



**The Canal District of the  
East Ohio Area of The United Methodist Church**

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**Rev. Dr. Tracy S. Malone, Resident Bishop – East Ohio Conference**

**Rev. Angela Lewis, Conference Superintendent – Canal District**

**Megan Myers, District Administrator – Canal District**

*“How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord. my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King, and my God. Blessed is those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Blessed is those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.”*

Psalm 84:1-5 (NIV)

Dear United Methodist on a Pilgrimage,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As an Easter people we celebrate that God gifts us with life beyond death and new beginnings after endings.

You are receiving this letter because we know you are on a pilgrimage. *A pilgrimage is a holy journey that leads one to a deeper understanding of self and a closer relationship with God. The concept of pilgrimage deeply aligns to us as United Methodists as we move towards God in our process of transformation.*

The congregation in which you hold your membership, \*CHURCH NAME\*, has voted to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. You may have voted to remain United Methodist and are now eager to find a United Methodist Church community that will welcome you with enthusiasm and grace. You may be feeling dismayed or disoriented and not sure how to proceed. You may have affirmed the vote to disaffiliate, and we bless your pathway forward.

In this season of uncertainty, I invite you to join others who are on a similar pilgrimage by exploring Lighthouse churches and Oasis groups in your region. Lighthouse churches are established congregations that are dedicated to the mission and the connection of The United Methodist Church. Oasis groups are intentional spaces for connection, healing, and spiritual growth.

The Canal District will host four initial gatherings to welcome United Methodists on a pilgrimage. We will commune with one another, acknowledge grief, and worship. You are invited to attend one or more of these gatherings:

- ❖ Wednesday, May 17 @ 6:00 p.m. via Zoom
- ❖ Saturday, May 20 @ 11:30 a.m.: Kent Free Library, 312 W. Main St, Kent OH 44240
- ❖ Thursday, May 25 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom
- ❖ Saturday, May 27 @ 11:30 a.m.: Doylestown – Wayne County Library, 169 N Portage St, Doylestown OH 44230

Please RSVP to the district office for which gathering you wish to attend, so that we can share the appropriate link &/or share an estimated number to the locations we are holding in-person gatherings. As well, if you have questions about these gatherings for United Methodists on a pilgrimage, please email Megan Myers, district administrator at [canaltuscdistoffice@eocumc.com](mailto:canaltuscdistoffice@eocumc.com).

I also encourage you to visit the East Ohio website and view the new resource designed to support you during this time of pilgrimage. There you will find information on Lighthouse churches, Oasis groups, how to move your membership, and more.

Together let us trust Jesus to lead us into a future with hope.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angela Lewis", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rev. Angela Lewis  
Conference Superintendent of the Canal District