



The Ambassador

July 2023

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

After three years of Annual Conference being held virtually, it was good to be in person for the 54th session of the West Ohio Annual Conference. Before I jump into sharing my highlights of conference, I want to offer some information on how the United Methodist Church is structured.

Each United Methodist Church is part of a district, led by a district superintendent. First UMC's district is the newly configured Great Miami River District and our District Superintendent is Rev. Jenn Lucas. Districts are gathered into geographical areas called conferences, led by a bishop. First UMC is a part of the West Ohio Conference and our Bishop is Rev. Gregory Palmer. Each conference meets annually to worship, nurture spiritual formation, plan ministry, and conduct business. We call this meeting Annual Conference.

This year First UMC was well represented at Annual Conference as each day of the conference involved someone from our congregation. On Thursday we had opening worship and our choir was one of several local choirs that came together to provide special music. In that same worship service, Maya Fairchild served as the liturgist. On Friday, Rev. Dee Stickley-Miner offered a report from the General Board of Global Ministries and shared about Les and Debbie Dornon and their plans to return to Nepal. On Saturday, our former associate pastor, Rev. Henry Folgoso, was commissioned as a provisional

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Worship With Us

Online & In Person
Worship @10:30 am
Sunday School @ 9 am

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elder. And behind the scenes as well as on the platform, our Rev. Amy Haines was there serving. Amy grew up at First UMC and is currently serving as the District Superintendent of the Maumee River District.

While those are my highlights from Annual Conference, I am well aware that my highlights do not address any of the business that was done. The West Ohio News offered the summary that starts on pg. 4. Please know that if you have any questions about Annual Conference, I am available and will answer your question as best I can and I will find the answer if I do not know it readily.

Peace,
Pastor Kim <><

Summer Road Trip Check-In

We have come a long way on our Summer Road Trip – A Journey thru Genesis! We have spent time at the beginning of creation and in the Garden of Eden, and by the end of June we were with Abraham and Sarah as God called them to leave their home and go to this land that God would show them. Talk about a road trip! Abraham and Sarah went on a destination unknown road trip!

In July we will continue with Abraham and Sarah and the story of them becoming parents to Isaac, then onto Isaac growing up and marrying Rebekah. Then Genesis gets a little wild with Isaac and Rebekah's sons Esau and Jacob. We will explore Jacob's dream at Bethel and his wrestling with God. In August, we will explore the rest of Genesis through the story of Joseph.

Our road trip continues as we learn about the unexpected people you meet on vacation, being at the right place at the right time, sibling fights, encounters that change you, unexpected finds, and planning the next adventure. If you have not done so already, pick up a Summer Road Trip passport and start collecting stickers. Also, it isn't too late to send in your travel pictures, just send them to the church office or drop them off. Don't forget to take pictures of this summer's adventures and send those in too!

Road Rally on August 13th at 2:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars and plan on joining us as we celebrate our Summer Road Trip series with a group road trip. Be at the church at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 13th and you will get some snacks and a list of items for you to do. We will meet at The Jug when we are all finished for some ice cream!

Music and Worship Notes *by Mary Ellen Clinard*



At the end of June, I attended my first ever convention of the American Guild of Organists! On alternate years there's a regional conference and this year that regional conference was in Evanston, IL. Since our Great Lakes Region is comprised of Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, I thought that would be a great experience on a smaller scale than a National Convention. During the conference I attended organ concerts in 17 different churches and synagogues in the Evanston/Chicago area and attended workshops on organ technique, jazz worship, and choral readings (for those like me who conduct a choir from the organ.)

Every pipe organ in the world is built for the specific space where it will be installed. And because of that, every pipe organ sounds different. It is always so interesting to hear several organs in the course of a day for that fact to really sink in!

What was really inspiring was the wide breadth of age ranges attending the convention and the expansive ethnicity of the people who are organists. From young college age to those in their 80's and yes, even their 90's! Of the hundreds of people who attended, all were interested in learning more about their instrument and how to best serve their communities both in worship and on the concert stage.

I hope that I will be able to use the information and experiences of this conference to make our instrument and your experience in worship more meaningful in the future.

22nd Annual Night Out

As mentioned in the June Ambassador, we will be participating in this community event on Tuesday, Aug. 1 from 5-9 pm at Smith Park. We will have a table set up to hand out information about our different ministries. If you would like to be at the table for 15, 30, or 60 mins. Please contact the office and let us know. Thanks in advance for your help!

The 54th Session of the West Ohio Annual Conference convened June 1 – 3 at the Dayton (Ohio) Convention Center. With nearly 1,600 clergy and lay members, this was the first in-person annual conference since 2019. Bishop Gregory V. Palmer presided over the conference under the theme “Committed, Connected, Community,” rooted in Hebrews 10:23-25.

During his Episcopal Address, Palmer spoke of recent and historic challenges of the church. “Our calling is to serve this present age,” he said, “even if there's a storm ... in the midst of passing over.” “One of our storms,” Palmer continued, “is disaffiliation. That's not a blame thing; it's just the way it is. It's in the book. We've given a lot of attention to it. Let me be clear. It is not our mission. We gave attention to it. We'll finish up what there is to be finished up. But it is not Jesus' mission. It's not the mission of The United Methodist Church. It's not Greg Palmer's mission, and it's not your mission. We've got one mission: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. “

“We exist for the people that have yet to come,” Palmer said, as the audience rose to their feet.

CELEBRATIONS

- Mary Katherine Collins, Henry Antonio Folgoso Jarmillo, Jennifer L. Miller, Sungyoon Park, Carrie Schwab, Shin Sung and Daniel Wells were commissioned as Provisional Elders and Seonyoung K. Chang, Lucy Kelly and Ashley Wynn as Provisional Deacons.
- Angela Schroder and Hannah VanMeter were ordained Deacons, and Mary Beth Cheeseman, Joseph Graves, Caleb Henry, James Jennings, Gregory Miller and Dominic Mejia were ordained Elders.
- Bobbi Ruddock was commissioned as a Deaconess.
- Fifty-eight clergy retired.
- The Harry Denman Award for exceptional ministry of evangelism was presented to Chris Parsons, a layperson from the Miami Valley District (Mosaic Church in Dayton).
- The One Matters Award, which celebrated an increase in the number of professions of faith and baptisms from zero through a renewed focus on discipleship was awarded to Bremen United Methodist Church, Foothills District, Linda Ward, pastor.

LEGISLATION

Recommendation #1 – Changes to Structure, Procedure and Rules – Annual Conference Rules and Policies – PASSED

Recommendation to amend the conference rules impacting our structure, procedures and to be more concise. This recommendation added the official list of Annual Conference officers to the General Rules. Throughout the rules, document references to United Methodist Women were changed to United Women in Faith and references to the Director of Lay Speaking Ministries were changed to Director of Lay Servant Ministries.

Recommendation #2 – Board of Pension and Health Benefits – PASSED

This recommendation outlines Clergy Pension and Disability plans and the Health Care Benefit plans for Active and Retired Clergy, as well as the eligibility requirements for those plans, and also includes resolutions related to Rental/Housing Allowances for retired and disabled Clergy of the West Ohio Conference. The base annuity rate for 2024 on Pre-82 pensions will increase to \$650 as outlined under the Clergy Pension and Disability Plans section of the recommendation.

Recommendation #3 – Commission on Equitable Compensation – PASSED

The 2024 Equitable Compensation recommendation presented a minimum salary increase of 2% over last year. The committee sought to balance the needs of appointed clergy and the financial challenges of the local church.

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Recommendation #4 – Disposition of West Ohio Camps and Retreat Ministry Property –

WITHDRAWN by Makers (Board of Trustees). The recommendation was withdrawn to allow more time to study the potential options for the disposition of the camp and retreat properties.

Recommendation #5 – Responding to a Request from Palestinian Christians – PASSED

The resolution authorizes the creation of a West Ohio Annual Conference committee to educate clergy, laity and delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences on the current situation in the Holy Land and to consider whether the West Ohio Conference will fully embrace the request made by Palestinian Christians represented by Kairos Palestine. The committee members are to be chosen by the Bishop and to report their findings to the 2024 session of the West Ohio Annual Conference.

Recommendation #6 – In Support of Creating a U.S. Regional Conference – PASSED

The West Ohio Conference supports the intents of the Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table legislation, including the creation of Regional Conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines and the United States. The recommendation also supports urging the Council of Bishops to expedite the process of voting on the constitutional amendments necessary to enact the regional conferences legislation including calling special sessions of annual conferences where necessary. Through the recommendation, the West Ohio Annual Conference also requests that the Council of Bishops appoint an Interim Committee on organization for a U.S. Regional Conference.

Recommendation #7 – Supporting the Removal of Discriminatory Policies – PASSED AS AMENDED

The West Ohio Conference supports the removal of discriminatory policies and harmful language related to sexual orientation that are present in the United Methodist Book of Discipline. The recommendation notes nine petitions that identify the policies and language for removal that are already submitted and will be before the voting body of the next General Conference.

Recommendation #8 – Affirmation for All People in The United Methodist Church – PASSED

The recommendation affirms that the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church will aspire to become a United Methodist Church in which LGBTQIA+ people will be protected, affirmed and empowered by supporting and amplifying the call to justice and empowerment for the LGBTQIA+ community throughout the Annual Conference; affirms the spirit of abeyance or moratorium as proposed to the General Conference by the authors of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation; and asks the West Ohio Annual Conference either to not pursue, hold in abeyance or resolve in timely fashion through the process of Just Resolution complaints against clergy regarding their sexual orientation or the officiating of wedding of LGBTQIA+ persons.

Recommendation #9 – Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions – PASSED

The Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions recommendation asks the West Ohio Conference to join our denominational boards and commissions in committing to a just and equitable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The recommendation calls on the bishop to establish a working group to study this action and develop an implementation plan. The working group will report back on their plan to the 2024 session of the Annual Conference.

OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUSINESS

North Star churches are prepared to welcome United Methodists whose home churches have disaffiliated. One new church has been launched with members seeking to depart their disaffiliating church.

172 churches requested [disaffiliation](#) from The United Methodist Church. This was supported by conference members

"My focus, our focus will continue to be on a vibrant future for the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church and its more than 700 churches and the communities in which they serve," Bishop Gregory V. Palmer concluded. "We've got work to do. With God's help, may it be so."

Read the Bible in a Year - Reading Schedule for July

You have made it halfway! Yay! I am so proud of you (and me)! And I have even better news, if you measure by page numbers, my Bible has us forty pages past the halfway mark. By the end of August we will make it into the beginning of Matthew but this month will not be boring. The first half will have us reading from Isaiah and odds are we will encounter several familiar passages since Isaiah is the most quoted book in the New Testament. In Jeremiah, known as the weeping prophet, we will encounter the most difficult time in the Hebrew people's Biblical history. The book of Lamentations only lasts for two days but it has one of my favorite verses in it – can you guess what it is? And then by the end of July we will begin Ezekiel and his visionary prophetic ministry.

Remember that, as always, I am available if you have any questions or want additional resources or need encouragement. You are in prayers!

Peace,

Pastor Kim

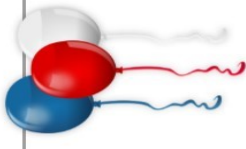

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July 1	Isaiah 1-4	July 12	Isaiah 49-52:12	July 22	Jeremiah 25-29
July 2	Isaiah 5-7	July 13	Isaiah 52:13-55:13	July 23	Jeremiah 30-33
July 3	Isaiah 8-11	July 14	Isaiah 56-59	July 24	Jeremiah 34-38
July 4	Isaiah 12-16	July 15	Isaiah 60-66	July 25	Jeremiah 39-45
July 5	Isaiah 17-23	July 16	Jeremiah 1-4	July 26	Jeremiah 46-49
July 6	Isaiah 24-27	July 17	Jeremiah 5-8:17	July 27	Jeremiah 50-52
July 7	Isaiah 28-31	July 18	Jeremiah 8:18-12:17	July 28	Lamentations 1-2
July 8	Isaiah 32-35	July 19	Jeremiah 13-16	July 29	Lamentations 3-5
July 9	Isaiah 36-39	July 20	Jeremiah 17-20	July 30	Ezekiel 1-5
July 10	Isaiah 40-44	July 21	Jeremiah 21-24	July 31	Ezekiel 6-11



July 2023

- Mike Snyder 1
- Kim Armentrout 2
- Debbie Dornon 3
- Don Burley 3
- Gene Goecke 4
- Dan Hausman 6
- Debbie Ellis 8
- Darrel Davis 10
- Nancy Heberling 13
- Dolly Dixon-Gordon 14
- Nortence Church 15
- Paulette McCandless 16
- Barb Balsmeyer 16
- Kyle Wilson 20
- Barry Ely 24
- Chris Buchert 26
- Ron Spaulding 26
- Kavon Church-Davis 27
- Sheila Crowe 27
- Norma Jean Davis 31

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
2 COMMUNION 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	3 8:00 Breakfast Club	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY—CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED NO Pantry	5 3:00 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study	6	7 12:00 First Friday Concert	8 8	
9 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	10 8:00 Breakfast Club 6:00 Immigration Clinic	11 1:00 SPRC 2:00 Pantry	12 NO Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study	13	14 AMBASSADOR ARTICLE DEAD- LINE NO UMW Mtg.	15 9:00 Hope Circle @ Bob Evans	
16 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	17 8:00 Breakfast Club	18 2:00 Pantry No Finance Mtg No Council Mtg	19 3:00 & 7:00 Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study	20	21	22	
23 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	24 8:00 Breakfast Club	25 2:00 Pantry NO Trustees Mtg.	26 NO Choir Rhrl 6:00 Hisp. Bible Study	27	28		
30 \$5 ON THE 5TH 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	31 8:00 Breakfast Club	 <p>Dates to Remember in August: August 1: Night Out 5-9pm Smith Park August 4: First Friday Concert @ Noon August 13: Road Rally 2 pm</p>					

Happy Birthdays!



2023 First Friday Concert & Artist Series

**July 7, 2023
SYRODESY**

**This flute trio comes to delight us with
compelling interpretations and new
compositions for flutes of all sizes**

**First UMC - Middletown
@noon
Free Admission**