

District Conference

Wrap Up

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN—SEPTEMBER 2025

Thank you East Chippewa!

Our Northern Ohio District Conference was held on August 8th and 9th at the East Chippewa Church of the Brethren with the theme “Grace Through Faith”. This was the first year holding Conference at this location. East Chippewa provided such a gift of hospitality from providing the ice cream on Friday evening from Smith Dairy, to providing opportunities to pray together, to the many hours spent making the wonderful food they shared. Over 30 volunteers worked together to make this a meaningful event. And while it is impossible to thank each individual that served through the weekend, we will mention several here that put a vast number of hours into making this happen.

Karl Kelbly served as East Chippewa’s on-site Coordinator working to make sure all the on-site details were covered.

Linda Smith coordinated the planning, cooking, and serving the meals with volunteers assisting.

Pastor Mike Huffaker brought greetings at the beginning of business on Saturday!

Karen Horst and Barb Teach coordinated the children’s activities.

Greg Stephens and Dave Smith coordinated the audiovisual set-up in multiple locations.

Doug and Joyce Imhoff served as liaisons and to make sure everything ran smoothly and looked spectacular.

Each of these servants had multiple people working with them to accomplish these tasks.

Thank you East Chippewa!



Moderator Mike Conner

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**2026 Northern Ohio
District Conference
August 14-15
Akron Springfield
Church of the Brethren
Cindy Peel, Moderator**

District Conference Ballot

2025-2026 District Board

Chair – Terry Baldwin, Lick Creek*

Vice Chair – Mark Pollock, Brook Park

Secretary – Agnes Hayhurst, Reading

Congregational Commission:

Chair – Beverly Wenger, Paradise

Vice Chair – Stephen McLaughlin, Northern Ohio*

Secretary – Edith Kieffaber, Akron Eastwood*

Member – Scott Brinkman, Sugar Creek West

Connections Commission:

Chair – Jocelyn Siakula, Hartville*

Vice Chair – Crystal Zellers, Freeburg

Secretary – Jane Matz, Ashland Dickey

Member – Abigail Akyeampong, Elm Street

Ministerial Commission:

Chair – Mike Huffaker, East Chippewa*

Vice Chair – Bill Holsopple, Lick Creek*

Secretary – Candie Orr, Woodworth

Member – Steve Keib, Maple Grove

Stewardship and Finance:

Chair – Dave Bassett, Pleasant View

Vice Chair – Todd Clemens, Poplar Ridge

Secretary – Bruce Morckel, Akron Springfield

Member – Mark Pollock, Brook Park

Ex Officio Members (without vote):

Kris Hawk, District Executive Minister

Laura Huffaker District Administrative Secretary

Linda Fry, District Peace/Conciliation Advocate

Andrew Kauffman, Camp Executive Director

Lisa Snyder, District Treasurer, Ashland First

**Cindy McNaull, District Financial Secretary,
Ashland Dickey**

Dawn Baldwin, Standing Committee, Lick Creek

Cindy Peel, Moderator, Akron Springfield

Paul Bozman, Moderator-Elect, Reading*

Ashley Harris, District Conference Clerk, Freeburg

**Russell Matz Camp Administration Committee
Chair, Ashland Dickey***

*** Denotes newly elected at District Conference**

Other Election Results

Moderator Elect

Paul Bozman, Reading*

District Conference Central Committee

Moses Siakula, Hartville*

Nominating Committee East

Phyllis Axline, Akron First*

Billi Janet Burkey, Center (filling unexpired term)

Nominating Committee West

Fred Brinkman, Sugar Creek West*

Camp Administration Committee

Bill Fike, Painesville*

Russell Matz, Ashland Dickey*

Linda Smith, East Chippewa*

Lisa Bertch, Paradise (filling unexpired term)

West View Healthy Living Liasison

Laura Kettering, Maple Grove*

Good Shepherd Board of Trustees

Barbara Wilch*

Conference Statistics

Attendance:

Registrations—148

Delegates—60

Congregations represented—32

Friday Worship—97

Saturday Worship—89

Insight Sessions—164

Pre-Conference Workshop—59

Offerings:

Friday—\$1860.00

(for conference expenses)

Saturday—1,000.00

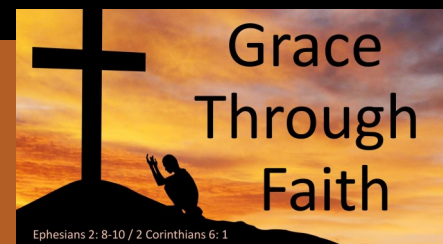
(for Brethren Disaster Ministries)

Total: \$1,960.00

Peace Auction—\$1100.00 +

People to People Ministries—\$200 + a
car load of donations of food, laundry soap,
shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toilet
paper, paper towels, and blankets.

As God's co-workers we urge you to not receive
God's grace in vain. **2 Corinthians 6:1**



District Conference Worship and Activities

Fifty-nine attended the Pre-Conference Workshop on “Fruit of Discipleship in Shifting Times” presented by Joshua Brockway, Director for Spiritual Formation for the Church of the Brethren.

Conference officially began with the meal on Friday evening, followed by opening worship. Mike Conner (Moderator) introduced the conference theme with a powerful message from 2 Ephesians 2:8-10 and 2 Corinthians 6:1 on “Grace Through Faith.” Worship music was provided by the Painesville Praise Team- Dennis & Bobbie Anderson, Leslie Chappel, Carol Wisen, Bill Fike and Mike Conner.

Saturday evening, Joshua Brockway spoke on Ephesians 3:12-21, on the importance of Christ’s love and being filled with God’s fullness. The service concluded with the consecration of the 2026 conference officers: Cindy Peel Moderator and Paul Bozman, Moderator-elect.

Fellowship opportunities included multiple insight sessions from Joshua Brockway - Spiritual Gifts or Discipleship, Connections Commission- Immigration “To Welcome the Stranger”, Northern Ohio Strategic Planning Committee and Andrew Kauffman, Inspiration Hills Camp Director or hanging out at the Peace Auction and display area, an ice cream social from Smith Dairy, and much time for informal conversation. A “roar” of conversation and laughter could be heard throughout the area anytime there was a break in the business session (and sometimes during the business session!) and between events. It was also a beautiful day to eat and hang out in the pavilion outside.

Conference Business Items

It was a full day the delegates worked their way through the business agenda on Saturday at District Conference. In addition to receiving reports from the board, commissions, treasurer, camp, and national representatives, and others, the delegates:

1. Approved the 2026 District Budget as recommended by District Board in the amount of \$166,066—\$29,616 less than the 2025 budget.
2. Approved the 2026 Inspiration Hills budget as presented in the amount of \$344,914—\$48,633 less than the 2025 budget.
3. Approved the motions to finalize the withdrawal from the denomination of the Dupont and Bristolville Church of the Brethren congregations. A litany of blessing forward reminded us that we continue as brothers and sisters in Christ, even as the churches are no longer part of our district. Prayer was offered for the ministries of these churches and of our district as move forward.
4. Approved the motion to close the Lake Breeze Church of the Brethren. A time of remembering the legacy of the congregation concluded with prayer.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. **Ephesians 2:8-10**

Conference guests included David Steele, Church of the Brethren General Secretary; Joshua Brockway, Director of Spiritual Formation; Loyce Borgmann, Director of Client Services Eder Financial; Dan Poole, Assistant Professor of Ministry Formation at Bethany Theological Seminary; Chris Widman, Executive Director of Good Shepherd Home; Amanda Reidling and Mark Self, Chaplains of Good Shepherd Home and Co-Pastor's of Jonah's People, and Reverend Dr. Amariah McIntosh, Associate Director of Ohio Council of Churches.

It was indeed a joy to gather together!



Installation of Cindy Peel as Moderator, Paul Bozman as Moderator elect





Celebrating Ministerial Service

Celebrating Ministerial Service

While each year of ministry is something to be celebrated, in the Northern Ohio District we take time at District Conference to publicly celebrate the completion of the first year of ordination, the 5th year, then every 5 years after that. We also recognize annually those who been ordained more than 50 years. This year, we also celebrated those that are commissioned in the Church of the Brethren that are faithfully serving our congregations. We are grateful for all who serve in the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren. Those recognized this year:

Ordination

Mike Conner (Painesville – 1 year)

Brian Layman (Ashland First– 1 year)

Andrew Wenger (Akron Springfield/Eastwood – 1 year)

Jason Harsh (Woodworth – 10 years)

Tobin Crenshaw (Akron First – 20 years)

Mike Huffaker (East Chippewa – 20 years)

John Ballinger (Northern Ohio – 30 years)

Wayne Brockway (Center- 40 years)

Gene Yenser (Defiance – 35 years)

Donald Earlenbaugh (Ashland Dickey – 57 years)

Seen in the picture above:

Front Row: Wayne Brockway, Mike Conner, Delbert Kettering.

Back Row: Andrew Wenger, John Ballinger, Bill Eley, Mike Huffaker, Brian Layman, Steve Keib.

Commissioning

Steve Keib (Maple Grove – 6 years)

Bill Eley (Chippewa – 8 years)

Charles Barnhill (Owl Creek – 9 years)

Rick Hicks (Marion – 9 years)

Dave Morton (Adrian – 9 years)



Thank You 2025 Central Committee and 2025 Conference Personnel

District Conference Central Committee

Mike Conner, Moderator (Painesville)
Cindy Peel, Moderator-elect (Akron Springfield)
Tina Hunt, Past-Moderator (Mansfield First)
Ashley Harris, Clerk (Freeburg)
Deb Rising, Member (Ashland First)
Michelle Brumbaugh, Member (Eden)
Linda Fry, Conference Manager (Mansfield First)
Erin Beebe, Conference Registrar (Maple Grove)

District Conference Personnel

Worship Coordinators: Dennis Anderson and Leslie Chappel (Painesville)
Music- Painesville Praise Team: Dennis & Bobbie Anderson, Leslie Chappel, Carol Wisen, Bill Fike, Mike Conner
Children's Program Coordinators: Karen Horst, Barb Teach, Kim Warden (East Chippewa)
Display Coordinator: Kim Morckel (Akron Springfield)
Hospitality Coordinator: Jane Matz (Ashland Dickey)
Time Keeper: Russ Matz (Ashland Dickey)
Sound & Media Technicians: Greg Stephens & Dave Smith (both from East Chippewa)
Conference Manager: Linda Fry (Mansfield First)
Teller: Brian Layman
East Chippewa Church On-Site Coordinator: Karl Kelbly
Meal Coordinator: Linda Smith (East Chippewa)

