warmer weather, summer vacations and fewer members and visitors physically joining you for worship. But that doesn't have to mean a decrease in donations.

Set your church up for a strong summer of giving with the right online giving tools from Vanco. Inspire generosity and allow members and guests to give whenever and wherever the feeling of generosity is present. And get the added benefit of spring Vanco's fee-free promotion. Whether you're new to eGiving or transition from another provider, Vanco's easy-to-use giving platform, exceptional customer service and simple church management software integrations help generosity soar for the benefit of your church while saving church staff time.

Ready to let your great work inspire members to give? Sign up with Vanco before March 15, 2024 and you'll experience:

- Compelling **storytelling and visual** giving pages that bring your missions to life for anyone from first-time donors to established members.
- **Free one-on-one implementation support where we'll help you launch your online giving program with best practices used by the over 25,000 churches we work with.**
- **No processing fees on gifts, up to \$50,000 in total, received in May.**

Let Vanco help you transition from the Lenten season to a strong summer of giving. Request a demo today to learn more!

[Request a demo](#)

P.S. Feeling overwhelmed about creating your promotional materials to inspire generosity for Easter? Access our [free Easter Giving Kit](#) and gain access to free templates your church can use as is or personalize to match your church's branding.



VBS Mini-Grants Available from Foundation

Thanks to the generosity of a major donor, the United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio is pleased to announce the availability of mini-grants for VBS programs in 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.

The Clara's Kiddies/Jesse's Vine Endowment was formed in 2017 by Ketha Robbins to support VBS programs in honor of her grandmother and great-grandfather who encouraged her faith. She remembers how much fun she had during those summer days as she learned about the Bible alongside other children who were hearing about Jesus for the first time. To Ketha, this is what made, and continues to make, VBS so special. In her words, "It is a bookend. It is the start of what a person's spiritual life can become."

Applications are due by March 15 and can be completed at this [link](#). Special 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.



The list of pastoral appointments beginning July 1, 2023 can be accessed [clicking here](#).

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

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