



July 2026

If you live anywhere near Winfield, KS, you might have noticed an odd smell in the air recently. As of this writing, a corpse flower (*amorphophallus titantium*) is the star of the show on the **Southwestern College campus**, which is home to the Institute for Discipleship. Blooming only rarely, this huge plant stores up energy for five to ten years before flowering for around 24 hours, during which it uses a foul-smelling scent to attract flies and beetles to pollinate itself and repeat the process.



It occurred to me that our Christian journey can look the same, minus (hopefully) the terrible smell. So often, we “store up” our faith experiences – our time in God’s word, our enhanced knowledge of Scripture or our faith gained through personal and shared study, or the places where we see God in our daily lives – and keep that “energy” for ourselves. Could we take a cue from the corpse flower and open ourselves up to attract others to what’s inside? While it doesn’t turn out so well for the fly or the beetle, sharing what we know of God’s goodness pollinates the fruit of God’s spirit in others AND in us – all we have to do is share a story, a resource, a hug, or even a smile.

Don’t be like the corpse flower and wait until the 2030s to bloom again. Who will you open up to and share your faith with, today?

Peace,



Lori Richey

Director of Online Education, Institute for Discipleship

P.S. Consider refreshing your faith “energy” with a brand-new course by long-time instructor Rev. Beth Perry, ***Fresh Expressions for Being the Church Today.***



You make a difference!

A big thank you to all of our Annual Conference representatives! We had 47 folks wearing “Ask Me About BeADisciple” pins across more than 30 annual conference gatherings – WOW! You make a difference with each connection and moment of sharing about what we do at the IFD. Thank you!

Blackboard system schedules routine maintenance

The Blackboard LMS platform used to host our online courses will be unavailable due to scheduled maintenance between 11:59 p.m. and 2 a.m. Central time on Wednesday, July 22. Those involved in courses at that time should take note and plan accordingly. We apologize for any inconvenience this outage may cause.

Enroll in Upcoming Lay Servant Ministry Courses

Each of the following courses has been approved by Discipleship Ministries as an advanced Lay Servant Ministries course, but enrollment is not limited to those needing LSM credit. All learners are welcome.

Beginning July 6

From Your Heart to Theirs: Delivering an Effective Sermon (Friday Zoom)

From Your Heart to Theirs: Delivering an Effective Sermon (Saturday Zoom)

Campus Ministry: Empowering Congregations to Support Students

Beginning July 13

For the Common Good: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts

****Justice and Kindness: Social Principles of the United Methodist Church***

Beginning July 20

**Fresh Expressions for Being the Church Today*
Biblical Storytelling I

Beginning July 27

Embracing Personal Prayer
Living Our United Methodist Beliefs
Ministry With People Living With Dementia
Embracing Personal Prayer

Beginning August 3

Called to Preach (Friday Zoom)
Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century

Beginning August 10

Life Together in the United Methodist Connection
Lay Servants as Christian Transformational Leaders

Beginning August 17

Becoming Accountable Disciples
Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts

Beginning August 24

Leading Public Prayer for Lay Leaders
Leading Worship (Friday Zoom)
Leading Worship (Saturday Morning Zoom)
Leading Worship (Saturday Afternoon Zoom)
Come to the Waters

**NEW class option in 2026*

Although the following course and microcourse do not lead to advanced LSM credit, persons interested in Lay Servant Ministry certification are encouraged to enroll in one of the new exploratory offerings:

July 13 - *Let's Talk: Using Your Gifts to Discern God's Call (Microcourse)*

August 10 - *Let's Talk: Growing as Disciples Through the Lay Servant Ministries Program*

Certified Lay Ministry Courses Continue

If you are seeking certification as a ***Certified Lay Minister*** in the United Methodist church, check out these upcoming dates. Be sure to read the ***CLM page*** for pre-course requirements, which include passwords for the advanced modules.

These CLM Modules are enrolling now:

CLM Module 1: ***Call and Covenant for Ministry*** (August 3 - 16)

CLM Module 2: ***The Practice of Ministry*** (July 6 - 26)

CLM Module 3: ***Organization for Ministry*** (August 3 - 16)

CLM Module 4: ***Connection for Ministry*** (July 6 - 19)

Wesley Academy Offers Theologically Rich Courses

The Wesley Academy for Advanced Christian Studies — created in partnership with Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. — has created courses and educational materials that are theologically rich and deep. Anyone — lay or clergy — can enroll in any of the courses available from the Wesley Academy, and if desired, can earn a certification in Advanced Christian Studies. For more information, click ***here***.

These Wesley Academy courses begin soon and are enrolling now:

July 13 - September 5: Methodist Identity: Our Story

August 2 - September 11: A Life Worthy of the Gospel

August 10 - October 16: N.T. Wright's 'Simply Christian'

See All Courses Enrolling

BeADisciple.com

Wesley Academy

CLM Modules

LSM Courses



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