



2026 Report to Western District Conference

CAMPUS PASTOR ANNOUNCED

Bluffton University appointed **Eli Tracy '12** as campus pastor in November 2025. Tracy received his master's in theological studies from Conrad Grebel University College in 2016 and has been serving as an associate pastor at the Family Christian Center and as an on-call hospital chaplain at Mercy Hospital, both in Defiance. Tracy also served at Bluffton last year as an adjunct faculty member in religion.

KEENEY PEACE LECTURE

Bluffton University welcomed alumni **Dr. Jonathan Moyer '02** back to campus as the featured speaker for the university's 48th annual Keeney Peace Lecture, an event that invites the campus community to reflect on faith, justice and peacemaking in today's world.

SPIRITUAL LIFE WEEK

Rev. Phil Yoder, Pastor, First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, was the Spiritual Life Week speaker for the spring semester. Yoder attended a student-led Bible study Sunday evening and spoke at Forum and Chapel on the subject "Abiding in Alienation," engaging with the 2026 Civic Engagement theme, "Who is my neighbor?" Yoder was also a guest in the course "Introduction to a Biblical Worldview."

PRE-OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MAJOR ANNOUNCED

Bluffton University has announced the launch of a **Pre-Occupational Therapy (Pre-OT) major**, expanding its offerings in the health sciences to prepare students for careers dedicated to helping individuals live independently and meaningfully.

BLUFFTON AFFORDABILITY EXPANDED

Bluffton University is strengthening its commitment to access and affordability by expanding key financial aid initiatives designed to make a high-quality Bluffton education attainable for more students and families. Bluffton's **Be a Beaver Program** guarantees full tuition coverage for qualifying students and Bluffton's **County Connect Grant** automatically awards \$1,000 to students who live in or attend high school in Allen, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam and now Auglaize or Van Wert counties in Ohio.

YODER SCHOLAR APPOINTED

Bluffton University appointed **Dr. Gerald J. Mast** the Harry and Jean Yoder Scholar in Bible and Religion. The appointment provides Mast with annual funds to support scholarly research and writing in areas related to Anabaptist-Mennonite life and thought. As part of the role, he will also serve as editor of the C. Henry Smith Series in Anabaptist Culture and Thought, formerly the C. Henry Smith Series, and deliver one Yoder Scholar Lecture per year on a topic related to biblical, religious or Anabaptist studies.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. FORUM

In remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Bluffton University hosted its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Forum presentation, featuring **Jonathon Blake Turner**, director of choral activities at Bluffton University, who offered a powerful combination of song, history and theological reflection. Turner, who started in Fall 2026, has begun work to re-establish the Bluffton University Choir.

Dr. J. Alexander Sider appointed President

Bluffton University's Board of Trustees named the 11th president in Bluffton's 125-year history. **Dr. J. Alexander Sider** accepted the call to serve as Bluffton's next president effective Aug. 1, 2025. Dr. Sider stepped into the active role of Interim President in February 2025 during a transitioning time at Bluffton. Dr. Sider, a longtime member of the Bluffton faculty, has served the university in various roles since joining in 2006, including as Professor of Religion, The Harry and Jean Yoder Scholar in Bible and Theology, Director of Peace and Conflict Studies, Director of University Assessment Programs, ADA Coordinator, and most recently Vice President of Academic Affairs and Academic Dean.

Save the date

**Bluffton University
Homecoming**
Oct. 3, 2026



Stay up to date with news and events at Bluffton University.

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For more information, contact **Gerald Mast**
*Church relations coordinator
and professor of communication*
mastg@bluffton.edu