

# Footnotes from the Foothills



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February 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Foothills District,

It's hard for me to believe that I have been your district superintendent for nearly seven years now. My, how quickly time has passed! Today, Bishop Palmer has announced that on July 1, 2021, I will once again become the senior pastor of the Purple Door United Methodist Church, a multi-site church now consisting of the Grove City Main Campus and the St. Mark's Columbus Campus. Some may recall that I served in the same role as the senior pastor of the Purple Door (Grove City UMC) prior to becoming your superintendent from 2008 to 2014.

As I write this letter, I am mindful of how inadequate words are to express my gratitude and appreciation for all of you and for the ministry we have shared for the past seven years. Ours is a partnership of clergy and laity, of local churches, of district and conference leadership all working together to carry out the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul writes in a couple of his letters an interesting phrase: "I was made a minister." I have viewed this to mean that while our work has a common focus wherever we serve, there are unique factors in each place that necessitate us being shaped and conformed in the very particular places where we are sent in the name of Christ. I would adapt the apostle's phrase and say that you have **"made me a superintendent"** and I am indebted to you for the ways you have guided, counseled, taught, and shaped me during these years.

I also want to say, "thank you" for the way you welcomed me and Rachel back "home" to southeastern Ohio. Many of you know I was raised in Zanesville and my home congregation is Central Trinity UMC, so the Foothills District will always hold a very special place in my heart. Rachel and I will miss being among you!

When I began my ministry on the district in 2014, I was faced with a steep learning curve and many challenges. Sherri Rogers, my Administrative Assistant, knew just what to do to help me succeed at my responsibilities. We became a team. She graciously familiarized me with processes and best practices in the office and offered administrative suggestions of how to move things forward efficiently. Sherri was and is a God-send! In addition, I was extremely blessed to partner with "Assistants to the Superintendents" Rev. Steve McGuire and Rev. Robbie Scott and district treasurer Merv Davis. These three men were invaluable to helping me do my work effectively as your superintendent. I am indebted to them and know they will remain my lifelong friends.

We will have an opportunity at our District Spring Conference in May to say goodbye and give thanks to God for this season of ministry with one another. Until then, there is still critical work to be done in the process of appointments and consultation, and in preparing to transition the district for our new superintendent who will be announced soon.

Please email or call should you have need of me and I will respond when I am available. Thank you for your leadership as we now focus on a very seamless transition to ensure that the Foothills District continues to be the best district in all of United Methodism!

I love you all!



Dennis Miller  
Foothills District Superintendent, 2014-2021

**Philippians 1:27: “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”**



## Online Leadership Training Event

Saturday, February 13, 2021 - 8:30 am to 12:00 pm



**The Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr.**  
**Keynote Speaker**

The West Ohio Conference is pleased to offer this online training to our pastors and church leadership across the conference this year, featuring three nationally known, dynamic speakers. We hope that they will inspire you with ideas about how to navigate beyond our current environment and work together to reach others and make Disciples for Jesus Christ. Because we know that different-sized churches face different challenges, this event will feature workshop tracks focused on both small churches and on medium-sized/larger churches.

Dr. Powe is the Director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership. An ordained elder in the Baltimore/Washington Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, he is committed to helping urban congregations and congregations in transitional areas to flourish through community partnering. His research interests are church revitalization, urban theology and Methodist theology. Dr. Powe is the author of *The Adept Church: Navigating Between a Rock and a Hard Place*; *Transforming Evangelism: The Wesleyan Way of Sharing Faith*; *New Wine, New Wineskins: How African American Congregations Can Reach New Generations*; and *Just Us or Justice?: Moving Toward a Pan-Methodist Theology*.  
[Additional information.](#) [Publications.](#)

**Rev. Karl Vaters**  
**Small Church Track**

Rev. Karl Vaters is pastor of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, California, and is the founder of [NewSmallChurch.com](http://NewSmallChurch.com), a blog that encourages, connects, and equips innovative small church pas-



tors. The New Small Church, "exists to encourage, connect and equip innovative Small Church leaders. That's not just a slogan – it's what we actually plan to do. We want to see better, stronger, healthier Small Churches, led by passionate, prayerful, capable, innovative and loving pastors. We believe being small is not a problem to fix, but a strategy God wants to use. Most Small Church leaders have not been told that – or at least they haven't been told it enough. If we can help turn up the volume on that message, we will have done what we set out to do." Karl is the author of *Small Church Essentials* and *The Grasshopper Myth*. [Additional information.](#) [Publications.](#)



**Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter**  
**Medium-Sized & Large Church Track**

Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter is passionate about reconnecting spiritual leaders with their God-given powers to co-create miracles with the divine. Her award-winning group coaching program, Creating a Culture of Renewal® has energized church leaders across the country to reclaim their calling and to grow their ministries. Known for teaching leaders how to bring out the best in the people who frustrate them the most, her work transforms church leaders and the congregations they serve. Rebekah is the author of *Dream Like Jesus: Deepen Your Faith and Bring the Impossible to Life*, *The Jew Named Jesus*, *Green Church*, *Green Church Leader Guide*, and *7 Simple Steps to Green Your Church*.

[Additional information.](#) [Publications.](#)

**Schedule of Events:**

8:30 - 9:30 am - Opening remarks by Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, and Keynote Address by the Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr. on "The Adept Church"

9:45 am - 12:00 pm—Workshops

**Small Church Track**

9:45 - 10:45 am - "The Post-Pandemic Church: What's Working in Congregations That are Thriving," with Rev. Karl Vaters

11:00 am -12:00 pm - "Three Ways a Small Church can be an Effective Church," with Rev. Karl Vaters

**Medium-Sized and Large Church Track**

9:45 - 10:45 am - "7 Surprise Blessings of the Pandemic," with Rev. Rebekah Simon Peter. *The global pandemic brought death, devastation and disorientation. At the same time, it also delivered up unexpected gifts that strengthened the church, deepened spiritual life, and revealed God's unshakable presence. In this interesting and interactive workshop, discover these 7 surprise blessings, and how they impacted you. Take your first steps into the new reality these blessings have revealed.*

11:00 am - 12:00 pm - "DARE to Dream Like Jesus in 2021", with Rev. Rebekah Simon Peter. *Now that the pandemic has revealed new ways of being human, and of being in community, learn how to build on that reality. In this exciting and compelling workshop, take the dare to dream like Jesus in 2021. Following Jesus' example, go beyond what you thought was possible, to bring renewal to your congregation and community. Plan your next practical steps to bring Jesus' dream to life in your setting.*

**Cost**

There is a fee of \$10 to participate in this training, which includes a copy of Rev Dr. Powe's book *The Adept Church*. The book will be mailed to you upon registering.

**Registration Deadline**

You must register by **Wednesday, February 3rd at 5:00 pm**. [Click here to Register.](#)  
**(you must log in to register)**

## Tips for Ash Wednesday during COVID-19

Ash Wednesday, **February 17** this year, is the beginning of the Lent-Easter-Pentecost-cycle of the Christian year.

Each year, Christians worldwide attend church services centered on the liturgical act known as the imposition of ashes. But as COVID-19 cases continue to soar, churches are left with the task of re-envisioning these liturgical markers while keeping faithful to their importance and meaning in the community of faith. Below are some suggested considerations for your preparations for Ash Wednesday. We begin by sharing some scenarios and then offering some practical ideas for imposing the ashes safely. We encourage you to take this information and work with your own worship team to contextualize it for your community of faith. [Read more here.](#)



## Monthly Ministry Development

In a world wrecked by big changes, many of us have discovered that consistency and companionship are two things we need most to keep moving forward. In 2021, All In Community is offering three monthly opportunities designed for mutual discipleship and en-

couraging engagement. Each offering will harness the collective compassion, wisdom, and innovation from the group gathered online as we seek to bring hope and healing in the midst of harmful circumstances. Mark your calendar and plan to participate in the following monthly events:

**Every Second Saturday Series** – Topics include caring for victims, emerging ministry perspectives and practices, trauma-informed ministry and creating healing communities for reentry. 2nd Saturdays @ 10AM on Zoom. [Register here](#)

**Saturday Circles** – Join the restorative environment of a Listening Circle, where topics include the pandemic's impact, family incarceration, victimization and racial justice. 4th Saturdays @ 10-11:30AM on Zoom. [Register here](#)

**Ministry Mondays** – Learn about specific All In Community ministry pathways such as HOPE Letters ministry, AIC Grants & Community Engagement, and the 72-Hour Pack Pilot Project. 4th Mondays @ 7:00-8:30PM on Zoom. [Register here](#)

For more information, email [allincommunity@wocumc.org](mailto:allincommunity@wocumc.org).



Knowing how to navigate the church in a pandemic is a challenge. Adapting and improving the way we lead during this season is a must. Bishop Gregory Palmer's Leadership Clinics are live, online opportunities to give you access to leadership insights from local, national, and global leaders. These proven influencers will challenge and inspire you, regardless of your title or position. You'll have the opportunity not only to hear from these leaders, but also to have some of your questions answered. When we focus on growing our leadership skills for positive kingdom influence, we can strengthen relationships and maximize the church's impact, leading to transformation in our communities. We hope you'll join Bishop Palmer and his guests for these monthly Leadership Clinics.

## From Social Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship

March 4th, 2021 10:00 AM through 12:00 PM  
Virtual via Zoom

During this month's Leadership Clinic, Bishop Palmer's guest will be Pastor Nona Jones, the globally renowned expert on social media ministry. Nona will provide her unique point of view on the age of digital discipleship from her bestselling book "From Social Media to Social Ministry." You'll learn practical steps to take your church's ministry and discipleship to the next level, into the digital age. Bring your questions and be prepared to learn.

Nona Jones is an author, speaker, and head of Faith-Based Partnerships at Facebook. An expert in expanding the influence of the Gospel through social technology, she coined the term "Social Ministry," and partners with churches and ministries to help them fulfill the Great Commission through digital impact. [Check out her new book: From Social Media to Social Ministry](#)

Please log in to register. [Log in](#)

Or create an account to register. [Create new account](#)

West Ohio Leaders - per person - \$20

Non-West Ohio Leaders - per person - \$40

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## Virtual ERT Recertification Class Set for February 20

On Saturday, February 20, from 9 am-1 pm, West Ohio will hold a virtual ERT recertification class using ZOOM online. The four-hour course will be taught by West Ohio ERT trainers and is approved by UMCOR.

Registrants must complete a background check and submit a photo prior to the training in order to participate. The class is only for ERT's who have already completed the 8-hour basic course and need to recertify.

The class costs \$20 and is limited to 15 participants, so register now! [Click here](#) for more information or to register.

Questions? Email [mgrace@wocumc.org](mailto:mgrace@wocumc.org).

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## West Ohio VIM Teams Plan Return to Mexico

Four West Ohio Volunteers in Mission teams plan to travel to Mexico in 2021 – in May, July, September and November. Last year, all but

January's team was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, which contributed to a shortfall in funding for the Methodist ministries in Mexico. With a vaccine on the way, and better safeguards now in place on both sides of the border, the VIM team leaders feel it is time to return. Mission teams to Mexico are coordinated through Manos Juntas, the licensed healthcare ministry of the Methodist Church of Mexico.

Each short-term mission consists of two to three days of mission service along with travel and set up. Each team is comprised of medical professionals (doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, specialists, nurses and dietitians), translators, pastors, educators and people willing to share the love of Jesus. Some teams also include a construction project and/or visiting the children's home. For more information, or to register online, visit [www.westohioumc.org/mexicovim](http://www.westohioumc.org/mexicovim).

### 2021 Annual Conference June 6th & June 7th

The 52nd session of the West Ohio Conference will be held Sunday June 6, 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Monday, June 7, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Bishop Palmer and the Planning Committee unanimously decided to hold a virtual conference since the COVID pandemic is still a serious concern. The theme of Annual Conference is "Run the race with perseverance" based on the scripture Hebrews 12:1-3.



"A vaccination is here and brings great hope. However, it is unclear as to how many people will be vaccinated by June. So, we must forge on with our plans

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Lunch 12:00-1:00 p.m.**

**E-Mails: Office - [foothillsdistrict@wocumc.org](mailto:foothillsdistrict@wocumc.org)**

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**Check us out on the Web:  
[www.foothillsdistrict.org](http://www.foothillsdistrict.org)**