



Pastor's *memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN—DECEMBER 2016

Something New!

In our ever-continuing search to find more effective ways to communicate what is going on in the District, we are adding a monthly bulletin insert. The Herald, our district newsletter, is sent out quarterly. And while it provides a great opportunity to share what is going on in the district and our churches, there is much that happens between those issues that needs shared in a timelier manner.

This insert will come with the Pastor's Memo each month. We ask that you please print enough copies to include in your bulletins this first Sunday of each month. If your congregation has limited ability to make copies, please let us know and we will mail printed inserts along with the Pastor's Memo each month. (Please note: This month a paper copy of both are being mailed. Beginning in with January's issue, we will send these out electronically, unless you request a paper copies for your congregation.)

The first issue is attached. Please let us know what you think!

Directory

The 2017 Directory is completed and available electronically. Paper copies are also being sent with this Memo. If you need additional paper copies, please contact the District Office.

Included this year is information on officers for each church. This information was gathered from the Form B's that were sent in and from multiple phone calls Julie Watson made to congregations. As new information becomes available, the electronic copy will be updated and resent and an update page will be included with the Pastor's memo to keep the paper copies current.

Mark Your Calendar

- December 3-4—Sr. High Winter Fest, Inspiration Hills, Burbank, OH
- December 15—Search Committee Meeting, District Office, Ashland, OH
- February 14—Executive Committee Meeting, District Office, Ashland, OH
- February 19-21—Clergy Spouse Retreat, Holiday Inn French Quarter, Perrysburg, OH
- March 5-7—New Pastors Retreat, Camp Mack, Milford, IN
- March 11—District Board Meeting, Dupont CoB, Dupont, OH

Search Committee Named

A service of consecration was held on November 12 at the District Board meeting for the Search Committee appointed to seek out the next District Executive for the Northern Ohio District. Members of the committee are: Paul Bartholomew, Chair (Mohican), Sherry Reese Vaught, Vice-Chair (Maple Grove), Fred Keener, Secretary (Bristolville), Kerri Bailey (Danville North Bend), Fred Brinkman (Sugar Creek West), Billi Janet Burkey (Center), Jim Masten (Lick Creek), Ben Polzin (Poplar Ridge), and Mike Zellers (Freeburg). Stan Dueck from the Church of the Brethren General Offices will be guiding the committee through the search process.

The Search Committee will complete a District profile which will then be circulated throughout the denomination. The tentative time frame is to begin interviews in the early spring and to be able to announce the new District Executive by the 2017 District Conference.

We are grateful for their willingness to serve our District in this important ministry, willing to commit the enormous amount of time and dedication required for this task. Please keep each of these Search Committee members in prayer as you continue to pray for our District in this time of transition.

Some basic numbers

In preparation to complete the District profile, here are some statistics that will be included:

Number of congregations: 48

Number with full-time pastors: 18

Number of churches under each category:

20 under 50 members

14 with 51-100 members

8 with 101-200 members

6 with 201+ members

(*as noted above, while these are the official membership numbers, they do not accurately reflect current active membership within the District)

Standing Committee representation from Northern Ohio District decreased

Each district can send one delegate to Standing Committee. Those districts that have 5000 or more members can send an additional delegate. The Northern Ohio District has sent 2 delegates for decades. However, the membership of our district dropped to below 5000 for the 2015 year. This reduces our Standing Committee representation to one delegate beginning with the 2017 Annual Conference.

Until June 2017, Kathy Ballinger (Mohican) and Ben Polzin (Poplar Ridge) both continue to serve in that role. When Annual Conference convenes in Grand Rapids in June, Ben Polzin will be serving as our Standing Committee Delegate. Deep appreciation to Kathy as she completes three years serving our District in this important position.

Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Bethel – Congregational profile completed.
Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Brook Park – *Tom Michaels* to begin as interim.
Search Committee appointed, first meeting
scheduled in January.

Dupont – Searching for youth/associate pastor.
Profile complete.

Paradise – Congregational call vote scheduled for
December 4th. *Terry Vaught* serving as interim.

Pleasant View – *Dr. Byron Hawbecker* serving as
interim. Congregational profile completed.

Woodworth – *John Polanski* serving as interim
and beginning the credentialing process.

Congregations that have chosen not to seek at this time:

East Nimishillen – *Matthew Reed* serving as
interim.

Eden – *Wayne Scott* serving as interim.

Lake Breeze – *James Washington* serving as
interim.

Lakewood – *Gene Wyse* serving as interim.

Maple Grove – *John Ballinger* serving as interim
until 2/2018.

District Prayer Calendar

November 27—December 3

Akron First CoB (Pastor Tobin Crenshaw) and
Akron Springfield CoB (Pastor Alan Brumbaugh)

December 4—December 10

Ashland Dickey CoB (Pastor Tom Zuercher) and
Ashland First CoB (Pastor Tina Hunt)

December 11—December 17

Bethel CoB (Pastoral Vacancy) and Black River
CoB (Pastor Mark Teal and Associate Pastors Dean
Foster and Cullen Thompson)

December 18—December 24

Bristolville CoB (Pastor Fred Keener) and Brook
Park Community CoB (Interim Tom Michaels)

December 25—December 31

Center CoB (Pastor Mark Kell) and Chippewa CoB
(Pastor Bill Eley)

2017 Clergy-Spouse Retreat

February 19-21

Holiday Inn French Quarter, Perrysburg, Ohio

Attention clergy you are invited to attend the 2017 Clergy-Spouse Retreat February 19-21 at the Holiday Inn French Quarter in Perrysburg, Ohio. This is an opportunity to take time for renewal and enjoy fellowship with other clergy members in the Northern Ohio District. Our guest speaker is Jason Barnhart, University Chaplain at Ashland University and the theme is “Tethered Freedom” (Psalm 78). See the attached flyer for more information and registration.

If finances are a problem for you or your congregation for this event, please contact the District Office to apply for a scholarship through the Ministerial Commission. We hope to see you there!

Ordination Service for Tina Hunt

It was a time of celebration as Pastor Tina Hunt was ordained November 27th during the morning worship service at Ashland First Church of the Brethren. The sharing time had many in the congregation expressing appreciation to Tina and her husband, Nelson for the impact they have had in the lives of many since Tina began as Interim Pastor in March of 2015 and continuing as she was call as Pastor last December. The church presented Tina with a picture frame that will be filled with a picture of Tina, Nelson, and the congregation at the end of worship that morning. Each one present also signed the matting for the picture, making this a very special gift indeed!



Taking a look at Membership Lists

Many are not aware that each year our District sends an assessment amount to the Church of the Brethren based on our membership. The Northern Ohio District reported membership in our churches has decreased from 5074 in 2014 to 4903 in 2015, resulting in the loss of one delegate to Standing Committee.

But even this number does not accurately reflect the active members in our churches. Many churches have not taken a serious look at membership for quite some time. This results in an inaccurate perception of where we are as a district, as well as an inflated assessment to be paid.

Please consider updating your membership lists to accurately reflect active members of your congregation. While it can be painful to officially recognize a decreasing membership, there is also freedom in looking at what is, rather than what used to be. This is a great opportunity to trust that God will move in our churches just as we are!

Church of the Brethren guidance on membership can be found in chapter 4 of the Polity Manual or on line at <http://www.brethren.org/ac/documents/polity-manual/2016/chapter-4-the-local-church.pdf>. If you need a paper copy of this chapter, please contact the District Office.

Self-Allocations

This is the time of year for each congregation to complete the Self-Allocation/Outreach form that was distributed at District Conference. We have already received over a dozen of these – thank you to those who have been so timely!

The decision was made at District Conference to increase the draw on the Hottle funds (4% for congregational grants, up to 4% for the camp operating budget, and up to 4% for the District operating budget). The more self-allocation funds received, the less money will be used from Hottle for the District Operating budget extending time that the Hottle funds will be available for church grants. The goal is a budget that is supported by self-allocations and does not rely on the Hottle money. While it will take some years to accomplish this, the process is greatly influenced by the completion of the Self-allocation/Outreach forms. Please prayerfully consider your outreach giving and return the form by December 31. You can also find the form at <http://www.brethren.org/stewardship/congregational-outreach.html>

Attachments

- Northern Ohio District Bulletin Insert
- Clergy-Spouse Retreat Flyer
- District Conference—Josh McDowell Flyer
- 2017 District Directory
- TRIM Brochure
- Administration as Pastoral Care
- Webcast Healthy Boundaries 101
- Transforming Faith: Introduction to Educational Ministry

District Office Staff Schedule

Interim District Executive Kris Hawk takes Wednesday as her day off. She can be reached at 330-612-2086 or krishawk@nohcob.org

Administrative Secretary, Julie Watson is in the office Monday through Friday, 9 am—3 pm. She can be reached at 419-281-3058 or julie@nohcob.org

Youth Coordinator, Esther Harsh is in the office on Mondays. She can be reached at 330-880-7161 or esther@nohcob.org