



# Pastor's Memo

## February 2023



NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

### New and Renew Conference May 17-19 in person or on-line

*If you are looking for new and practical ways to engage your community and congregation, look no further than the New & Renew Conference 2023.*

*Join to learn more about church planting and congregational renewal.*

*Register by February 28th and the district will cover your registration cost.*

Our District Congregational Commission would like to encourage you to join the "New and Renew" Conference on May 17-19. This three-day hybrid conference has more than 20 sessions to broaden your knowledge of church planting and congregational renewal. Besides the workshops, inspirational worship, keynotes and storytelling will invigorate your calling and passion for ministry. The Commission will cover the \$109 cost of early registration for those that attend either in person or via online programming. Find details at <https://www.brethren.org/newandrenuew/> or see the attached flyer.

### Withdrawing Congregations

Three churches in the Northern Ohio District have entered the process to withdraw from the Church of the Brethren. Mount Pleasant CoB and Zion Hills CoB had their final votes earlier this month. Both were above the 80% majority needed to withdraw. The next 90 days are a time to finalize details according to our District Withdrawal Policy, which addresses property, financial settlement, and a service of blessing. The withdrawal policy can be found on our [website here](#). The County Line CoB will have their final vote on January 31. District Conference delegates will officially finalize the process at District Conference. While withdrawing removes them as part of our district, we continue as brothers and sisters in Christ, seeking first God's Kingdom.

*Our District Executive Committee sent out a letter last fall, encouraging congregation to further engage with denominational leadership in a number of ways.*

*The full letter can be read [here](#).*

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# Continuing Education Opportunities

## Buckeye Brethren Institute History of Christianity

Instructor: Brad Kelley

Course Description: This course will provide an overview of the History of the Christian faith from Pentecost through the modern day.

Meeting dates: February 11, March 4, March 25, 2023; 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Participants can attend classes in person at the Northern Ohio District Office or can join by Zoom. Register online at [www.nohcob.org/registerbbi](http://www.nohcob.org/registerbbi).

Ordained Ministers may audit this course for CEUs. Anyone can join this class for personal enrichment.

## Lands of the Bible Study Tour July 2-18, 2023

In July of 2023, Bridgewater College chaplain Dr. Robbie Miller will again lead a study tour of Israel, Palestine and Jordan. The tour, conducted by the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem <https://uhl.ac/>, will visit sites of biblical and religious importance including Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, Capernaum, Caesarea, Masada, Qumran, Petra and many more. The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership will provide 4.0 CEUs for the study tour. For an itinerary and more information, contact Dr. Miller at [rmiller@bridgewater.edu](mailto:rmiller@bridgewater.edu) or at 540-421-2720.

## Calling the Called

Are there people in your congregation in whom you see gifts for pastoral ministry? How do you name this call in your congregation? Are there ways you could encourage such people to explore a call to ministry? We encourage you to make this important work of the church a central part of your life as a community of believers.

~The Northern Ohio District Ministerial Commission

## Brethren Academy Classes

Spring 2023

**Wisdom Literature**, online

March 15-May 9, 2023

Instructor: Dr. Steve Schweitzer

(credit: B/T, BTS)

Registration Deadline: February 8, 2023

Biblical wisdom literature addresses difficult and probing questions of the meaning of life, freedom and responsibility, divine-human interaction, suffering and the problem of evil, the function of praise and lament, and the proper ethics that flow from a proper theology. In this class, students will discuss the perspectives presented by the wisdom traditions, especially as manifested in the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes.



Brethren Academy  
for Ministerial  
Leadership

**What Brethren**

**Believe**, online

April 19-June 13, 2023

Instructor: Dr. Denise Kettering-Lane

(credit: B/T, BTS)

Registration Deadline: March 8, 2023

This course will explore Brethren beliefs related to a variety of issues, including Scripture, the person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the nature of the church, original sin, and the end times. It will also examine how these beliefs and practices have changed over time and consider the diversity of beliefs found among Brethren today.

Register and pay for courses online:

[www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy) or 765-983-1824.



Northern Ohio Church of the Brethren  
District Conference 2023

# BACK TO OUR FUTURE

“LOOKING BACK TO OUR FUTURE”  
I Corinthians 3:10-11

Our 2023 Northern Ohio District Conference will be held August 11-12, 2023 at the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren in Ashland, Ohio. James Washington, Pastor of the Elm Street and Pleasant View CoBs will serve as Moderator.

## Pastoral Placement

### Congregations actively in the search process:

**Bristolville (full-time)** –Search Committee interviewing. *Congregation* arranging pulpit supply.

**Woodworth (part-time)** – *Steve Simmons* serving as interim pastor.

### Congregations that have not yet begun the Search Process or have chosen not to seek at this time:

**Akron Eastwood** – *Cindy Peel* serving as interim pastor.

**Brook Park** – *Ryan Lopez* serving as interim pastor.

**Dupont** – *Solomon Okang* serving as preacher.

**Sugarcreek East** – *Nelson Brown* serving an interim pastor.

**Silver Creek** – *Ric Beals* providing pulpit supply.

### Congregations that have completed the Search Process:

**Mansfield First** – *Tina Hunt* call as pastor and began serving on December 11, 2022.

## Prayer Calendar

### February

#### Our Churches/Pastors

Adrian, Dick Neuwirth

Akron Eastwood, Cindy Peel

Akron First, Tobin Crenshaw

Akron Springfield, Andrew Wenger

#### District Leadership

District Board, Patrick Bailey (chair)

#### Other Districts

Altantic Northeast, Mid Atlantic

#### National Leadership

David Steele, CoB General Secretary

EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)

Visit [www.nohcob.org/prayer](http://www.nohcob.org/prayer) for a complete copy of our District Prayer Calendar.

## 2023 IRS Mileage Rates

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued  
the 2023 standard mileage rates.

\*65.5 cents per mile for business miles driven.

\*14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

# Clergy-Spouse Retreat—February 19-21— register now

Please plan on joining us for this time of relationship-building, renewal, learning, and rest. Pastor Tom and Susan Zuercher will provide leadership. Single and married clergy and their spouses are encouraged to attend. The retreat begins with registration at 4 pm on Sunday, February 19 and finishes with lunch together on Tuesday.

You may register online at [www.nohcob.org/retreat](http://www.nohcob.org/retreat). Costs are \$325.00/Couple (3 days/2 nights, plus 6 meals each); \$250.00/Single (3 days/2 nights, plus 6 meals); \$40.00/Single One Day Registration (Monday Lunch, Dinner and Sessions). Single clergy who may want to share a room can save money at the couple rate. Please indicate your request under "comments". Financial scholarships are available by contacting Kris Hawk at 330-612-2086.

**Please register on or before February 3, 2023.**

## “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

We hope during our time together that each person will draw closer to God in the experience of self-awareness and faith expression. Sessions will focus on scripture, sharing, and faith affirmation, with specific activities for spiritual awareness and growth.

At various points we will split into groups. Tom will meet with the pastors and Susan will meet with the spouses. Given the life situations that Tom and Susan have been through, their narrative/testimony will provide encouragement and inspiration.

## Tom and Susan Zuercher

have been part of the Northern Ohio District family since 1976.

After 42 years of church ministry

that included the roles of pastor, District Executive, congregational consultant, adjunct faculty, author, and resource leader. Tom retired in 2018. Susan has served as a teacher and inspirational leader, and devotes much of her time to caring for the family. Susan and Tom will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary next year. They raised three wonderful children and have had fantastic experiences with their seven grandchildren. And when the opportunity arises, they love to travel and explore new places.



## District Office Hours

**Regular office hours are Tuesday—Friday from 9 am to 3 pm.** But since Kris is sometimes out for meetings, it is best to contact her to make sure she will be there. Kris can be reached by phone/text at 330-612-2086 or [krishawk@nohcob.org](mailto:krishawk@nohcob.org).

**Administrative Secretary, Erin Beebe** is in the office Monday and Wednesday from 4 pm—8 pm. The rest of her 16 hours/week are flexible. She can be reached at [erin@nohcob.org](mailto:erin@nohcob.org).

**Youth Coordinator, Taylor Petersen** is in the office on Wednesdays. She can be reached at 419-571-0612 or [taylor@nohcob.org](mailto:taylor@nohcob.org)

## District Events Calendar

- 02-01 Camp Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- 02-01 Western Pastor's Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 02-07 Executive Committee Meeting
- 02-07 Northern Ohio Pastor's Zoom Gathering
- 02-08 Central Area Pastor's Gathering at 8 am
- 02-11 BBI History of Christianity (Class 1)
- 02-19/21 Clergy-Spouse Retreat
- 02-16 Nominating Committee Meeting
- 02-21 Northern Ohio Pastor's Zoom Gathering
- 02-24/25 Youth Winter Party