January 11, 2021

Moving Forward: Online Leadership Training Event

Saturday, February 13, 2021 - 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

The West Ohio Conference is pleased to offer this online training to our pastors and church leadership across the conference this year, featuring three nationally-known, dynamic speakers. We hope that they will inspire you with ideas about how to navigate beyond our current environment and work together to reach others and make Disciples for Jesus Christ. Because we know that different-sized churches face different challenges, this event will feature workshop tracks focused on both small churches and on medium-sized/larger churches. Learn more and register here.
The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1, RSV

Our dear Father, we ask you to come to us from heaven and surround us with your goodness and mercy, with your light and life. We are weak, poor, and lost just when we need to stand firm and hold on. But you are faithful. You stay by us and help us. Continue to help and sustain us, we pray. Do not let our lives be lived in vain. May something of eternity be with us in all we have to face in life, so that over and over again we may find courage to start anew. Amen.

Reminder: Update Your Website with Worship Service Information

In the current environment we know that things can change very quickly. Please make sure you update your website/Facebook page with current service information so that both members and visitors can access your worship services.

Attention Treasurers and Finance Team Members:
The Apportionment Statement and Payment Process is Changing Effective 1/1/2021

You will receive one statement containing BOTH District and Conference Apportionments – listed as separate amounts. You will issue one check payable to West Ohio Conference. The Conference will transfer the District's share to their account regularly. It is especially important to include a copy of the Statement with your payment indicating how your payment should be applied between District and Conference Apportionments. Any questions, contact the District office.

IMPORTANT DATE

February 26, 2021 Year End Statistical Reports Due

2020 year-end reports were sent out last week, so look for them in the church mail.

IRS 2021 Mileage Rate

The IRS Rate for mileage goes down to $.56 for 2021 for business travel.
Let us remember in prayer those grieving the loss of their loved one, and remember in thanksgiving the life and ministry of:

Dr. Marilyn Murphree who died Monday, December 14, 2020. She was a retired pastor from the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. She served appointments at Iliff Charge and Zanesville Coburn church.

Preceding her in death was her husband, Walter H. Murphree and sister, Barbara Bowman. Surviving are her step-daughters, Janet (Everett) Havenor and Patti (Jane) Estep; step-sons, Walter E. Murphree and Sean (Tina) Murphree; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; sister, Rose (Steve) Oliver; and numerous nieces & nephews.

Visitation was held Thursday, December 17, 2020 at the Bryan & Hardwick Funeral Home. Her funeral service was held Friday, December 18, 2020 followed by her burial at Duncan Falls Cemetery. You can make memorial contributions to the Coburn UMC Scholarship Fund at 3618 Maple Avenue, Zanesville, Ohio 43701. You can also email the church at office@coburnumc.org

Rev. Richard Maurer who died Wednesday, December 16, 2020. He was a retired pastor from the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. He served appointments at Wellsville Central (East Ohio), Derby-Five Points, McArthur-Zaleski, Somerset, Carroll Shalom, Columbus Summit and Jackson Christ churches as well as Methodist Theological School of Ohio.

Preceding him in death was his sister, Zella (Maurer) Lucas; brother-in-law, Jon Cook; and sister-in-law, Cathy Cook. Surviving are his wife, Judy Maurer; children: Richard (Deborah) Maurer, Karen Maurer, Bradley Maurer (May Zia), Lynn Maurer (Mark Wyatt), Rebecca (Ty) Meyer, and Gayle Maurer; sister, Phyllis (Carson) McNeely; thirteen grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

The family is planning a memorial service for Richard at a later date. In lieu of flowers, you may donate in his memory to the charity of your choice, The Open Shelter in Columbus, Ohio, or the International Child Care (ICC) Grace Children’s Hospital in Haiti.

Bishop, Cabinet Ask for Your Prayers

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus:

We have now turned the corner and are fully into 2021. Every day that God grants us to draw breath is yet another opportunity to bring glory to God as we serve our neighbor. I continue to be filled with awe and gratitude for your faithfulness through all the opportunities and challenges.

As you read this, the district superintendents and I have begun digging into the work of appointment making. To be sure, some of this goes on throughout the year. But the Winter/Spring of the year bring it to a more intense focus as read more
It's Almost W-2 Time!

2020 W-2s are due to all employees by February 1, 2021. Information to help with preparing IRS Form W-2 for clergy, which can be complicated, can be found on the Conference website. Use the worksheet and example here as a guide for preparing your pastor's W-2. This sample spreadsheet and W-2 is just that, a sample. Your fact set may include more or fewer items to report (for example, moving expenses which are now taxable if paid or reimbursed are not in the sample).

Highlights for 2020 W-2's include:

- Moving expenses paid by churches directly to moving companies or via reimbursement to clergy are taxable and must be reported as income and included in box 1 (see the moving expense section of IRS instructions completing W-2's here).
- If your pastor received health insurance through the Conference Plan (Anthem) they received a contribution to their HSA account that should be reported. Clergy on single plans received $500 in January and July 2020 for a total of $1,000. Clergy on Family-2 or Family-3 plans received $1,000 in January and July for a total of $2,000. If two churches share in the cost of health insurance, adjust accordingly.
- All full-time clergy and some ¾-time clergy receive a $50,000 death benefit through a conference plan. This is in addition to $50,000 available through the denominational plan (CPP). The cost of group life insurance over $50,000 is taxable. To calculate the amount click here IRS Publication 15-B and go to page 14. Using your clergy’s age, take the corresponding cost and multiply by 50. That is the monthly amount. Multiply by 12 for the yearly total. This is letter “J” on the fact pattern example W-2.
- Note: If your pastor is not on the Conference health insurance plan and your church has not established its own qualified plan, direct payments to clergy to offset the cost of health insurance (for example on a spouse or other employer plan) are taxable income.

The resources referenced here and on the conference website should answer most of your questions. However, contact your payroll provider, a CPA or tax preparer if you have technical questions.

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Resisting Injustice: Leading through Divided Times

This online training will be held on Saturday, January 30th, 2021, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and features Rev. Dr. Douglas Powe, Jr. and Bishop Gregory V. Palmer. Class offerings include: Getting the Discussion Started, Having Courageous Conversations, Engaging in Immigration Reform, Engaging Young People in Social Justice, SPRC- Supporting Your Pastor in Times of Prophetic Leadership, Increasing Your Cultural Competency, and Pastors - Preaching to a Divided Congregation. Information and Registration.
Northwest Plains District is Available by Phone & Email

The Northwest Plains District remains closed to visitors but the work of the staff continues. You should expect responses by telephone and email. Messages left in the general voicemail will be forwarded to staff the same day. Thank you.

Corona Virus Resources

CAN Town Hall Resources
Rev. Linda Middelberg and Rev. Karen Cook recently held Town Hall meetings in the district on returning to worship. Click here to see the resources and best practices that were shared during those meetings. This information includes a sample congregational survey, proposed reopening plan template, social distancing seating capacity calculations, etc.

Suggested Guidelines and Considerations for Returning to Worship
To print or download these guidelines click here.

Cokesbury Offers Worship Supplies including, masks, sanitizers, signage, etc. See more here.

One Stop Corona Virus Resources kept UPDATED can be found here.

CDC Guidance for Communities of Faith can be found here.

State of Ohio Best Practices for Places of Worship can be found here.

Planning for Church Life After Covid-19 from UM Communications, read the article here.

Worship Supplies If you are not able to obtain single-serve communion cups and other worship supplies from Cokesbury, we have had luck with Concordia Supply, https://www.concordiasupply.com/.

Special announcements regarding West Ohio Camps

The spread of the coronavirus continues to challenge our West Ohio Camping directors and staff. In their ongoing effort to keep people safe, they have made the difficult decision to cancel the annual Winter Camps program which is usually held at all three camps. Family Camp rentals are still available at Otterbein and Wesley with a maximum of 10 people. Should families choose to participate they will be responsible for their own meals.

2020 has been a difficult year for the West Ohio Camping Ministry. “We are deeply grateful for your continuing prayer and financial support,” said Director Ken Overholser. “This continues to be a challenging time and yet gives us opportunities to dream about what is possible for the future of West Ohio Camps,” he said.

The 2021 West Ohio Camps Guide and registration details will be announced in January. The information will include safety and cleaning details which are already in place. If you would like more information about these guidelines and safety precautions, they can be found at: www.westohiocamps.
IMPORTANT: Counties in Ohio that are now at a RED Covid level

Covid-19 cases in Ohio are increasing. You can view the county map [here](#).

If your county is Red, the pastor should work with their Health Department and Leadership team to determine the best solution for their congregation. We do not have a mandatory shut down until the county gets to Purple.

In both Red and Orange counties, churches should be very strict on enforcement of the protocols of wearing masks, keeping social distance, providing as much air flow as possible, and keeping surfaces and hands sanitized.

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**Announcing Two Virtual Leadership Training Events**

**Save the dates!**

**January 30 and February 13, 2021**

Mark your calendars for two virtual church leadership training events.

The first event, **Resisting Injustice: Leading through Divided Times**, will be held on **Saturday, January 30th, 2021**.

The second event, **Moving Forward: Creating a Nimble Church** is scheduled for **Saturday, February 13th, 2021**. This event will feature workshop tracks focused on small churches and on medium-sized/larger churches.

The Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr. will be the keynote speaker at both events. Dr. Powe is the Director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership. An ordained elder in the Baltimore/Washington Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, he is committed to helping urban congregations and congregations in transitional areas to flourish through community partnering. His research interest are church revitalization, urban theology and Methodist theology.

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**Financial Matters Update**

Click [this link](#) to view the update Bill Brownson shared on Facebook Live this week
It's Time to Apply for Paycheck Protection Plan Loan Forgiveness

Most Small Business Administration (SBA) lenders and participants are now opening up their online portals for PPP borrowers to apply for loan forgiveness. Conference CFO, Bill Brownson, has this guidance for your church. First, be in touch with your lender and follow their guidance; they're the key to everything. Second, submit qualified expenses in excess of your loan amount, if possible. The lender may disqualify some expenses and if they do, you'll want enough other expenses to maximize the amount of your loan that's forgiven. Remember, there's no guarantee all of your loan will be approved for forgiveness. Third, be patient. Millions of borrowers will be applying for forgiveness and the processing won't happen overnight. It may take weeks to learn how much of your loan is forgiven. Until then, the funds you received remain a loan.

Counting Attendance During Covid Season and Beyond

Worship attendance, under normal circumstances, is recorded as the number of participants at regularly scheduled worship times. This includes Sundays and other days of the week when worship is practiced, as well as regular religious services. Children and youth ministries that feature sharing of the gospel, praying and singing can be included if held on a regular basis – assuming participants are not already counted during the main worship service. All of these can be counted and added to your average worship attendance. Note that funerals and weddings are not regularly scheduled and should not be counted.

Online worship is a bit different. How do we know if a Facebook viewer is on for 20 seconds or the entire service? Facebook has metrics available to publishers and page editors with information such as total minutes viewed, peak viewers, unique viewers, 10-second views and average completion percentage. If possible, use these as they can help distinguish between actual worshippers and web surfers.

Here are suggestions on ways to count worship attendance:
2020 has 52 Sundays. Subtract the Sundays your church was closed due to COVID-19. Divide that number (i.e. 52-10 = 42 weeks) into your total worship attendance to get your 2020 average.

If you offer online worship, try to get accurate counts for all weeks online worship was offered. Add those numbers to your regular worship attendance and divide by 52 weeks. The calculation for online worship should be the number of hits on your sermon times a 1.6 multiplier. The average is that for each hit, 1.6 people are watching. Also, add regular online or in-person Fresh Expression worship venues.

The Breakthrough Goal reports are being updated, along with the church year-end report, so you can report worship in three categories: regular face-to-face live worship, online worship and Fresh Expression-type services. Record them separately and then total them for the required reports.

Perhaps most importantly, if you are currently doing online worship, do not stop when the virus goes away! Thirty percent of Americans work on Sundays. They need opportunities to worship in alternative ways and to be invited into your worship.
Lay Servant Training Events

Lay Servant Ministries is one of the most significant lay leadership development programs already available within the United Methodist connection. Through this system of equipping and empowering, lay servants have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples.

“Biblical Teaching/in a new age” (CORE) led by Rev. Becky Motter will be offered on Saturday, March 6, 8:30am-4:30pm, via ZOOM. The FIRM deadline for registration is TBD. More info yet to come.

“Demographics (Advance)” led by Rev. David Mac-Donald will be offered on Saturday, March 6, 8:30am-4:30pm, via ZOOM The FIRM deadline for registration is TBD. More info yet to come.

“Lay Servants in Worship (CORE)” led by Dwight Bowers will be offered on Saturday, April 10, at 8:30am-4:30pm, via ZOOM. The FIRM deadline for registration is TBD. More info yet to come.

“Social Justice (Advanced)” led by Rev. Dee Stick-ley-Miner will be offered on Saturday, April 10 at 8:30am-4:30pm, via ZOOM. The FIRM deadline for registration is TBD. More info yet to come.

Please help get the word out. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in participating, please register when the time is open to do so!

NWP Directors of Pulpit Supply

Pastors, if you are in need of Sunday morning pulpit supply and would like to arrange for a Lay Speaker to fill in for you, please contact our District Directors of Pulpit Supply.

- **Linda Hoover** is responsible for the southern part of NWP District including Allen, Auglaize, Hardin, Mercer, Van Wert and Wyandot counties. She can be reached at 567-204-0329 or by email at bhoo-ver1@woh.rr.com.

- **Larry Zuvers** is responsible for the northern part of NWP District including Defiance, Hancock, Henry, Paulding, Putnam, and Williams counties. He can be reached at 419.636.2329 or by email at lzuvers@gmail.com.
The Walk to Emmaus is a global ministry of the Upper Room dedicated to supporting the spiritual formation of Christians and the development of Christian servant leaders for the local church. If you would like to experience this spiritual retreat or learn more about it contact Brad Martin.

I am also looking for clergy who are interested in serving in the Northwest Ohio Emmaus Community. The clergy listing needs updating. If you took your walk in another community, if you took another three-day retreat, or if your contact information has changed, please send the information to Brad Martin, Emmaus Community Spiritual Director | bmartin4477@gmail.com

Findlay Emmaus Walks @ St. Marks UMC, Findlay, OH
http://www.findlayemmaus.org/

Women's Walks /Dates
October 8 – 11, 2020—CANCELLED

Men's Walks/Dates
November 5 – 8, 2020—CANCELLED

Sidney Emmaus Walk @ First UMC, Sidney, OH
http://www.sidneyemmaus.org/

Women's Walks/Dates
#82 - 10/15/2020 - 10/18/2020—POSTPONED
2/18/2021—2/21/2021
7/15/2021—7/18/2021
10/07/2021-10/10/2021

Men's Walks/Dates
#76 - 11/05/2020 - 11/08/2020 - POSTPONED
3/18/2021—3/21/2021
11/4/2021—11/7/2021

NW Ohio Emmaus Walks @ Widewater, Liberty Center, OH
http://www.nwoemmaus.com/

Women's Walks/Dates

Men's Walk/Dates

Chrysalis is a three day experience of spiritual renewal open to members of any Christian denomination, ages 15 to 24. It is an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ in a new way. Chrysalis is meant to inspire, challenge, and equip youth for Christian action in their homes, churches, communities and places of work. 2020 events have been canceled. 2021 are listed below.

St. Andrew’s UMC, Findlay
Girls Flight #53
Feb. 19,20,21, 2021 - CANCELLED
Girls Flight #54
July 30,31, Aug 1 2021

Boys Flight #53
March 5,6,7, 2021—CANCELLED
Boys Flight #54
July 9,10,11 2021

http://www.findlaychrysalis.org/

Greene Street UMC, Piqua
http://www.westohiochrysalis.com/

Delta UMC, Delta
http://www.nwoemmaus.com/
Laity Discernment Retreats

Tuesday, January 12, 2021
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
Tuesday, March 2, 2021
6:30 - 8:30 pm

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.

Each virtual 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

This is a great way to partake of this during this time because there is no travel involved. Contact Kim LaRue if you have any questions, kimlarue@powellumc.org.

https://www.westohioumc.org/laitydiscernment
Bishop Announces Dates for 2021 Annual Conference:
June 6 - 7, 2021, to be held virtually

The 52nd session of the West Ohio Conference will be held Sunday June 6, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Monday, June 7, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Bishop Palmer and the Planning Committee unanimously decided to hold a virtual conference since the COVID pandemic is still a serious concern. The theme of Annual Conference is “Run the race with perseverance” based on the scripture Hebrews12:1-3.

“A vaccination is here and brings great hope. However, it is unclear as to how many people will be vaccinated by June. So, we must forge on with our plans to care for the business of the annual conference,” said Bishop Gregory V. Palmer. "I have great hope and anticipation that we will come together again in a foreseeable future.”

More details will be made available in the weeks to come.

Clergy Day Apart Slated for January 28

The West Ohio Conference Clergy Day Apart will be held virtually on Thursday, January 28 at 2:00 p.m. Rev. Dr. Vergel Lattimore III, President and Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling, Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina will be the keynote speaker. His focus will be Life Stress and Care Beyond Ordinary Pain & Relational Loss. The event is free but registration is required. Register Here.

Local Church and Community Events

Community Meal PSA

The Pandora United Methodist Church will be NOT be hosting a FREE Community Meal for the month of JANUARY
Free Cantata Books
Middle Point UMC has song books for Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and Patriotic seasons. Donating. Really good condition. Please call Sandy Moore at 419-968-2443 if interested.

Stoles remaining
Women Clergy Alb recently found a home, but various stoles are still available. Free for the taking. Can be picked up here at the District Office. Please call at 419-523-9901 or email at lmoore@wocumc.org.

First UM Church looking for Contemporary Worship Leader
First United Methodist Church of Van Wert is looking to fill a part-time position of Casual/Contemporary Worship Leader. The ideal candidate will demonstrate excellent musical, recruitment, leadership, coordination, and management skills in a Casual/Contemporary worship setting. He or she will also profess a love to serve Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

FUMC offers diverse worship styles to provide opportunities for people to both embrace God in worship and to receive God’s embrace through worship. Understanding our cultural context and presenting the Good News of Christ through compelling worship lies at the center of our worship opportunities. The Casual/Contemporary Worship Leader will offer creative, visionary, engaging and collaborative leadership in the design and deployment of the casual/contemporary worship experience for the Glory of God.

Compensation is based on a ¼ time salaried position rate. A complete job description may be obtained by emailing Director of First Impressions & Worship Arts Director, Paul Hoverman at paulhoverman@gmail.com. Please respond if interested by December 16, 2020. This position could be filled by January 1, 2021.

Pastor Chris Farmer is the Lead Pastor at First United Methodist Church, located in the heart of downtown Van Wert at 113 West Central Avenue.
Click on below link to view the job posting for St. Luke's United Methodist Church for an Assistant Director for Student Ministry

http://hireayouthpastor.com/churches/2336/jobs/3055

Just North (United Church of Christ, on Henderson Road in Columbus) is searching for a trained Intentional Interim Minister to work with our congregation for the next couple of years as we transition between Pastor Eric (who we will miss after he retires this year after almost two decades of service) and our new settled pastor. Please share the word and direct any inquiries to justnorthoffice@gmail.com. Here’s a link to the job posting on our conference website.

**TRINITY VAN WERT IS SEEKING WORSHIP LEADER**

Trinity United Methodist Church in Van Wert is looking for a Worship Leader for our Praise Team. This position consists primarily of 1 weekly rehearsal and 2 Sunday morning worship services and assisting the Youth Director with the Youth Praise Band. The position is able to be negotiated, but primary responsibilities are:

- Maintaining/developing team atmosphere among the volunteer Praise Team
- Scheduling Praise Team members
- Leading rehearsals to prepare for Sunday morning
- Choosing music for Sunday morning based on Pastor's sermons
- Maintaining music database
- Working with the Youth Director to develop the Youth Praise Band
- Ensuring worship graphics are prepared for worship

While we would like a Leader who is able to lead worship, we have many in our Praise Team that can do so. This position is as much about organization and team building as it is about leading worship. Salary is negotiable in the $110 - $130/week range dependent on experience and availability.

Candidates can email resume and references to Jody Bigham, Office Manager. tumcvanwert@gmail.com. 419-238-9541
Free Active Shooter Prevention Guide

Recently, attention has been drawn to the unthinkable action of active shooters in a house of worship.

UMI is offering this resource to you as a way to prepare you, your church leadership, the congregation and visitors in the event this should occur. Being prepared helps everyone cope with these realities and begin to re-focus attention on core ministries.

Conducting the ministries of The United Methodist Church takes on many forms. Our first call to ministry is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This crucial part of our ministry as a denomination begins in the local church. Everything else we do on a daily basis supports this core commission. (Matthew 28:19)

There are many supportive actions taking place every day to support the local church. One of them is to insure the church properties so that a church can continue its core ministries in the community.

DOWNLOAD  http://tiny.cc/hf6sry

Local Church Officer Job Descriptions

Positions Required in All Congregations

Every congregation must make provision for including these functions according to The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, ¶244, ¶249. Positions may be combined except for the financial functions. "The positions of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these positions should not be immediate family members (¶258.4)."

Nominations and Leader Development Committee (¶258.1)
Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee (¶258.2)
Trustees (¶258.3 and ¶2524 to 2550)
Finance Committee Chairperson (¶258.4)
Lay Leader (¶251.1)
Lay Member of Annual Conference (¶251.2)
Financial Secretary (¶258.4)
Church Treasurer (¶258.4)
Membership Secretary (¶234 and ¶235 to 242)
Leadership Team (also called Church Council, Administrative Board) Chairperson (¶251.3)

LEARN MORE  https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/local-church-officer-job-descriptions

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Do you have news or something interesting to share? Know of anyone who would like to be added to our Weekly Bulletin e-mail list? Contact Northwest Plains District via e-mail nwplains@wocumc.org or call 1.800.589.7828.

When e-mailing the district staff, please use the e-mail addresses listed below:

- Rev. Barry Burns, District Superintendent: bburns@wocumc.org
- Rev. Lynda Lockwood, Assistant to the District Superintendent: llockwood@wocumc.org
- Kim Tumblin, Financial Secretary: ktumblin@wocumc.org
- Lesley Moore, Office Administrator: lmoore@wocumc.org