



May 30, 2024
A Note from Pastor April

HUMC Family,

Last night the West Ohio Annual Conference convened at Capital University in Bexley, Ohio.

Each year, equal numbers of clergy and lay delegates from each church across West Ohio gather to worship, pray, commission and ordain new clergy, and vote on important matters before the annual conference of the United Methodist Church.



Your two pastors, along with your Lay Delegates, Stephanie Harrell and Michael Haney, will be representing our church as this gathering proceeds over the course of this week.

It's difficult to fully articulate how much the landscape has changed since our last annual gathering in Dayton a year ago. This will be reflected in some really noticeable ways this week:



- We will commission Angie Cox as a Provisional Elder, West Ohio's first OUT LGBTQ candidate in our history (to my knowledge). Her commissioning comes after being rejected by the board five times in a row, and after her candidacy was reconsidered at our recent May meeting in light of the changes at General Conference.
- We will have no public debates over the sacred worth or affirmation of LGBTQ persons in the UMC. The decision of the General Conference to remove restrictive language around the ordination of LGBTQ clergy and the officiating of same-sex marriages in the church has shifted the conversation and created more space for

inclusion to be practiced freely in the church. (To see the full list of things approved at our General Conference 2024, click [HERE](#).)

<https://westohioumc.org/news/recap-general-conference-legislation>

- We will celebrate the retirement of our resident bishop, Bishop Gregory Palmer, after 12 years of service to our Annual Conference. His retirement will mark a new beginning where West Ohio Annual Conference and East Ohio Annual Conference will share the same bishop, starting September 1.
- We will prepare ourselves for next year's ratification of the Regionalization plan passed at General Conference. This will create a separate organizational structure where the U.S. churches can make policy decisions separate from the global body.

Our numbers will be decidedly smaller, after the disaffiliation of 300 churches across the conference. Our financial decisions will reflect this, with significant strategic reductions in how we allocate funds. I also expect there to be less contention and arguing, more worship and praise for the season we have all been through, and time to connect around the table to imagine what may be next for our collective witness as the United Methodist Church in West Ohio.

Our theme is appropriate for such a time as this: "God is Able."

"Now to [God] who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV)



I hope you will be praying for your delegates and pastors as we gather this week.

By the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us, may we sow seeds of new possibilities, that we may yield the fruit of a season of growth, healing, and love in the years to come.

Pastor April



The Rev. April Blaine

Lead Pastor

ablaine@hilliardumc.org

614.876.2403 (church office)

<https://hilliardumc.org/people/rev-april-blaine/>



Hilliard
United Methodist Church

God Loves You  No Matter What

5445 Scioto Darby Road
Hilliard, Ohio 43026 | 614.876.2403
info@hilliardumc.org
www.hilliardumc.org