



# Western Lakes District

*News from The United Methodist Church*

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## WLD Important Information



### Summary of the Special Session of the 2023 West Ohio Annual Conference

The West Ohio Annual Conference Special Session convened Saturday, October 28, at Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio. Bishop Gregory V. Palmer presided over the conference with nearly 800 clergy and lay members in attendance.

The day began with a powerful worship service with the combined effort from the Annual Conference and Ginghamburg Worship Teams. "The power of worship and prayer infused the day," said Bishop Gregory V. Palmer.

Rev. Dr. Tim Bias, Olentangy River District Superintendent, presented the sermon based on Hebrew 12 reminding participants that they are encouraged by a great cloud of witnesses.

"When you leave this place, you will be entering the mission field where people need hope," Bias said. "Don't give up, keep going!"

[Continue reading.....](#)

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### HealthFlex Deadline Nov 16th

It's time to get down to work now that you are more familiar with HealthFlex. Here's what you should do before the Annual Open Enrollment Period, which runs from November 1-16.

#### Preparation Steps to Annual Open Enrollment:

Go to: [HealthFlex Group Plan](#)

1. Review the Premium Credit video to understand how it works.
2. Locate the Premium Credit funding based on the number of covered participants.
3. Find the 2024 HealthFlex Rate Sheet for Medical, Dental, and Vision premium costs.
4. Review the HealthFlex Plan Comparisons.
5. Visit **Alex** the Benefit Counselor decision support tool.
6. November 1 – 16 go to [BenefitsAccess.org](https://www.benefitsaccess.org) to enroll in HealthFlex.

[Read more here](#)

REV. ADAM HAMILTON  
January 16, 2024  
Reynoldsburg, OH



"The Future of the United Methodist Church"



## Hamilton Scheduled to Appear in Upcoming Leadership Clinic - Virtual Option Only

Author and United Methodist Pastor, Rev. Adam Hamilton will be featured in the upcoming season of *Bishop Palmer's Leadership Clinics*.

On Tuesday, January 16, Hamilton will be featured at Bishop Palmer's

Leadership Clinic, live and in person at the Church of the Redeemer United Methodist Church in Reynoldsburg, Ohio from 10:00 AM -12:00 PM EST. Hamilton will share his perspective around the topic "The Future of the United Methodist Church", followed by an interview with Bishop Palmer and questions from the audience.

A virtual and "stream later" option will be available. Each registration will receive a complimentary copy of Hamilton's upcoming book, *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*.

Rev. Adam Hamilton is the founding pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, one of the fastest growing, most highly visible churches in the country. Resurrection is a multi-site church, currently with six campuses in Kansas and Missouri. The Church Report named Hamilton's congregation the most influential mainline church in America, and he preached at the National Prayer Service as part of the presidential inauguration festivities in 2013. Hamilton is the best-selling and award-winning author of several books including *The Call*, *24 Hours That Changed the World*, *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White*, *Prepare the Way*, and *Luke*, all published by Abingdon Press.

Go to <https://westohiounc.org/Clinics> to register.

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## Foundation to Offer Online Legacy Planning Seminar Nov. 12

The United Methodist Foundation of West Ohio will be offering a seminar on estate planning and legacy giving on November 12 at 6 p.m. via Zoom. All congregations and their members are welcome to attend. No registration required. The seminar will cover basic estate planning and legacy giving options. Participants can join the seminar at this link: [Join Zoom Meeting](#). Contact Susan Black at [sblack@wocumc.org](mailto:sblack@wocumc.org) for more information.

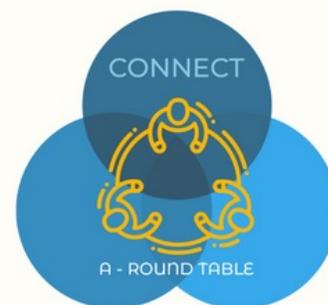
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## Connect A-Round Table November 29th

Sharing around a table is one of the most uniquely human things we do. No other creature consumes its food at a table. When we share around the table with each other, we are reminded that food is more than fuel.

Gathering around a table is the most important place of human connection; fellowship while sharing a meal. We shouldn't be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it's worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion.

Connect A-Round Table is a time to gather on zoom, share a meal together, and connect over subjects that peak interest. Each Connect session includes a 45-minute round table discussion with a panel discussion followed by a Q&A. The session will conclude with creating actionable steps to the topic being discussed. Everyone is encouraged to bring a meal with them to each session.



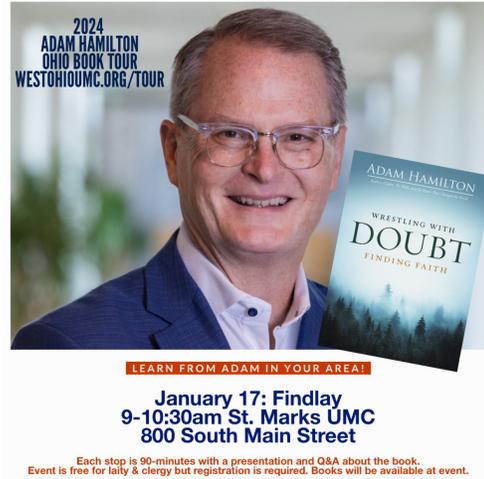
Our first Connect A-Round Table is scheduled for Wednesday, November 29 at 6:00 pm. The topic for that evening is call. Each of us has a calling but do we know what it is? Come to learn more about what a call is, learn how to identify your call and the call in others.

If there is a topic you are interested in, please submit those ideas to [jcarter@wocumc.org](mailto:jcarter@wocumc.org).

[Click here to register](#)

## Adam Hamilton is Coming to Findlay with a Discipleship Opportunity for Clergy and Laity

Rev. Adam Hamilton is touring Ohio with the release of his upcoming book, "Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith." This is an incredible opportunity to learn from a successful author of church resources and pastor of one of the most influential churches in America, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. Each stop will be 90 minutes with a short presentation followed by a Q & A about the book. The event is free, but registration is required. Books will be available to purchase on site.



**JANUARY 17, 2024**

FINDLAY: St Marks UMC | 800 S Main Street, Findlay | 9-10:30AM

[Click here to register](#)

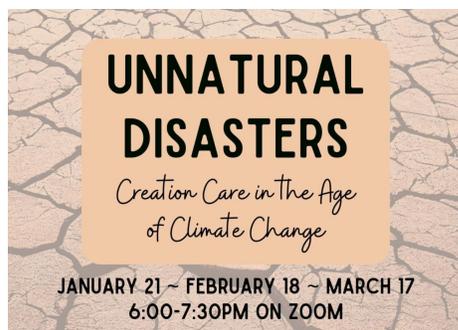
About Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith (releases December, 2023)  
Does your faith make room for questions?

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

In Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith, join best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton as he discusses some of our most significant sources of doubt and shows how a steady trust in God can emerge from them. You will delve into questions like:

"Does God exist? How can I know?" "Is the Bible true?" "Why do prayers go unanswered?"

Hamilton approaches these sources of doubt with honesty and insight, drawing on the rich wisdom of the Bible, Christian tradition, and his experience walking with thousands of people on their spiritual journey. Whether you're a longtime Christian or someone brand new to faith, this book will lead you to a trust in God that is unafraid of hard questions. Wrestle with doubt and find faith—belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers.



## Register Now for "Unnatural Disasters" Documentary Series

Floods. Hurricanes. Wildfires. Droughts. As the planet warms around us, causing disasters such as these to become more extreme and more common, how can people of faith take better care of God's creation? "Unnatural Disasters" is a series of three documentaries that will take you to places around the country where people are finding creative ways

to care for the planet in the midst of devastating disasters. Sponsored by the East Ohio and West Ohio Conference, this virtual event is free and open to the public.

- January 21, 6-7:30PM: Flooding in Detroit
- February 18, 6-7:30PM: Hurricanes in Puerto Rico
- March 17, 6-7:30PM: Wildfires in Northern California

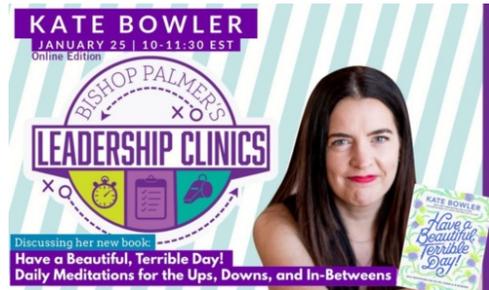
Register here for all three!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOmXwEkqhXZoDAFzu-ybMXHpfd6-KIKSndYcy6G4EPDquRvg/viewform>

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## NYT Bestseller Kate Bowler to Join Bishop Palmer for Clinic

New York Times bestselling author and award-winning podcast host, Kate Bowler will be Bishop Palmer's guest on his Leadership Clinic on Thursday, January 25. Bowler is the author of "Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved."



The week of this clinic, Bowler's latest book, "Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day! Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens", will be released and will be given to each person registered for the clinic.

To learn more about Kate or to register for this online clinic, [click here](#).

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## Confirmation Event With Bishop Palmer March 3

**Save the Date** -Attention all confirmation teachers, students, and church leaders! On March 3, 2024, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer will be hosting a very special confirmation event for all confirmands of West Ohio.

To register for updates about this event or ask questions, contact Director of Camps, Retreats, and Next Gen Engagement Rev. Ann Marie Carley [amcarley@wocumc.org](mailto:amcarley@wocumc.org). More details around this special event will be coming soon!

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## Join a Mexico VIM Team Journey in 2024

Each year, the West Ohio Conference sends five to six Volunteers in Mission teams to the Oriental Conference in Mexico. There, they work with a ministry called Manos Juntas - Hands Together - which has a variety of outreach programs, including a daycare center, children's home, after school programs, community center, retreat center, construction ministry, and medical clinic. While West Ohio teams are best known as medical teams, there are plenty of other opportunities for ministry with Manos Juntas!

Teams can take part in construction projects, run a VBS program, or hang out with kids at the children's home!

[Read more...](#)

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

**Rev. Wayne Fowler**, 90, of Piqua, who passed away on Thursday, October 26, 2023 at Ohio Living Dorothy Love Retirement in Sidney, OH. Wayne was a retired pastor from the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Wayne graduated from Otterbein University and was the drum major for the marching band. He also graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary with a Master of Divinity. Over the 43 years Wayne pastored 9 churches including Peachblow (CN) 1953, Pomeroy Cirtucit (A) 1954, Pataskala (N) 1955, Pickerington Trinity (N) 1963, Wright Memorial (N) 1967, Bigelow (P) 1973, Dir. Social Services, Portsmouth 1974, Marion Oakland (F) 1979, McKendree (CN) 1986, and Piqua Grace (DN) 1992, retiring in 1996. Following his retirement, he continued to preach each time the Lord provided an opportunity. Wayne enjoyed gardening, reading, music, singing, hunting at the Hughes hunting camp in West Virginia, and especially following his grandsons' sporting events. He was an avid fan of the Ohio State Buckeye and the Piqua Indians. He was born in Columbus, OH on September 20, 1933 to the late Ray J. and Dorothy (Siders) Fowler. On October 25, 1955 in Knoxville, TN, Wayne married Gwendolyn "Gwen" Thomas and she survives. Wayne is also survived by one daughter and son-in-law: Tammy and Jim Peterson, Huntsville, OH; four grandchildren: Matt (Kristin) McGraw and Drew (Jenny) McGraw; James (Ashley) Peterson; Jordan (Maria) Peterson; eleven great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by one son, David Michael "Mike" Fowler, sister Barbara Kerstetter, and one great-grandson, Matthew Dierks McGraw.

A celebration of Wayne's life was held on Friday, November 3, 2023 at The Ohio Living Dorothy Love Chapel, 2500 North Kuther Road, Sidney, OH 45365, with Pastor David Chivington officiating. The family requests that everyone who attends Wayne's celebration of life to stay following the service and join them in food, fellowship, and sharing fond memories of Wayne. A private graveside service will be held at the convenience of the family. Services have been entrusted to Melcher-Sowers Funeral Home in Piqua, OH. [Obituary.](#)

Condolences may be expressed to the family at [www.melcher-sowers.com](http://www.melcher-sowers.com).

## Resources

### Receive Free Steaming for Advent Studies When You Sign Up for Amplify Media

Whether you want to experience Advent through the sights, sounds, and smells of the season, or explore the events surrounding Jesus' birth from the points of view of those biblical figures who *don't* take center stage, you can invite your congregation or small groups to encounter the season differently this year with these new studies from Matt Rawle and West Ohio's Rachel Billups!

Click here to preview [Experiencing Christmas](#) or [An Unlikely Advent](#). Then, subscribe to access these studies and hundreds more resources for Advent and beyond.

[Click here to subscribe...](#)

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### Explore Podcasts from Across the Connection

Across the connection, United Methodist clergy, laity and agencies have created and produced podcasts covering various topics.

Last month, *Times Like These*, a podcast of the West Ohio Conference Communications Team, participated with other UM podcasts in a *podcast- a -thon* sponsored by United Methodist Communications. The event showcased the diversity of programming through this media.

The audio version of participating podcasts are available for you to explore and become familiar with the different programs available.

[Click here for audio of participating podcasts from the Podcast-a-thon](#)

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## Creation Care In West Ohio Conference

Since 2008, the WOC has passed resolutions encouraging local church establishment of Green Teams, advocacy for environmental justice, support for Fossil Free UMC, and net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. As the Creation Care Task Force promotes these activities within the Conference, it seeks to determine what is already being done in local churches and where additional efforts are needed. To that end, we are asking local churches to share what they are already doing (Green Team, church garden, renewable energy, environmental advocacy, energy audits, Wild Church, etc) and what they plan to do in the near future. Send short descriptions of your efforts to the Task Force lead Bob at [bobdowns@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bobdowns@sbcglobal.net), for compilation and sharing at <https://www.westohioumc.org/climate-justice> . Also, if you are interested in joining the Task Force, notify Bob Downs at the email above.

## 2023-2024 Appointments

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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