

Pastoral Skills Building Retreat

***For all ministers (ordained, commissioned, licensed, authorized) in the Ohio Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Heartland Conference (United Church of Christ)



Camp Christian, Magnetic Springs, OH (near Marysville)

Begins with lunch on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 and concludes after breakfast on Thursday, January 15, 2026

We are planning this retreat around a workshop format. Each day we will offer several workshops - one or two workshops may be offered twice depending on interest. You may want to attend workshops, you may want to spend time in conversation with a colleague, your regional minister or conference minister. You may want to rest, read, walk.

What does your spirit need?

We will also offer worship, meditation, and yoga.

Evenings will offer more time for one-on-one or small group conversations as well as games - or go to bed early.

What does your body need?

The cost is \$175 for those who want a room in the lodge (shared bedroom; bathroom down the hall) and \$150 for those who sleep in the bunk rooms (shared bathrooms in each cabin). All rooms are heated. We expect that the 20 lodge rooms will reserve quickly.

PLANNING TEAM

The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brill, CALM Consulting & Coaching

The Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon, Senior Minister, UCC, Medina

The Rev. Brian Shields, Transitional Interim Minister, Community Christian Church, North Canton

LEADERSHIP TEAM

(In addition to the above planning team members)

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Blodgett, Independent Consultant

Edward Boyte, The Listening Group

The Rev. Allen Harris, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Ohio

The Rev. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister, Heartland Conference, UCC

workshops!



Planning Worship Series for Lent 2026, led by Kelly Brill

Bring your Bible and a notebook or laptop. Together we'll brainstorm several approaches to Lent 2026: worship and preaching series, some based on the lectionary.

Keeping My Preaching Mojo Over the Long Haul, led by Kelly Brill

Kelly was a local church pastor for over 40 years, 30 in the same congregation. She can speak with experience about strategies for keeping one's enthusiasm for preaching and sermon preparation, and share tips on effective preaching.

Writing as a Spiritual Practice, led by Kelly Brill

Bring something to write on and something to write with. We'll engage in some writing exercises together and talk about the ways writing can enhance our personal journeys and be used in the congregation.

Planning Events in an Age of Solitude, led by Barbara Blodgett

Popular videos circulating these days show people relishing the moment their plans get cancelled so that they can stay home instead. Some say we've entered an age of self-imposed solitude. If so, getting people to come out and attend our events will become even more challenging. In this workshop, we will learn ways to plan compelling gatherings, issue intriguing invitations, host engaging events, and gather people around important purposes.

Making Decisions Together, led by Barbara Blodgett

Has your group ever had a hard time arriving at a decision? Are decisions ever contested? It could be that your decision-making process itself is at issue. In addition to different personal temperaments, there are different decision-making cultures. In this workshop we will learn how to set the stage for good group decisions and practice one process.

Addressing Conflict in Your Congregation, led by Ed Boyte

Lifelong mediator and PK (pastor's kid) Ed Boyte of The Listening Group leads a practical conversation on how early engagement can prevent church conflicts from escalating. This workshop will also explore when it's wise to bring in outside help, offering tools and insight for pastors navigating challenging dynamics.

Practices of Effective Communication and Collaboration, led by Brian Shields

The Rev. Brian Shields will facilitate conversation with participants through using a one-page guide called Practices of Effective Communication and Collaboration. This document has benefits for naming the parameters of engagement for important conversations within congregations.

Evangelism that Works Today, led by the Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

Gone are the days of door-knocking and tracts on windshields. Today's evangelism is relational, authentic, and rooted in justice. In this session, we'll explore practical approaches to sharing good news in a world suspicious of religion. Learn how to invite others into a faith community not with fear or formulas—but through story, connection, and meaningful engagement.

Social Media Best Practices, led by Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

Social media is not going away. This workshop offers a crash course in using social media as a tool for ministry. Discover strategies for consistent content, healthy engagement, and digital hospitality. Whether you're a social media novice or a reluctant poster, you'll leave with practical ideas and tools you can use right away.

Your Free Research Assistant: How AI can help make you more effective and efficient, led by the Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

When something new comes across the threshold, we tend to view it with fear. In this presentation, the Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon will talk about a role-playing game he got for Christmas, his niece who codes A.I., and how insights from both helped him become a more effective and efficient pastor. And you just might, too.

Understanding Homelessness in America, led by Ed Boyte

Ed explores the root causes of America's homelessness crisis. This interactive session helps pastors understand who is affected, why, and how local congregations can become part of meaningful, lasting solutions.