



Please join us for an



No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven (Philippians 3:13–14; NLT).

The year was 1986. I had just turned 16, and sitting in the driveway was my first car. It wasn't anything fancy—a 1984 standard Chevy Chevette—but I had paid for it with babysitting money, and it represented freedom! I couldn't wait to get on the road. There were just a few things standing in my way: learning to drive and learning to drive a standard.

I will never forget my first time out on the road with my friend who was teaching me to drive. He kept giving instructions: Keep your hands at 10 and 2, keep your eyes on the road, check your rearview mirror every 30 seconds, let up with your right foot, press down with your left foot, shift gears, and don't wreck the car!

It was all very overwhelming. How in the world can a person do all of those things at the same time? I wondered. My dreams of freedom and the open road were fading before my eyes. My car jerked and stalled at each attempt to drive. And then it happened—it all clicked, and I had my license, and with five dollars to fill my tank, the road of possibilities lay in front of me.

Throughout these past two years, we've often felt like a 16-year-old learning to drive a Chevy Chevette. We have spent countless hours learning new skills, readjusting course, juggling more than seems humanly possible, all while trying not to wreck the whole thing. We are tired. We are frustrated. We (or maybe this is just me) are grumpy. We long for freedom.

The pandemic still rages on as we cautiously peer into 2022, looking forward to the possibilities that a new year brings. We look forward while simultaneously looking in the rearview mirror at the past year.

Many of us see the New Year as a chance to do better. We make resolutions to lose weight, quit smoking, quit swearing, read our Bibles more, pray more, exercise more .

The problem with resolutions is that by the middle of January, we'll have broken them and fallen back into our previous habits. It can all become overwhelming, especially when we get caught up in the habit of being overly critical of ourselves or others. We begin to think of all the things that are wrong with our lives and our churches. I have heard many of you lament that people are not back in the pews on Sunday morning. Many of you are exhausted from the constantly changing demands placed on your daily lives. We long for a better day, a better year.

I have GOOD NEWS! God loves us—you and me! That holiday that we just celebrated—remember that one—just last month: It was all about God's love and forgiveness. God came to us as a baby in a manger to be with us—our Emmanuel. We do not have to wait for a new calendar year to start fresh. We do not have to wait for the pandemic to be over to live into our hope. God is the freedom of the open road with endless possibilities! All we have to do is ask for directions and then follow God's lead.

Give yourself a break. No one is perfect except Jesus! Let God be God. Lean into Jesus and let the Holy Spirit transform your life day by day as you learn to accept the grace that is given to you.

Continued on the next page

Southern
Hills
District
Hours
Mon—Thurs
9-3

740-255-5691

Southern
Hills District

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The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

When life becomes overwhelming and your frustration level rises, follow the example of Jesus. At numerous times in scripture, we see Jesus drawing away from the crowds and the demands on his life to sit alone in prayer with God. At other times, he drew aside with his inner circle of friends. Jesus' example teaches us that balance is essential for a healthy Christian life.

The district strategy team and conference leadership are busy planning intentional times when clergy can retreat from the overwhelming demands of ministry during a pandemic. The first of these events will take place at the Epworth Center on February 20 from 4–6 p.m. This will be a time for our district team of clergy to draw aside from the obligations and demands that we all face. We are working hard to find some quality Christian entertainment so that we can laugh, enjoy fellowship, and replenish our spirits. During that event, you will hear of opportunities for district clergy to take additional time away at the Epworth Center. You will also hear of the Bishop's Day Apart that is being planned for April 2 at North Canton Faith.

As your Superintendent, I **strongly encourage** our clergy to participate in one or all of the events. This is important! Our laity are tired, frustrated, and weary. They need to witness strong clergy leadership who understand the importance of prayer, being in community, self-care, and balance. Lead by example. Reconnect with your community of clergy, brothers and sisters. Be intentional about stepping aside for times of prayer and devotion. I will be checking in on each of you to hold you accountable in taking this time, and I ask that you do the same for me.

Laity, I ask that you do the same. Stay connected to your faith communities. Take time to sit alone with God in prayer. Take time to replenish your Spirit.

Encourage one another in this endeavor and hold one another accountable. If we can learn to do this one simple thing, then I promise that we will have the Happy New Year that we are dreaming of. With God, every day brings the chance to start over. And God gives us the strength and wisdom to transform our lives.

May 2022 will be the year when "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). A year where we can heal from the brokenness of the past. A year when dreams of gender, racial, and economic equality will be realized. A year when neighbor will love neighbor, the weak will be made strong, and the proud will humble themselves. May it be a year that we take the church outside of our walls and into our communities. A year when more people accept God's transforming love, allowing the grace of Jesus to wrap around them and know that they are valued.

May this be the year when nothing distracts us from being the Church and the people that God is calling us to be. This be the year when we accept the freedom that God has already given us!

On bended knees,

Rev. Laura



WINTER MISSION ACADEMY 2022: All sessions will be on Zoom at 12:00 p.m. EST / 11:00 a.m. CST / 10:00 a.m. MST / 9:00 a.m. PST. (sessions will be recorded if you are unable to attend live)

The Zoom link will be sent out to all registrants a few days before the Mission Academy begins.

Monday, Jan. 31: Engaging the Community for Social Transformation—Rev. Brian Tener of Discipleship Ministries

Tuesday, Feb. 1: Creating the Family Mission Experience—

Amy Foc, Kimmy Farone, Collette Ndobe

Wednesday, Feb. 2: Volunteerism with Justice For Our Neighbors—Rev. Tom Lank

Thursday, Feb. 3: Raising Money (Without Embarrassment) For Your UMVIM Project—Cesie Scheuermann

Friday, Feb. 4: Equipping the Church for Preparedness and Resilience for Extreme Weather and Disaster

Saturday, Feb. 5: Mobile Photography and Mission—Rev. Matt Lacey, SEJ UMVIM Exec. Director

Sign up link.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6vWa9ckoRsfrgx1iijApyXGt1xtDTSfZ3N7wxyGowF63Aw/viewform>

SAVE THE DATE

February 20, 2022

Who: Pastoral Leadership

What: Southern Hills Pastoral Leadership Event

When: 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Dinner included

Where: Epworth Center -301 North Main St.,
Bethesda, Ohio

Come fellowship, be fed spiritually and physically,
& learn about opportunities available for Pastors in
the Southern Hills District

R.S.V.P. to Rev. Laura White at 740-255-5691 or
lwhite@eocumc.com

More information to follow.

Spring District Conference

APRIL 24, 2022
Location tbd

**Anticipated dates for the
Charge Conference Season 2022**

Clergy Consultations:

August 22 through September 1

SPRC Consultations:

The month of September

Charge Conferences:

October 2 through October 9

I want to thank everyone
for your beautiful Gifts of
love & kindness over the
Advent and Christmas
seasons.

Love, Rev. Laura



Thank you all so
much for my
Christmas gifts.
It's special to be
remembered...

Mollie

YEAR END REPORTS

**If, as you are reading this your year end
reports are not entered You Are Probably
Late.**

**Please call the Conference Office and get
an extension for your church, then let
your D. S. know when she can expect your
church entry will be completed.**

Church Audits

Due MARCH 30, 2022



Please Send your audit to the District Office,
PO Box 340, Cambridge OH 43725

You can find the Audit Report on the eocumc.com
web page.

A) About Us....

B) Districts/Churches

C) Southern Hills....

D) Forms.... (Church Forms) 3/4's down the page
you will see listed -Audit Report

E)

If it is a problem having your audit completed let us
know. We will help you find someone in your area
that is able to complete your audit. (It would be at
your expense if there is a fee for the service)

◇ **LAY SERVANT TRAINING**

Saturday—APRIL 9, 2022

8:00 a.m.—5:30 p.m. Woodsfield UMC

**Are you interested in exploring how you
might serve in your local church?**

The Southern Hills District Lay Servant Ministries
Spring 2022 Training will be held on Saturday, April
9 at the Woodsfield United Methodist Church in
Woodsfield, Ohio.

The "Basic" training will be offered for anyone
interested in exploring what it means to be a lay
servant.

The "Advanced" training will be "Devotional Life in
the Wesleyan Tradition." Registration flyers will be
available on the SH District website and/or from
your pastor in late January.

For more information, contact the District Office or
email Linda Morrow at lemorrow74@gmail.com

**Keep up on what is going on in the East Ohio Conference, messages from the Bishop, all events, forms
and good articles. www.eocumc.com**

Southern Hills District Office
641 Steubenville Avenue
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Cambridge OH 43725

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2022 Summer Camp

(See eocumc.com for detailed information on each camp)

[Camp Aldersgate](#), [Camp Asbury](#), and [Camp Wanake](#) each offer **Summer Camps** and year-round retreat facilities. Participants have incredible experiences while they make new friends, try new things, learn about God, learn about themselves, and then take it all home.

East Ohio Camps & Retreat Ministries offer something for everyone – children, youth, adults and families – and can provide accommodations year-round for a small intimate setting or a large group gathering.

Southern Hills offers scholarships for youth attending camps.
The Scholarship form is on our web page. Contact us for information.

2022 Summer Camp Programs ALSO looking for Christian women and men for summer staff positions (counselors, lifeguards, program staff, food service, administration and maintenance. Go to www.eocsummercamps.org and click on the “Staff & Vol” tab for more information.

Nominees Needed for 2022 Members-at-Large

Southern Hills District has openings to attend 2022 Annual Conference—June 9-June 11

If you would be interested in attending please talk with your pastor. Upon approval of your church council your pastor will submit your name to this office and you will be added to the list to be brought to The District Conference of 2022. Annual Conference will be held at the Akron John Knight Center.

ARE YOUR CONGREGATIONS
BEING THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS
in your communities?

Do you have a program that is WORKING?
-share that with us so other churches can hear.

How much easier is it to be connectional and not
have to reinvent the wheel? Let's DO this and
let's DO this together!!!

The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.