

WE Are the Church:
Wesley, West End, and Our Witness in the 21st Century
Each Sunday in June and July, 2018
9:45-10:45 AM in McWhirter Hall

What does it mean to be “the church” today...in our world, in Nashville, in our personal lives? What difference can our Christian witness really make in the world, our community, and our own lives? In this rapidly changing world, these are questions with which we must wrestle because WE *are* the church. As people of faith, we must believe that the Christian way does indeed still matter. Perhaps as importantly, as Methodists we must consider how our unique understanding of the Christian faith prepares us to engage our lives and the world faithfully.

We hope you will join us each Sunday this summer as we explore our heritage as Methodists, learn about our history at West End, and listen for the direction God might be calling our church in the future. Each week, a different United Methodist guest speaker will offer his or her insights. Our speakers will include current and former pastors of WE UMC, a Vanderbilt Divinity school professor, United Methodist justice advocates, and employees of our United Methodist Boards and Agencies. Each talk will be followed by a time for discussion and brainstorming with other members of West End as we dream about our future and our common witness in Nashville.

You do not need to register for these sessions. Simply come as you are able each week. We invite you to learn with us, talk with us, pray with us, and dream with us this summer!

**See Complete Schedule
and
Speaker Bios
on the
Following Pages!**

WE Are the Church:
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Weekly Schedule

June 3 – Session 1 – Joerg Rieger – “Methodists, a Social People”

- Dr. Rieger helps us examine the long history of Methodist social activism and engagement.

June 10 – Session 2 – Carol Cavin-Dillon – “The Theology of John Wesley”

- Pastor Carol helps us understand the unique theology of Methodist founder John Wesley and how it informs our individual and collective Christian witness.

June 17 – Session 3 – David Lowes Watson – “Class Meetings: A History of Accountable Discipleship”

- Dr. Watson reminds us of the class meetings that were at the core of the early Methodist movement and its promotion of accountable discipleship.

June 24 – Break – Retirement Celebration for Becky Peeler

July 1 – Session 4 – Brandon Baxter – “Back to the Future: WE Are the Church Today”

- Pastor Brandon will connect what we know of our Methodist heritage and the history of West End UMC to the challenges and opportunities facing us in Nashville today.

July 8 – Session 5 – Liz Shadbolt - “Our Witness: Compassion”

- Liz will ask us to consider how individual encounters with those on the margins can awaken us to our Christian responsibility to the world around us.

July 15 – Session 6 – Sophia Agtarap - “Our Witness: Justice”

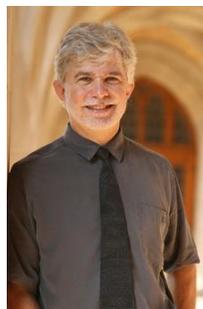
- Sophia will encourage us to examine critical issues that face our community and the world today, and how we can be justice seekers in the service of God and neighbor.

July 22 –Session 7 – Kara Lassen Oliver - “Our Witness: Devotion”

- Kara will remind us of the importance of devotional and spiritual practices that undergird our faith and sustain us in our discipleship.

July 29 – Session 8 – Doug Ruffle - “Our Witness: Worship”

- Rev. Doug help us examine the crucial role that worship can play in welcome others into a robust life together in Christian community.



Joerg Rieger

*Cal Turner Chancellor's Chair of Wesleyan Studies
Distinguished Professor of Theology
Vanderbilt Divinity School*

Affiliate Faculty Turner Family Center for Social Ventures, Owen Graduate School of Management

Joerg Rieger is the Cal Turner Chancellor's Chair of Wesleyan Studies and Distinguished Professor of Theology. Previously he was the Wendland-Cook Endowed Professor of Constructive Theology at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. He received an M.Div. from the Theologische Hochschule Reutlingen, Germany, a Th.M. from Duke Divinity School, and a Ph.D. in religion and ethics from Duke University.

For more than two decades he has worked to bring together theology and the struggles for justice and liberation that mark our age. His work addresses the relation of theology and public life, reflecting on the misuse of power in religion, politics, and economics. His main interest is in developments and movements that bring about change and in the positive contributions of religion and theology. His constructive work in theology draws on a wide range of historical and contemporary traditions, with a concern for manifestations of the divine in the pressures of everyday life.

Author and editor of more than 20 books and over 125 academic articles, his books include *Unified We are a Force: How Faith and Labor Can Overcome America's Inequalities* (with Rosemarie Henkel-Rieger, 2016), *Faith on the Road: A Short Theology of Travel and Justice* (2015), *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude* (with Kwok Pui-lan, 2012), *Grace under Pressure: Negotiating the Heart of the Methodist Traditions* (2011), *Globalization and Theology* (2010), *No Rising Tide: Theology, Economics, and the Future* (2009), *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (2007), and *God and the Excluded: Visions and Blindspots in Contemporary Theology* (2001). His books have been translated into Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, Korean, and Chinese.

Rieger is editor of the academic book series *New Approaches to Religion and Power* with Palgrave Macmillan Publishers and, together with Professor Kwok Pui-lan, he edits the academic book series *Religion in the Modern World* (Rowman and Littlefield).

Rieger has lectured throughout the United States as well as internationally, including presentations in Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Belgium, England, Russia, and China. He is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

<https://joergrieger.com>



Carol Cavin-Dillon

*Senior Pastor
West End UMC*

Rev. Carol Cavin-Dillon is almost a native of Nashville. The youngest of four children, she moved here from West Tennessee with her family at the age of five. After graduating from Harpeth Hall, she attended Duke University and received a B.A. in English. She taught English for a year in Armentieres, France, and then worked in education policy in Washington, D.C. before enrolling in seminary at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She was ordained in 1996 and appointed to Brentwood UMC. Seven years later she was appointed to Christ UMC, where she served first as an associate and then as the senior pastor. She and her husband David, also a native Nashvillian, married in 1999 and have two children, Tate and Martha. They also have a wonderful rescue dog named Gabby and a snake named Artemis.



David Lowes Watson

David Lowes Watson is a retired Elder in the Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church. A native of England, he was educated at Oxford University (M.A.), Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (M.Div.), and Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (Ph.D.). He pastored congregations in the Illinois Great Rivers and North Carolina Conferences, and served as Executive Secretary for Covenant Discipleship and Christian Formation at the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. He taught at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas as the McCreless Professor of Evangelism, and at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C. as Professor of Theology and Congregational Life and Mission. He concluded his active ministry as Director of the Office of Pastoral Formation for the Nashville Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church, and for three years following his retirement served as Interim Senior Minister at West End United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He also taught as Adjunct Professor at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and The University of the South School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee.

He has written extensively in the fields of Methodist history and theology, evangelism, and congregational life and mission. His books include *Accountable Discipleship*, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*, *Class Leaders: Recovering a Tradition*, and *God Does Not Foreclose*. He has written curriculum resources for The United Methodist Church, including the New Testament studies in *Troublesome Bible Passages*. He was the founding editor of the *Covenant Discipleship Quarterly* and the *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education*, of which he is a past President. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Bicentennial Edition of *The Works of John Wesley* and the Board of Directors of Eden Theological Seminary.



Brandon Baxter

*Associate Pastor, Coordinator of Spiritual Formation
West End UMC*

Brandon Baxter is Associate Pastor and coordinator of Spiritual Formation at West End United Methodist Church. Brandon is a Nashville-area native and lifelong United Methodist. He graduated from Millsaps College in 2001 with a degree in Music (Vocal Performance) and additional training in Education. After college, Brandon returned to the Nashville area where he trained teenagers as community peer-educators. Sensing a call to full-time ministry in the local church, he began working at United Methodist churches primarily in youth and music ministries. Brandon has served churches in various portions of Tennessee including Calvary UMC in Nashville, Germantown UMC outside of Memphis, and First UMC of Cookeville. He also served as the Lead Preaching Pastor at Glendale UMC while a student at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Brandon graduated from Vanderbilt in May 2017 was commissioned as an Elder in the United Methodist Church the following month.

Brandon is married with two children; his wife Carol is a dentist in Nolensville and his daughters, Emerson and Miriam, are in elementary school. In his free time, Brandon enjoys reading, playing piano, hiking, watching Tennessee Volunteers football, and spending time with family and friends.



Liz Shadbolt

*Volunteer and Operations Coordinator
Open Table Nashville*

Liz Shadbolt is the OTN Volunteer & Operations Coordinator. As a United Methodist Deaconess, Liz is dedicated to creating community and connecting faith with service. Nashville has been home to Liz and her family for 15 years. She's an advocate for refugee and immigrant communities and spends her own volunteer time with folks in the South Nashville area. Her passion is for engaging and connecting those who live on the margins, whether that be socioeconomic, cultural, or linguistic. Liz holds a Master's Degree in Anthropology from the Ohio State University and a certificate in Christian ministry from New York Theological Seminary. In her free time, Liz can be found helping two kids with homework, reading, and cooking.

www.opentablenashville.org



Sophia Agtarap

*Director of Communications
Office of Admissions, Vocation, and Stewardship
Vanderbilt Divinity School*

Sophia Agtarap joined the staff at Vanderbilt Divinity School in 2017, having worked at the University of Washington in advising and recruitment and retention, and most recently The United Methodist Church's Communications Agency. Her graduate studies include Communication and Digital Media (University of Washington) and Theology (Seattle Pacific Seminary). A transplant from Seattle (via Southern California and Iowa), she lives with her partner and three dogs. She enjoys food and travel, and even more so when they are done in tandem.

Sophia is a candidate for deaconess in The United Methodist Church--a lay order whose call is to engage the world through a full-time vocation in ministries of love, justice, and service. She provides leadership for Moral Movement Tennessee, a grassroots organization building a multiracial, intergenerational, interfaith, anti-poverty, pro-justice moral movement in Tennessee.



Kara Lassen Oliver

*Director of Discipleship Resources International
Publishing Initiatives for Central Conferences
Discipleship Ministries*

Kara Lassen Oliver is currently the Director of Discipleship Resources International at Discipleship Ministries. As she explains, "I am a writer and editor, working primarily to train and empower writers in the central conferences (outside the United States) of The United Methodist Church." This work finds Kara coordinating discipleship resources for the global Methodist church. Kara has also been a freelance writer and editor. She and her family spent two years in Malawi, Africa, as Volunteers in Mission. Kara holds a master's degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School and has served as youth minister at Belmont United Methodist Church in Nashville.

www.karalassenoliver.com



Doug Ruffle

Editor for Wesleyan Resources

Discipleship Ministries

Born in New York and grew up in New Jersey, Doug served churches in New Jersey and Argentina, where he worked with the Methodist Church of that country as a missionary of The United Methodist Church. For ten years he served as Director of Congregational Development for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. Currently he works at Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church, splitting time between Path 1 (New Church Starts) and The Upper Room. Doug is the blessed husband of Tammie, writer, baseball fan and Jesus follower.

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