Strategic Plan

2025–2028

West Ohio Conference

The United Methodist Church

Vision

By 2028….

- The local congregations in the West Ohio Conference are a welcoming community of people, who are worshiping and growing spiritually. Through their growth and connection to Jesus, they are moved to partner with local organizations and individuals to collectively meet the physical and social needs of their community.

- The laity and clergy are working in partnership to serve in a rapidly changing world, leading churches that are multi-generational, diverse, and highly engaged in the community.

- The West Ohio Conference is providing laity, clergy, and churches with a grounding in theological beliefs of the United Methodist Church, and is effectively delivering education, connections and resources to support local congregations and church vitality.

Strategy

Strategic Focus Area *What the WOCUMC needs to focus on to achieve the desired future state.*	**Goals** *A clear and verifiable statement about what the WOCUMC is working towards.*
Strengthen the ministry pipeline. **Champions:** Donnetta Peaks **Connectional Table Liaisons:** Barry Burns	• Increase Clergy and Accredited Laity in the Pipeline • Leadership Growth for Credentialed Leaders
Develop an approach to engage younger populations. **Champions:** Karen Cook **Connectional Table Liaisons:** Corey Perry and Tom Hofmann	• Support, equip and empower local congregations to create a culture which engages in intergenerational discipleship and leadership. • Launch a sustainable and diverse intergenerational outdoor ministry
Laity **Champions:** Karen Cook **Connectional Table Liaisons:** Christina Albrecht, and Scott Miller	• Love Boldly • Serve Joyfully • Lead Courageously

New Faith Communistes **Champions:** Brad Aycock **Connectional Table Liaisons:** Bob Hyland	• Build momentum • Solidify West Ohio as the "backbone of United Methodism" • Expand the reach of Jesus Christ's hope, grace, and love to people in every corner of Ohio.

Across all strategies, WOCUMC will work diligently to:

- Leverage United Methodist connections to ensure local community resources are available to churches.
- Provide solutions to restructure/share administrative/bureaucratic tasks of the business of doing ministry so leaders can focus on outward efforts.

Action Plan

Strengthening the Ministry Leadership Pipeline

Goal 1: Increase Clergy and Accredited Laity in the Pipeline

Objective: Ensure that all churches have credentialed pastoral leadership by increasing the number of clergy and accredited laity.

Next Steps:

Next Step	Outcome / KPI	Responsible Party	Deadline
Secure updated data on clergy pipeline needs.	Accurate projection of demand for clergy and laity leaders.	Appointive Cabinet & Clergy Leadership Team	Ongoing; Annual Reports
Reduce bureaucratic hurdles in the credentialing process.	Streamline requirements while maintaining high clergy quality.	BOM Executive Committee	July 1, 2025
Strengthen mentorship programs for potential clergy candidates.	Increase in young adults and mid-career professionals entering ministry.	BOM Executive Committee	December 2025

Goal 2: Leadership Growth for Credentialed Leaders

Objective: Support the ongoing **spiritual, emotional, theological, financial, and physical** growth of credentialed leaders to equip laity effectively.

Next Steps

Next Step	Outcome / KPI	Responsible Party	Deadline
Review and improve the **Crucible Process** for clergy development.	Ensure that seminary students and local pastors receive practical training.	BOM Executive Committee	Phase One July 1, 2024 Phase Two July 1, 2025
Highlight Youth ministries	Provide highlight of youth ministry activities throughout West Ohio	Feeder- Young people's Engagement Ann Marie Carley	Summer 2025/Fall 2025
Implement mentorship structures for **young clergy candidates**.	Better support for those discerning a call to ministry.	Mentorship Teams & Clergy Coaches	November 2024/ Summer 2025
Conduct seminary and church recruitment visits.	Increase engagement with potential clergy candidates.	OOM and BOM Exec Committee	Ongoing
Support engagement opportunities for youth and young adults.	Strengthen programs that encourage a "culture of call" among younger members.	Collaborate with Connectional Ministries Next Gen??	Throughout 2025
Implement a structured **Continuing Education** plan for clergy.	Ongoing training in theology, leadership, and pastoral care.	Office of Ministry & District Superintendents School of Ministry	2026 (Full Rollout)
Expand **Boundaries Training** for clergy and laity.	Promote best practices in ethics, financial responsibility, and inclusion.	Boundaries Training Team	Fall 2024 and
Update Laity component of Boundaries Training	Promote best practices in ethics, financial responsibility, and inclusion.	New Zenler set up (Peaks)	Summer 2025

Developing an Approach to Engage with Young People

Goal 1: Support, equip and empower local congregations to create a culture which engages in intergenerational discipleship and leadership.

Next Steps

Next Step	Outcome / KPI	Responsible Party	Deadline
Connecting with Emerging Generations	All-Ohio Youth Gathering All-Ohio Young Adult Gathering Regional Young Adult Gatherings Rotational each quarter All-Ohio Family Mission Experience All-Ohio Youth Mission Experience All-Ohio Young Adult Mission Experience	Ann Marie Carley	12/31/2026 12/31/2026 12/31/2026 12/31/2028 12/31/2027 12/31/2027
Grant development to support local churches innovating in the area of engaging emerging generations	Go! Grants & Resourcing post-award for grants showing engaging emerging generations & college ministries led by college-aged students	Ann Marie Carley Brad Aycock EGT & TDT FSNB Team Local Church Leadership	10/25 10/26 10/27 10/28
Provide resources, training, and support which help local churches engage with emerging generations	Generate Advent & Lent Resourcing Family Prayer Cards Family Conversation Cards VIM-Emerging Gen Safer Sanctuaries Lay Servant Ministry Fresh Expressions for Emerging Gen Coaching Preschool Connection Emerging Gen Connections Preschool Educator Workshop Youth Leader Workshops Children's Leader Workshops College Leader Workshops Messy Church Workshop Godly Play Workship Dream Labs Greenhouse	Ann Marie Carley Julie Carter Mariellyn Grace	Continuous

Conference Level Mentors/Coaching Collaboration	DFMN nominate individuals from Emerging Generations to shadow Conference level teams. All Lead Teams have 1 mentee/coach who is mentoring a team member a part of emerging generations. At least 50% of local churches bring a young person as a delegate to annual conference and mentors the delegate. At least 15% of our delegation to General Conference consists of members under the age of 30.	Ann Marie Carley Serena Wolfe Ami Peacock Abby Lightle Matt Overman Jodi Packard Lead Team Chairs Local lay and clergy members to annual conference	1/1/2027 1/1/2028 3/1/2028 5/31/2028

Goal 2: Launch a sustainable and diverse intergenerational outdoor ministry

Next Steps

Next Step	Outcome / KPI	Responsible Party	Deadline
Organize oversite group for the remodeling project (Interim Camp Wesley Coordinating Council)	Multi-disciplinary team meeting monthly from August 2024 December 2026	Bishop Palmer Ann Marie Carley	8/2024-8/2026
Make necessary improvements at Camp Wesley based on facilities and business plan	Working with owner's rep complete the renovations on budget	Ann Marie Carley ICWCC Tom Garske Tom Baker WSA Contractors	3/2026
Collaborate with East Ohio & Michigan Area Camps to provide summer camping opportunities	30 applicants for financial assistance, 100 summer campers from West Ohio	Ann Marie Carley Gary Jones David Berkey Local Churches Districts	8/2025
Rebrand Camp Ministries	New logo, website, and launch of summer programming	Ann Marie Carley Gary Jones TDT ICWCC	09/2025
Develop annual giving	Camperships and special projects are	Ann Marie Carley Gary Jones	10/2025

	funded by annual donors and partners	TDT Foundation ICWCC	
Hire a Camp Director	A qualified candidate is hired	Gary Jones Ann Marie Carley TDT ICWCC	09/2025
Connect with partners to gain momentum	Local church, local community partnerships support relaunch	Ann Marie Carley Gary Jones ICWCC TDT Local Churches Camp Director	1/2026
Recruit Summer Staff	All positions are filled Counselors, Resource, Kitchen	Camp Director	3/2026 3/2027 3/2028
Open Summer Registration	All registration is ready and live	Gary Jones Camp Director TDT ICWCC	01/2026 01/2027 01/2028
Provide opportunities for new campers to see Wesley	100 people visiting open houses	Gary Jones Camp Director ICWCC	4/2026 4/2027 4/2028
Create new interdisciplinary governance team for Wesley-Rules change	Governance team made up of one from each group: CFA, Trustees, RealEstate, Foundation, Trustees, Emerging Gen, TDT, HR, Cabinet	Ann Marie Carley Karen Cook	06/2026 (rule change) 12/2026 (hand off ICWCC to new governance)
Develop a long-term plan for Wesley	Master Plan Development with Kaleidoscope Inc	Gary Jones TDT Interdisciplinary Team	3/2026
Develop Capital Campaign for Emerging Generations	Utilizing Master Plan and Future Emerging Gen plans-launch campaign	Ann Marie Carley Gary Jones Susan Black New Wesley Governance TDT	2/2027
Continue Business Plan	Host at least 4 summer camps Host at least 3 user groups during summer	Gary Jones Camp Director New Wesley Governance	08/2026 08/2027 & 8/2028 12/2028 (starting 1/2028)

	Off season retreats in 2028	TDT	

Laity

Goal: Love Boldy

Objectives: Cultivate a conference-wide movement of laity engaged in inclusive, Christ-centered relationships and witness.

Next Steps:

Next Step	Outcome / KPI	Responsible Party	Deadline
Connectional Small Group Networks: Launch cross-district small groups (online and in-person) to build relationships and spiritual community among laity from diverse backgrounds.	Number of districts engaged in Connectional Small Group Networks	Board of Laity, Julie, Beth	25-Nov
Annual Laity Convocation: Empower laity to take bold action on justice issues, building relationship across conferences, and learn from key leadership	Laity participation levels and action following convocation	Lay Leaders, Board of Laity	25-Aug
Fear+less Congregations Workshops: Provide workshops on inclusive ministry, antiracism, and reconciliation practices.	Workshops held and post-learning evaluations Number of courageous conversations hosted and feedback collected	Fear+less team and coaches	25-May

GOAL 2: Serve Joyfully

Objective: Expand opportunities for laity to discover and live into their spiritual gifts through joyful acts of service across local, district, and global contexts.

Next Steps:

Conference Spiritual Gifts Inventory: Roll out a unified spiritual	% of churches using the spiritual gifts inventory	Connectional Ministries team, spiritual	26-Mar

gifts tool and training for all churches to use in lay engagement.		directors, Kim LaRue and team	
Lay-Led Mission Hubs: Support district-level hubs that coordinate lay-led outreach, mission journeys, disaster response, and community partnerships. ERT and VIM trainers lead	Growth in lay volunteerism in mission initiatives	Connectional Ministries staff, Julie and Mariellyn take the lead, VIM and ERT leaders	26-Jun
Celebrate Laity Sunday Conference-Wide: Equip churches with a shared liturgy, video testimonies, and recognition ideas for celebrating lay service annually.	Testimonials or stories collected annually	Board of Laity, Communications, Julie	25-Oct

GOAL 3: Lead Courageously

Objective: Form and deploy laity who boldly lead ministries, congregations, and conference initiatives with integrity and innovation.

Next Steps:

Conference Lay Servant Ministry Academy: Launch a multi-level academy (virtual and in-person) to educate laity in leadership, adaptive ministry, conflict transformation, and innovation.	Number of academy graduates and districts represented	Board of Laity, LSM Board, Kathy Moore, Julie	26-Sept
Emerging Lay Leader Pipeline: Identify, mentor, and support young, BIPOC, and underrepresented laity for conference and local leadership roles. Incorporate culture of call	Number and Demographics of lay leaders in conference and district roles	Connectional Ministry staff, Julie and Ann Marie take the lead	26-Jun
Small Group Leader Training: Equip laity to lead new small group ministries throughout the conference.	Number of small group leaders and small groups developed	Beth Ortiz, Julie	25-Sept

New Faith Communities

Goals: Build momentum; solidify West Ohio as the "backbone of United Methodism;" expand the reach of Jesus Christ's hope, grace, and love to people in every corner of Ohio.

Objectives:

- Strengthen West Ohio systems
- Set leadership infrastructure

Next Steps:

Next Step	Deadline
Continue collaboration with the Fresh Starts Committee in West Ohio	Now – June 30, 2025
Prep for June 29 launch of a new Hispanic/Latino church in Columbus (Iglesia Hispana)	
Finalize Go Grant application to spark new ministries (involve all conference departments)	
Plan August 28 District Strategy Team (DST) training at Sunbury UMC.	

Objectives:

- Evaluate and refine strategies and resources
- Roll out 2026 Go Grant applications
- Recruit for 2026 Greenhouse and Greenhouse: Versión Español
- Host Large Church Gathering with Bishop Jung to cast vision for planting
- Launch Resurrection Mason

Next Steps:

Next Step	Deadline
Host "Greenhouse Listening Sessions" across the conference (recruitment and visioning stops)	July 2025
August 28: DST Training at Sunbury UMC	August 28, 2025
Large Church Gathering to cast vision for church planting	October 30, 2025
Announce first round of Go Grant recipients	November, 2025
Plan Fresh Expressions training	Early 2026

Objectives:

- Launch Greenhouse ecosystems
- Equip new leaders and congregations

Next Step	Deadline
Bishop's Go Awards (celebrating past, commissioning the future)	February 1, 2026
Launch Greenhouse - Launch Hispanic/Latino Greenhouse	February 2026
Offer Fresh Expressions training for early adopters	March 2026

Objectives:

- Launch first wave of new churches (Fresh Expressions, micro churches, classic church plants)
- Evaluate and refine strategies

Next Step	Deadline
Launch 8–10 new churches (Fresh Expressions, micro churches, classic church plants)	April – December 2026
Track and evaluate church health and growth metrics	
Continue identifying and training the next wave of planters	