

2026 Tools for Ministry: March 14, 2025 at Asbury UMC in Allentown

Speaking, caring, leading, praying, studying, and reaching out – these faithful acts form the very core of our life and witness as disciples of Jesus Christ! This year, our Tools for Ministry program will focus on these foundational basics of living out our faith. These workshops have been designed to equip people in the pews – whether you’re new to church ministry, are growing in leadership in your local congregation, or have responded to the call to serve as a lay pastor. In addition, we’ve included opportunities to learn more about special ministry programs like Pathways: Bridges and United Women of Faith, and a special conversation on the future of small church ministry. We hope you’ll join us!

And pastors: don’t just *send* your laity to Tools – join them! This year, we’ve created two workshops designed with the needs of seasoned clergy in mind, too. Join us for opportunities to grow closer to one another (ReCONNECT) and closer to Christ (ReNEW).

Please note: All workshops will be offered during both sessions unless otherwise noted.

Workshop Title	Facilitator & Bio	Working Description
Telling the Story: Speaking, Preaching, and Good News	Rev. Candy LaBar <i>Rev. Candy LaBar currently serves as the Pastor of Bethlehem: Wesley UMC and the chair of the District Resource Team. She is, at her core, a storyteller, and brings her love of story to the pulpit. She enjoys good iced coffee, bad reality television, thought-provoking podcasts, and challenging crochet patterns.</i>	Preaching is storytelling – and together, we’ll discover new ways to tell God’s great story to others. In this workshop, we’ll consider not what you want to say, but what you want your listeners to hear as you share the good news of Christ. Whether you preach regularly, fill in the pulpit from time to time, or just want to get more comfortable sharing your testimony with others, this workshop has something for you.
Caring Ministries in the Local Church	Rev. Wendy Bellis <i>Rev. Wendy Bellis has served churches of various sizes and locations across the Eastern Pennsylvania</i>	We will talk about the “Who, When, Where, Why and How’s” of caring for the congregation of which we are a part. Whether you are the pastor or someone on the care team, or find you have the gift of compassion, in

	<p><i>Conference for more than 40 years. Caring for church members and helping members to care for one another has been a significant focus for her in each setting.</i></p>	<p>this workshop we will learn of ways to reach out to people in the hospital, nursing facilities, or the home through communion, prayer, and encouragement or simply listening.</p>
<p>Holy Order in Methodist Mayhem: A Primer in Local Church Admin</p>	<p>Rev. Jeffrey Weber</p> <p><i>Rev. Jeffrey Weber is a full-time, licensed local pastor of Reeders UMC. Previously, he had been a professor of public administration at East Stroudsburg University. Prior to becoming a pastor, he had served in multiple lay positions in the local church and on the conference level in both the Louisville Annual Conference and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.</i></p>	<p>This overview introduces the core structures, roles, and responsibilities of the local church, district, and annual conference. The course is from the perspective of the local church and is designed to orient rather than provide detailed specific training in committee areas. Through a concise presentation, some real-world examples, and a short Q&A, participants will leave with a biblical and theological understanding of administration, a clear map of governance and oversight, fiduciary duties, personnel basics, and the key places to look for detailed answers in any of the areas.</p>
<p>Planning Worship All Year: Prayer, Sacraments, and Resources for the new or occasional leader</p>	<p>Rev. Monica Guepet</p> <p><i>Rev. Monica Guepet has been in ministry for the last quarter of a century with churches of all sizes (small, medium, and large) and geographic settings (country, town, urban). Pastor Monica, as she is called, has been an assisting elder, teacher, local church pastor, mother, spouse, and much more. She loves planning worship and prayer from the season of sun to wind to leaves to snow (which she loves!)</i></p>	<p>Together, we will walk through the liturgical year with resources for planning worship and prayer from New Year to Christmas. We will also look at sacraments and creative ways in which we can praise God and engage God's people. If you are planning worship regularly, occasionally or what to learn about extemporaneous prayer, this is the workshop for you!</p>

<p>Your One Stop Guide to Leading a Small Group or Bible Study</p>	<p>Rev. Rick Brown</p> <p><i>Pastor Rick Brown is an Ordained Elder (2017). He has been serving in pastoral ministry since 2012 in which he has served three congregations. He has a passion for connecting biblical principles with practical application. He is married to his wife, Kim, and has two daughters.</i></p>	<p>Are you about to lead your first Bible Study or small group? Not sure where to start or what approach to take? This course will take you through major approaches to leading a group, finding helpful resources, and close with a live example. Whether you are leading your first group or are just looking for a new take to keep your small group style fresh this course will have something for you.</p>
<p>Effective Outreach: The Attitudes, Actions, and Strategies that Make a Difference.</p>	<p>Rev. Scott Kuhnle</p> <p><i>Rev. Scott Kuhnle is a Licensed Local Pastor who has served as the Director of Youth Ministry (2009-2021) and Associate Pastor (2020-2021) of East Stroudsburg UMC and Pastor (2020-2024) of Black Creek UMC. He currently serves as the Pastor of Effort UMC. Scott's gifts in ministry center around preaching, teaching, outreach, and helping people get excited about fulfilling the great commission in their local communities.</i></p>	<p>In our time together, we will explore practical ways to think about, plan, and implement outreach ministries. In addition, we will discuss ways to get your congregation excited about investing in outreach ministries, and we will conclude with a time for you to share your outreach success stories.</p>
<p>Pathways Bridges Workshop: Cultivating Curiosity and Building Community</p>	<p>Rev. Gina Yeske</p> <p><i>Rev. Gina Yeske is an Associate Superintendent in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference and serves as the Bridges Champion and a congregational coach. She walks alongside congregations as they deepen discipleship, explore new ways of being church, and build meaningful connections with their communities.</i></p>	<p>Discover how curiosity can deepen relationships and transform your congregation's impact. In Bridges' you'll explore tools to foster a strong connection with both your church and your neighbors, identifying spiritual practices that embody love for God and others. In this workshop, we'll share an overview of how to extend these practices beyond church walls to foster spiritual growth, communal well-being, and meaningful</p>

	<i>Gina brings a pastoral, practical approach shaped by her love for the church, storytelling, and prayer.</i>	engagement with the world around us. Join us as we build bridges for lasting change.
United Women in Faith	Tamara Clark <i>Tamara Clark is a member of Mid-Town Parish in Philadelphia and Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer for United Women in Faith's national office.</i>	Women United in Faith are #UNSTOPPABLE. Together we lead change in our local communities to impact the lives of women, children and youth everywhere. Join our workshop to learn more!
What Is the Future of the Small Church? (Session 1 Only)	Rev. Mike Netznik <i>Rev. Mike Netznik is a retired full-time licensed local pastor who has been a part of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference since 1982. He has served many churches on the North District and has served on the conference and district level for over 40 years. He has a passion for small churches and a desire to see all small churches succeed in ministry. He has experience in satellite ministry, church mergers, moving churches from part-time to full-time, and mentoring pastors newly in ministry.</i>	What is the future of the small church? In this workshop, we will discuss your small church, other small churches, and the settings in which you find yourselves. As we do, it is our hope that you will find new ways to make your small church succeed in the future as a viable church for ministry in your area.
ReCONNECT: A Workshop Designed for Play, Connection and Soul-Tending (Session 1 Only)	Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm (Executive Director of Connectional Ministries) & Rev. Carmen O'Shea (Director of Pocono Plateau) <i>Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm and Rev. Carmen O'Shea are two disciples of Jesus who seek to love, laugh, and live fully.</i>	This workshop is designed to build and renew relationships. Through play and prayer, we will take time to grow in relationship with each other and remember the heart of Methodism is in relationships. We will live out the UMC Vision to LOVE BOLDLY, as we reinvest in our sacred relationships with each other. Come to rekindle friendships and make new friendships. Come ready for play, pause and prayer.

<p>ReNEW: A Workshop Designed to Renew Your Spirit in Contemplation</p> <p>(Session 2 Only)</p>	<p>Rev. Peter Jamieson</p> <p><i>Rev. Peter Jamieson is a Retired Elder from Greater New Jersey. Peter began practicing forms of Contemplation/Mindfulness while in Seminary and has continued practice of and learning about Contemplation and Mindfulness. Peter earned a MA in Old Testament from the Claremont University Graduate Center in Claremont, CA and an MDiv from Palmer Seminary. Peter also holds a certificate in running Spiritual Retreats and Spiritual Groups from Living Stream and Flowing Water LLC in conjunction with Garrett Theological Seminary.</i></p>	<p>Join us for a discussion about and practice of contemplation and mindfulness. We will talk about the benefits of practicing contemplation / mindfulness and then spend some time doing a contemplation / mindfulness exercise with a discussion about the exercise at the end.</p>