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## DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT BRENT WATSON TO RETIRE

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ of the Shawnee Valley District,

I am so very grateful, as your District Superintendent, for your lives and witness to the life-giving power that comes from knowing Christ. You have been a continual testimony to me as I have traveled these nine counties in Southern Ohio. I have enjoyed getting to know and walk alongside our pastors and lay leadership. What a joy it has been to be part of watching God use you to impact your communities and the individual lives of people God has placed in your care. There is still much to do and God's call upon our lives continues as we move into the future.



I write to share with you that I am requesting retirement status as of July 1, 2019. It has been my joy and pleasure to serve these 37 years in the West Ohio Conference as a local church pastor, Assistant to the Foothills District Superintendent and the Shawnee Valley District Superintendent. These past five and a half years have been filled with wonderful moments and memories as your District Superintendent and I will cherish them in my heart as I move forward in July to the next adventure. I have experienced a profound sense of meaning and purpose as I have traveled these counties and I hope that I have encouraged you to be faithful to God and to love your neighbors. My call to ministry and pastoral heart are still at the forefront of who I am and I will be discerning God's next chapter for my life. Please pray for me!

You have been a true blessing to me and I want you to know that I believe God will continue to use you in the many lives you touch. May you remain a winsome witness for Christ and may you stay encouraged as you lean forward into the future. Thank you for the privilege of serving in the beautiful Shawnee Valley District. I hope I served this District well and that together we were pleasing to Christ. I will continue to pray for you as you fix your eyes on Jesus and run the race God has set before you.

Bishop Palmer will be meeting with the Shawnee Valley District Leadership Team to discern your future District Superintendent. If you have any thoughts or input, please talk to any of the members of that team. Their names are on the District website and please pray for them and God's wisdom throughout this process.

In Christ's Love,

*Brent*



Join Bishop Gregory V. Palmer and other conference leaders for a Way Forward Gathering to discuss the called General Conference scheduled for February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO. These gatherings will include an opportunity to hear about the key proposals to the General Conference from the Commission on a Way Forward and will include a time for Q&A and sharing your thoughts about the options verbally or in writing.

These events are intended for any United Methodist, both clergy and lay. **Each person wanting to attend MUST complete an online registration form, which can be done by clicking one of the links below:**

- [Sunday, January 6, 2019, 4:00 - 5:30 pm at Christ UMC, Jackson](#)
- [Thursday, January 17, 2019, 7:00 - 8:30 pm at New Vision UMC, Cincinnati](#)

For more information about the Special Session of the General Conference and to familiarize yourself with the work of the Commission on a Way Forward as you prepare to attend one of

## SARDINIA UMC HOPES TO EXPAND SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM

As we at Sardinia United Methodist Church became more aware of the hunger faced by children in our community during the summer months when they were no longer receiving free lunch at the school, we felt called to try to address this need. We are part of an ecumenical council in Sardinia in which 6 local congregations participate, and so we worked through the Agape Council to find solutions. In the summer of 2016, we partnered with our local Lutheran congregation to provide lunch to the children at our local low-rent apartments one day a week during the summer, with the United Methodist congregation taking the first half of the summer and the Lutheran congregation taking the last half. In 2017, both churches felt the need to expand our ministry, and so each church provided a meal each week of the summer, feeding the children at the apartments two days a week.



[\(READ ENTIRE ARTICLE\)](#)

## LIBERTY CHAPEL AT SCRUBB RIDGE UMC RECEIVES WILLIAM B. MURRAY VITAL CHURCH AWARD

Liberty Chapel was founded in 1889. It still sits in the same location on top of a ridge in Eastern Adams County, Ohio. No matter what direction you take to travel to the church you soon realize you are traveling to what feels like the top of a mountain. From the front doors of the church you have a view of Peach Mountain across the valley.



We formed a Leadership Team that was dedicated to casting a vision for the church's future. As we looked over the numbers reported in the past year, we took time to pray and set goals while we game-planned together on how we could move forward; becoming not just a church in the community but a church that fills the needs of the community. As we planned for Vacation Bible School, we reached out to the other churches in the area and asked them to team up with us. [\(READ MORE\)](#)

## 2019 DISTRICT MISSION TEAM TO LAURINBURG, NORTH CAROLINA JANUARY 27 - FEBRUARY 1, 2019

JOIN US!



Join D.S., Brent Watson and the Shawnee Valley District Staff as we travel to North Carolina to assist with clean-up and rebuilding after Hurricane Matthew (October, 2016) and Hurricane Florence.

We are still in the planning stages, but here are the initial details:

- We will leave Ohio via vans / cars after church on Sunday, January 27
- Accommodations will be at a local church in North Carolina close to our assigned work site
- Work days on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
- Return to Ohio on Friday, February 1
- Only expenses will be for food (we will dine out for evening meals)
- **A deposit of \$50 by December 21 to confirm your spot on the team** (deposit will go towards purchase of breakfast and lunch prepared by the team)
- A final payment of \$50 due by January 15 (may possibly be more, depending on number of participants)
- Anyone may join us; there will be jobs for every age and every skill level (students must be at least 13 and anyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult)
- Verification of Safe Sanctuaries training is requested

Call Diana Hall in the District Office with any questions.

## JACKSON COUNTY OPENS GRACE CLINIC

The concept of opening a Free Faith-based Health Clinic was born in 2015 by a group of leaders working with the homeless community in Jackson.

Grace Clinic had it's Open House and ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 2 and will open it's doors on December 4.

The clinic's mission is to provide free, quality, accessible and holistic health care in a God-honoring way to the residents of the Jackson County area who are unable to access needed medical care through any other source. [\(Brochure\)](#)



## UNITED METHODIST RURAL ADVOCATES PLAN FOR

## 2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

While Minneapolis and the greater United Methodist Church gear up for General Conference 2020, the United Methodist Rural Advocates (UMRA) have already started the ball rolling.

Meeting in Minneapolis October 2-5, 2018, UMRA got busy with legislation to bring before the General Conference. ([READ MORE](#))



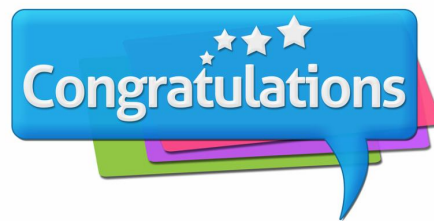
### VIETNAM MISSION UPDATES

- [November Newsletter from Quynh](#)
- [Vietnam Initiative Transition](#)
  - [Letter to Vietnam Partners](#)



### D.S. RECOGNIZES CHURCHES AT CHARGE CONFERENCES

District Superintendent Brent Watson chose 18 churches to award for Increasing Christ's Kingdom in at least one of 4 categories in 2017. The statistics came from the year-end reports in the following categories: Baptisms, Average Attendance, Professing Members, Professions of Faith.



Here are the churches that were recognized at their County Charge Conference:

Coal Grove Memorial	Concord
Cornerstone - Portsmouth	Dunkinsville
Fruitdale	Georgetown
First - Greenfield	Haverhill
Calvary - Jackson	Kingston
Leesburg	Emmanuel - Lucasville
McColm Chapel	Mt Nebo
New Hope - Proctorville	Pleasant Valley
Richmond Dale	Grace - Washington Court House

### OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON CONFERENCE TEAMS

To continue providing our Conference with innovative, qualified and effective leadership, the nomination team would like to identify persons with passion, gifts and a commitment to serve beyond their local church. I wanted to make you aware of the West Ohio Conference Leadership Interest form available on the West Ohio Conference Website. If you are interested in serving in conference leadership, please click on the following link to complete the interest form.



<http://www.westohioumc.org/conference/webform/west-ohio-conference-leadership-interest-form>

As leadership positions come open on conference boards, lead teams and committees throughout these next three years, members of the nomination team will review the interest forms to fill these openings. Additionally, in 2019, the nomination team will be tasked with developing leadership slates for all conference boards, lead teams and committees and having a pool of committed and gifted laity when we begin that process will assist us in balancing lay and clergy representation in our conference leadership.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of serving as a potential volunteer leader within the West Ohio Conference.

Peace and Blessings,

*Rev. Laura Bensman*

Chair of West Ohio Conference Nominations



Spirit and Truth Conference at United Theological Seminary -  
March 7-9, 2019 ([Press Release](#))



The **Preachers' Relief Society** is a voluntary, non-profit benevolent organization of clergy and their families in the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church. ([READ MORE](#))



**Youth 2019** is for all United Methodist Youth, grades 6-12, and their leaders. Join thousands for 4 days of discipleship, worship, Bible study, service opportunities, and life-changing fun! Expect inspiration, support, and challenges to grow authentically as a world-changing disciple of Jesus Christ. YOUTH 2019 will provide youth and their leaders with chances to connect with each other, denominational leaders, and connectional agencies to help them discover the wide variety of ministries of the United Methodist Church. YOUTH 2019 event will be held July 10-14 in Kansas City, MO. [Visit the website](#) Shawnee Valley District may offer scholarships - contact District Youth Coordinator, [Todd Wallace](#) for Information.

## SOWER

Sharing Our Witness

Enriching Relationships

The **SOWER VIM Project** is a conference wide construction mission to build new housing in the area served by Henderson Settlement, Frakes, KY. [BROCHURE](#)



**Winter camps** at Otterbein, Widewater and Wesley are just a short time away! The theme this year is "Incredible Christmas" Come spend your winter break having fun, making friends, and worshipping God! All of our cabins and restrooms are heated to make sure you stay toasty warm and there is plenty of hot chocolate to go around! [Register now](#)



**Drama Programs** available through [Martin Denes Ministries](#). *Lifting Up Jesus / Bringing the Bible to Life*. Click on the link above for more details.

## CHURCHES TO PRAY FOR THIS MONTH

- Week of December 2, 2018 - **First UMC, Greenfield**
  - Pastor Kevin Hall
- Week of December 9, 2018 - **Haverhill UMC**
  - Pastor Bob Morrow
- Week of December 16, 2019 - **Highland UMC**
  - Pastor Mary Cyrus
- Week of December 23 - **First UMC, Hillsboro**
  - Pastor Derek Russell
- Week of December 30 - **First UMC, Ironton**
  - Pastor Donald Woolum



## PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THESE WINTER EVENTS

*DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS*

- **January 6, 2019**
  - [The Way Forward: Listening, Learning, Loving with Bishop Palmer](#)
- **January 15, 2019**
  - SHV Ministry Session
- **February 2, 2019**
  - Smaller Church Pastor Training
- **February 12, 2019**
  - SHV Ministry Session
- **February 16, 2019**
  - Volunteers in Mission Training
- **March 2, 2019**
  - Leadership Training for Laity & Clergy
- **March 16, 2019**
  - Lay Servant Training

- **March 19, 2019**
  - SHV Ministry Session

**HAVE A WEBSITE, FACEBOOK PAGE OR LIVESTREAM? LET US KNOW!**

We trying to compile a list of which churches have websites, Facebook pages and livestreams. If you have a page, we'd like to list them on our district website. It's a good resource for other churches to see ideas from others. We will compile a list as we receive information.

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