



## ***Giving Thanks and Thinking Ahead***

Greetings, friend!

Is it beginning to feel like fall where you are? Here in Kansas the air is cooler – finally! There are pumpkins and mums on porches, chili is making a return to my meal rotation, and leaves are making their way from branch to ground. God's handiwork is on full display, everywhere I look.

As we give thanks in this season and prepare our hearts and minds for Advent, I invite you to think ahead to January and your educational needs in the new year that is just around the corner.

Our **Certified Lay Ministry program** is expanding with even more sessions offered by our team of experienced instructors in 2025. New BeADisciple instructors are bringing fresh vision and creative ideas for new courses this fall and in the new year. And don't miss the opportunity to join a cohort for **specialized-ministry certification** in these areas, forming in January:

- Christian Education
- Church Administration
- Evangelism
- Ministry with People with Disabilities
- Spiritual Formation
- Women's Ministries
- Young Adult Ministry

These programs are designed to help Christians like you grow in knowledge and confidence as you serve and lead in your church and community. Learn more here and you'll be ready to take your next faithful step into the new year!

Whether you are a new, returning, or future learner with BeADisciple, I'm thankful for you and the ways you are following God's leading for Good in the world.

Peace,

Lori Richey  
Director of Online Education, Institute for Discipleship



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## **BeADisciple Instructor Spotlight: John Zimmerman**

Rev. John Zimmerman is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church and served local churches in Western Pennsylvania for 28 years. For the past 12 years, however, he has been appointed as General Evangelist in the UMC and travels full-time in an RV with his wife of 38 years, Christine, as they direct "About Face Church Outreach Consultants." They develop long-term relationships with churches to help congregations learn how to get outside the walls of the church and live the Gospel of Christ with the poor and impoverished living in their neighborhoods. Currently they are working with a United Methodist church start in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and they are preparing to launch another new United Methodist church in Corry, Pennsylvania.



In his work with BeADisciple, John was part of the development team for the Certification in Evangelism. He also teaches one of the eight core Lay Servant Ministries courses – "Leading Public Prayer" and the advanced course "Afire with God: Becoming Spirited Stewards."

"I have always embraced online learning as the next best thing to being there. And sometimes, it is even better than a traditional in-person class," John says. "Through my 15 years as an instructor with BeADisciple, I have had the privilege of engaging with students from around the country and the world. This has provided me the opportunity to share in the stories, faith, and experiences of a beautifully diverse community of faith."

He adds, "Some of the things that I really appreciate about online learning are the flexibility to accommodate our busy schedules, the opportunity to engage all students to contribute and have a voice in the class, and the ability to offer quality education that is accessible and transforming."

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## **Don't Miss These Advent Courses as You Prepare for Christmas**

As you get ready to decorate your tree and hang Christmas lights, consider adding an online course to your preparations for celebrating the birth of Christ. These courses are available as well as two new Advent microcourses described below.

- ***Christians Getting Ready for Christmas***
- ***Taking Back Advent: Moving Toward the Miraculous***
- ***Children of Abraham***
- ***Proclaiming Scripture With a Storytelling Spirit for Advent***

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## ***New BeADisciple.com Online Courses Beginning in December***

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### ***Old Testament Through a Different Lens: Ketuvim/Writings* December 2 - 13**

This course examines the Ketuvim/Writings, sometimes described as "the least holy books of the Hebrew Bible," by studying familiar Biblical writings through



lenses other than what Christians often use. It examines the “historical books” of the Old Testament and connects them to the prophetic voices and Torah when appropriate. You’ll learn about the post-Exilic period when the Jews returned to Israel and began rebuilding, as well as looking at the poetic writings, histories (Ruth), and stories of woe (Job and Lamentations). The

Ketuvim/Writings also introduces apocalyptic literature (Daniel) and its puzzling symbols and metaphors. Your instructor, a retired professor of history with a degree in religious studies, hopes to lead you to a deeper appreciation for how different perspectives and interpretations might help you grow in your own faith.

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### ***Living in the Slow Lane: Strengthening Our Spiritual Well-being***

**December 2 - 16**

Be still and know that I am God! When we are still and silent for an extended period of time we open space for God to be with us. This two-week course is for anyone looking for slow down their lives and live in closer relationship with Christ by practicing silencing the brain, centering prayer, and social ways to slow down reading of Scripture. You will develop new practices for slowing down and living more without feeling you are even on a tighter schedule with more to do. You also will recognize Christ’s call to be on a journey of social holiness. While we need silence in our lives, we need each other. When we study Scripture in community, we expand our understanding and develop our relationship with each other and with God.

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### ***Biblical Women in Advent (Microcourse)***

**December 2 - 6**

This course is for busy Christians who want to stay spiritually & scripturally centered in Advent. It is a microcourse that provides that opportunity for centering, even if your calendar is crowded, while digging into Advent scriptures, and without the stress of that longer commitment.

More information on microcourses is on the course page.

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### ***Joseph: An Advent Study (Microcourse)***

**December 9 - 14**

Advent season often focuses on Mary and the baby Jesus, and rightfully so. There is another important player

in this story, though—Joseph. In this brief study we will look at the earthly father of Jesus and examine his role during the Advent season. This will allow learners to have a deeper understanding of Jesus' earthly family, while examining the relationship of Joseph to Jesus.

More information on microcourses is on the course page.

[READ MORE](#)



### ***Addiction and Spirituality***

**December 9 - 20**

“Addiction and Spirituality” is a transformative course designed to explore the profound impact of spiritual practices on overcoming addiction. It delves into various spiritual traditions and their healing techniques, offering tools for personal growth and recovery. This course is perfect for those seeking to understand the role of spirituality in creating lasting change, for local church members who desire to understand addiction, and for professionals looking to integrate these practices into their therapeutic approaches.

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## ***Enroll Now in New BeADisciple.com Online Courses Beginning in November***

**Nov. 4 - 15: *A Scriptural Walk to Refresh the Soul***

**Nov. 4 - 17: *Parents of Prodigals***

**Nov. 18 - 22: *Christians Getting Ready for Christmas***

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### ***See All Courses Enrolling***

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