

Pastor's Memo

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
MARCH 2024

Spring Pastor's Workshop

April 11, 2024 from 10 am - 3 pm at Inspiration Hills

Plan on attending the Pastor's Workshop at Inspiration Hills Camp. All clergy – new and not-so-new, retired, and interim – are invited to join the fellowship and practical conversation about sharpening their ministry tools.

Pastor Bill Eley from the Chippewa Church of the Brethren will lead the morning session on "Transformational Preaching". The afternoon will begin with Q&A/discussion on the morning's topic then move into an "Open Forum" format with topics that may include pastoral leadership, worship planning, visitation, counseling, community presence, conflict, or self-care. One topic we will explore together is where God may be calling us to new ministries. We will also spend time on district and denominational updates.

Lunch will be provided.

0.4 CEU's provided. Please RSVP to the District Office or register online at: www.nohcob.org/workshop by Thursday, April 4th so we can give a meal count to the camp. Fellowship time begins at 9:30 am.

April 13, 2024 from 10 am - 12:30 pm at the District Office or join by Zoom

For those that cannot attend on Thursday, **Bill Eley will provide the session on "Transformational Preaching"** on Saturday, April 13. This shortened format will provide 0.2 CEUs. Refreshments will be provided. Fellowship time and district and denominational updates will begin at 9:30 am. Please RSVP to the District Office or register online at: www.nohcob.org/workshop13 by Thursday, April 4th to receive the Zoom link. Fellowship time begins at 9:30 am.

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Andrew Wenger Ordained at Akron Springfield CoB



November 19th was a special day at Akron Springfield as their pastor, Andrew Wenger, was ordained in the Church of the Brethren. Andrew has been serving as pastor

at the church since December of 2019. He has a BA from Elizabethtown College and his MDiv from Lancaster Theological Seminary.

Andrew and his wife, Lauren have three children: daughter Grace (5), and son Beckett (1), and daughter Sophia in heaven.

The congregation celebrated Andrew's ordination Sunday with a worship service filled with beautiful music and a reception following the service.

Brian Layman Ordained at Ashland First CoB



Ashland First Church of the Brethren celebrated Brian Layman's ordination on January 7th. He began serving there in April of 2021. He has also run his own Website Consultation business since 2009. Brian attended the Buckeye Brethren Institute and has been active in local and

District Church of the Brethren boards for many years. He also volunteers as Chaplain every year at Inspiration Hills Camp. He and his wife Denise have been married for 30 years. They have four adult children, Jaxom, Azia, Julian, and Caleb.

The congregation celebrated with a wonderful worship service followed by a luncheon provided by the congregation.

Mike Conner Ordained at Painesville CoB

It was a joyful day as Mike Conner was ordained at the Painesville Church of the Brethren on December 10th where he has been serving as pastor since August, 2022.



Mike graduated from the Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI), our district's ministerial training program, and is currently serving in the district as our Moderator-elect and chair of the District Nominating Committee.

Mike is a bi-vocational pastor, also working full-time as a block truck driver. Mike and his wife, Dawn, have two adult sons.

The congregation celebrated Mike's ordination Sunday with a beautiful worship service and a carry-in dinner.

Nelson Brown Licensed and Installed as Pastor at Sugarcreek East CoB

Nelson Brown was licensed to ministry in the Church of the Brethren and installed as pastor on Sunday, December 17th at the Sugarcreek East



Church of the Brethren. Nelson has been serving as Interim Pastor at the church since November, 2021, He and his wife Cathy are from the Southern Ohio/Kentucky District and had been attending Sugarcreek for several months when the congregation asked him to lead Sunday School, and then eventually preach. Nelson appreciates the congregation encouraging him in his gifts for pastoral ministry.

Michael Huffaker Installed as Pastor at East Chippewa CoB



Michael Huffaker was installed as the new pastor at the East Chippewa Church of the Brethren on January 15th during the worship service.

Michael graduated from Bethany

Theological Seminary as he began his years of pastoral experience in Church of the Brethren congregations in S. Ohio, Iowa, Virginia, and Kansas before pastoring the Sugar Creek West congregation in Lima, Ohio.

Michael and his wife, Laura, are blessed with four children. Daughters Ashley and Lauren each reside on the east coast. Kamryn and Jarred are young adults living at home. Kamryn (21) works in retail and Jarred (19) is working as bank teller while attending college.

The congregation celebrated with Mike and his family with a worship service filled with beautiful music and a meal following the service.

Continuing Education Opportunities

The Brethren Academy will offer the in-person course, ***Polarization as an Opportunity for Ministry Course***, at Bethany Theological Seminary (Richmond, IN) from April 11-13 2024, with an additional Zoom session before and after. Russell Haitch, Professor of Theology and Human Science, will be the instructor. The deadline to register for this course had been extended to *March 7, 2024*.

The Brethren Academy will offer this online course, ***Cultivating an Everyday Faith***, from April 17 - June 11, 2024. Joan Daggett, ordained minister and executive director of the Brethren and Mennonite Heritage Center, will be the instructor. In this course, students will explore ways to break out of the Sunday school box and nurture an everyday faith in church, home, and community. Deadline to register is *March 13, 2024*

Listening for the Sound of the Genuine is the theme for the pre-Annual Conference Ministers event. This is a preaching workshop led by Dr. Frank A. Thomas, professor of homiletics at Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis). His passion is "to teach preachers to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to shape and influence preachers to rise to the height, depth, and beauty of the best of their preaching potential." *Register before June 10*. The event begins the evening of July 2.

BUCKEYE BRETHREN INSTITUTE INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE

The next BBI class "Introduction to Pastoral Care" begins in April with Tina Hunt teaching. This class is for:

BBI students (those exploring a call to pastoral ministry).

Ordained and Commissioned Ministers may audit this course for 1.5 CEUs

Anyone wanting to join for personal enrichment.

Meeting dates (all Fridays) and times:

April 19, April 26, May 10, 2024 (all Friday's) from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Classes will be held at the Northern Ohio District Office, 1107 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805. Classes will also be available by Zoom. The link will be sent after registration.

You can register on-line at <https://nohcob.org/BBI/pastoralcare> or by sending in the form on the attached flyer by March 23rd. Cost is \$25 and can be paid on-line, mailed to the office, or brought the first day of class.

Tina has put together an introductory video which you can view at <https://youtu.be/YcEQKb0fbxE>



Northern Ohio District Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Akron Eastwood – Search Committee formed. **Cindy Peel** serving as interim.

Ashland Dickey – Search Committee Interviewing. *Leadership arranging for pulpit supply.*

Bristolville – Search Committee interviewing. **Ed Agler** serving as Interim Pastor.

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

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

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

Freeburg – **Ed Wartluft** serving as preacher.

Silver Creek – **Ric Beals** serving as preacher.

Jonah's People – **John Ballinger** serving as Interim Pastor

Eden-Tom Michaels serving as Transitional Pastor.

Sugar Creek West - Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Congregations that have completed the Search Process:

East Chippewa - **Michael Huffaker** called as pastor and installed on January 8th.

Sugarcreek East - **Nelson Brown** called as pastor and installed on December 17th.

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. Contact Kris Hawk at krishawk@nohcob.org or 330-612-2086 for more information on exploring the call to ministry.

Training is available through our District's Buckeye Brethren Institute. Find out more information at <https://nohcob.org/BBI> or contact Paul Bozman, Director of Ministry Education at pbozman78@gmail.com.

District Prayer Calendar

February Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

Swan Creek, Dick Neuwirth

Woodworth, Steve Simmons

Adrian, David Morton

District Leadership

District Disaster Ministries

Sister Districts

West Marva, Western PA

National Leadership

Brethren Disaster Ministries

March Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

Akron Eastwood, Cindy Peel

Akron First, pastoral vacancy

Akron Springfield, Andrew Wenger

District Leadership

District Board-Terry Baldwin, Chair

Sister Districts

Atlantic Northeast, MidAtlantic

National Leadership

David Steele, CoB General Secretary

Denominational Forms - it's that time of the year

In the last few weeks your church office should have received a set of forms from the denomination's Yearbook office. These include a statistical report form that looks at membership and attendance, a financial reporting form, and an informational form that asks who is doing what in your church so that appropriate mail can be sent to those persons.

This information helps the district office and the denomination have statistical information that assists in planning and understanding what is happening across the denomination. Forms are due back to the Yearbook office by April 15. Thank you for making sure this happens for your congregation.

Experience the power of prayer at camp in 2024!

Campers will learn both the importance of communicating with God AND many different ways to engage in prayer from the formal to the informal, from praying in groups to praying alone, and from asking God for help to prayers of thanksgiving and joy. We will reach out to God in community through joy, pain, and everything in between.

Whether in a group or all alone, prayer is our connection to God and other believers and it is essential to our life as Christians. This curriculum will allow us to deepen our connection with God and grow our understanding of how God answers prayer to make our relationships with Christ stronger than ever. Join us!



[Bring Your Big June 30-July3](#)

[Grand Camp June 30-July3](#)

[Beginners Camp and Launchpad July 14-17](#)

[Junior Camp July 7-12](#)

[Junior High Camp June 16-21](#)

[Senior High Camp and Weekend Bash June 9-14](#)

Click on a camp at the left to find more information on the individual camps available.



Saturday
April 6, 2024
10 am – 3 pm



You are invited to "Be Encouraged!"

Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren
SISTERS' Spring Women's Retreat
at Richland Church of the Brethren, Mansfield Ohio

Speaker: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford
Director of News Service for the Church of the Brethren



Funds Available to Your Congregations

Hottle Grants are available through the district for 1) Project grants within the church to expand the ministry of the church, 2) Outreach Ministry grants that impact not only the church but the community at large and may include changes to the physical plant, 3) Program Development grants within the church to stimulate growth or spiritual health. Click [here](#) for more information and an application.

Church Improvement Loans are available through the district at 0% interest. The loan may be used for building improvements and repairs to the main ministry property. Click [here](#) for more information and an application.

District Events Calendar

- 03.03 Connections Commission Meeting at 9:00 am
- 03.03 Eastern Area Lenten Service at 7:00 pm
- 03.05 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering at 10:00 am
- 03.06 Western Area Pastor's Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 03.07 Camp Administration Committee at 6:00 pm
- 03.09 District Board Meeting at Good Shepherd Home
- 03.10 Eastern Area Lenten Service at 7:00 pm
- 03.14 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering at 12 pm
- 03.19 Central Committee Meeting at 6 pm @ Hartville
- 03.19 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering at 10:00 am
- 03.28 Maundy Thursday
- 03.29 Good Friday (District Office closed)
- 03.31 Easter

Northern Ohio Church of the Brethren



District Conference August 9 and 10
at the Hartville Church of the Brethren.
Registration opens May 1, 2024

2024 IRS Mileage

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued
the 2024 standard mileage rates.

*67 cents per mile for business miles driven.

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



ROMANS 16:2 (CEB)

**WELCOME+
WORTHY**

2024 CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

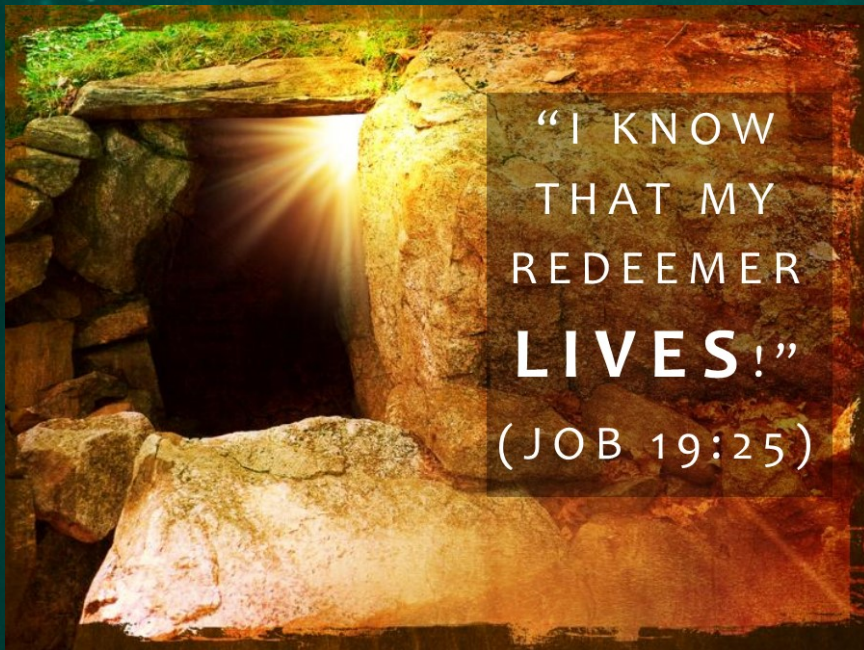
Annual Conference Registration Opens March 1

Registration for Annual Conference begins on March 1st at noon (Central time). The Conference will be held in Grand Rapids, MI, from July 3-7. Earlier this year your church should have received information regarding costs and the registration process. More information, as well as the registration link beginning March 1, can be found at www.brethren.org/ac/.

All are encouraged to attend. And we hope that each of our churches will send a delegate (churches with over 200 members can send 2) to have a voice in the decisions that will be made this year. For clergy, many CEU opportunities are available including the Pre-Conference Workshop **Listening for the Sound of the Genuine** (see page 3 for more info)

Virtual Non-Delegate Registration Option

An option will again be offered to Non-Delegates to participate in conference virtually. You can register for the virtual option online from March 1 through July 7, although the registration fee goes up after June 11. New this year is an option for Groups or Institutions to register and enjoy the convenience of the virtual platform as a group.



District Office Hours

The District Office regular hours are Tuesday – Friday from 9am to 3pm. Since Kris is sometimes out for meetings, it is best to contact her to make sure she'll be there. Kris can be reached by phone or text at 330-612-2086 or by email at 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 419-606-1707 or erin@nohcob.org.

Peace and Conciliation Advocate, Linda Fry, can be reached at linda@nohcob.org.

The office will be closed on Good Friday, March 29th.