

# Pastor's *memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
DECEMBER 2022—JANUARY 2023

## 2023 Clergy-Spouse Retreat

February 19-21, Quality Inn & Suites, Richfield, Ohio

Guest Speakers: Pastor Tom and Susan Zuercher

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee” Galatians 5:16

Please plan on joining us for this time of relationship-building, renewal, learning, and rest. 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.

### “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.

## Tom and Susan Zuercher

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.



# Camp Strategic Planning Committee requesting survey participation

A newly-appointed Inspiration Hills Strategic Planning Committee has been called by the District Board to bring a written strategic plan for the camp with specific goals and implementation plan to a combined meeting of the District Board and Camp Administration Committee and ultimately to bring to the District Conference delegates.

To begin the process, we've developed a short survey to gather information on how the camp is perceived and supported by churches and members of the Northern Ohio District. Our hope is that this will be filled out by as many people in our congregations as possible.

Please participate by :

1. Filling out the attached form and returning it by email to [erin@nohcob.org](mailto:erin@nohcob.org) or by mail to Northern Ohio District Office, 1107 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805.
2. Clicking on this link to complete the survey form online <https://forms.gle/Pq2efVi9D2awUqyp9>

Thank you,

## The Inspiration Hill Strategic Planning Committee

David Bassett, Chair (Pleasant View)

Lisa Ballinger (Painesville)

Mark Dickerhoof (Freeburg)

Russell Matz (Ashland Dickey)

Cindy Peel (Akron Eastwood/Akron Springfield)

Ex-Officio members:

Shannon Kahler (Camp Executive Director)

Lisa Snyder (Camp Treasurer)

Erin Beebe (District Administrative Secretary)

Kris Hawk (District Executive Minister)



# Meet our new staff members



**Erin Beebe**  
*District Administrative Secretary*

Erin Beebe began serving as our District Administrative Secretary in October of 2022. Erin is a member of Maple Grove currently serving as a deacon, member of the bell choir,

Notes of Praise band, and Shoebox Ministries Chairperson. She also serves as Camp Representative and is in the Worship Leader rotation. In the past, she has served on the District Youth Cabinet and worked at Inspiration Hills. Erin's family includes son Nikolas age 23, daughter Megan age 21, daughter Kate age 18.

She brings excellent secretarial and administrative skills to her ministry as District Administrative Secretary as well as a spirit of faith and compassion.

Erin's Office Hours: Erin is bi-vocational - working full-time at other employment through the day. She is in the office on Monday from 4 pm - 8 pm and the rest of her 16 hours on a flexible schedule. You can reach her by email at [erin@nohcob.org](mailto:erin@nohcob.org)



**Taylor Petersen**  
*District Youth Coordinator*

We welcome Taylor Peterson as the Northern Ohio District Youth Coordinator beginning August 13, 2022. Taylor has been a member of

North Bend Church of the Brethren since a young age. She has served on the Christian Education Board for three years and has volunteered at Royal Family Kids Camp for six years.

Taylor obtained a degree in Life Science Education from Mount Vernon Nazarene University in 2021. She used this degree as a substitute teacher during the 2021-2022 school year. She has a passion for junior and senior high students and is excited for the ways that God has led her into this position and where He will continue to lead her and the youth students.

She married her husband Riley, who is also a member of North Bend Church of the Brethren, in 2021. They live in Bellville and hope to stay in the area.

Taylor can be reached at 419-571-0612 or [taylor@nohcob.org](mailto:taylor@nohcob.org)

# Buckeye Brethren Institute Receives Renewed Accreditation from Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy of Ministerial Leadership has renewed the accreditation of the Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI), our District's ministerial training program. We are grateful to Paul Bozman, District Director of Ministry Education, for his work coordinating the BBI program and in completing the requirements for recertification for this vital educational program for our pastors and those exploring ministry.

## Clergy Tax Seminar

January 28 2023

11:00 am - 4:00pm (EST)

Students, clergy, and anyone who deals with clergy finances are invited to participate in this online Zoom seminar.

During this hour webinar with Deb Oskin as the instructor, you will learn a great deal about clergy tax law, tax preparation, and clergy compensation. Earn 0.3 CEUs (for the first 2 sessions only.)

Registration and Cost:

Registration is \$40 per person (generally nonrefundable to keep fees and overhead low).

Deadline to register is January 18, 2023

Register now at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren->

## 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.

## CEU LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### Wisdom Literature

March 15-May 8

Instructor: Steve Schweitzer

The Brethren Academy will offer the online course, *Wisdom Literature*, from March 15-May 9, 2023. Bethany Theological Seminary's Academic Dean, Steve Schweitzer, will be the instructor.

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

The deadline to register for this course is February 8, 2023. See the attached flyer for registration information.

### Basic Clergy Ethics Training and Advance Ethics Training

January 21, 2023 from 10am –4 pm

The Brethren Academy has set a date for the next training session of *Ethics for Set-Apart Ministry: **Basic Course***, created by James Benedict. This training using Zoom, an online conferencing platform, is for **newly licensed ministers and others seeking basic clergy ethics training**. The training will be held January 21, 2023, via Zoom.

**The Advanced Course** is also being offered on the same date for those that have been ordained/commissioned since the 2020 ethics training cycle. The registration deadline for both is **January 11th**. This allows time to mail the workbooks to participants. The attached brochures contains all the information and instructions for registering.

For more information or to register for courses, go to the Brethren Academy Website: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/>



## Mike Conner Installed as Pastor at Painesville CoB



It was a joyful day as Mike Conner was installed as Pastor at the Painesville Church of the Brethren on August 28th. Mike grew up in the Akron Springfield congregation and

served as a Junior High Advisor for both the church and the N. Ohio District. Opportunities there led him to consider a call to ministry. He has completed the classes with the Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI). Mike will be serving as 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 the beginning of Mike's ministry with a carry-in dinner.

## Stephen McLaughlin Ordained November 27 at Lake Breeze



Stephen McLaughlin was Ordained at the Lake Breeze Church of the Brethren on Sunday, November 27th where he had been serving as pastor for

almost two years. Stephen began serving as Interim Pastor at Lake Breeze in 2018 and was licensed and called as Pastor in December 2020.

Stephen and his wife, Jeanene, have a total of eight children in their blended family. Stephen received an M.A. in Counseling in 2012 from Ashland University and pastored for 10 years in a non-denominational church prior to coming to Lake Breeze. Stephen is also a full-time Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor working in an Adult Counseling program in Lorain.

The congregation celebrated with special music during the worship provided by

## Pastoral Placement

### Congregations actively in the search process:

- **Bristolville** – Search Committee interviewing. *Congregation* arranging pulpit supply.
- **Woodworth** – Search Committee interviewing. *Congregation* arranging pulpit supply.

### Congregations that have not begun the search process or have chosen not to seek at this time:

- **Akron Eastwood** – *Cindy Peel* serving as interim.
- **Brook Park** – *Ryan Lopez* serving as interim pastor.
- **Dupont** – *Jeff Rhees* serving as interim pastor.
- **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* called as pastor and will begin serving as pastor on December 11th.
- **Painesville** – *Mark Conner* called as Pastor as began serving on August 14th.

## Prayer Calendar

### December

#### Our Churches/Pastors

Sugar Creek West, Mike Huffaker

Sugarcreek East, Nelson Brown

#### District Leadership

Camp Inspiration Hills, Shannon Kahler

#### Other Districts

Puerto Rico, Atlantic Southeast

#### National Leadership

Nancy Heishman, Director Office of Ministry

### January

#### Our Churches/Pastors

Swan Creek, Dick Neuwirth

Woodworth, pastoral vacancy

Zion Hill, Scott McPeck

#### District Leadership

District Disaster Ministries

#### Other Districts

West Marva, Western PA

#### National Leadership

Brethren Disaster Ministries

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



# NOMINATIONS: REMINDER FROM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Your opportunity to nominate for denominational leadership

Each member of the Church of the Brethren is invited to recommend possible nominees for the 2023 Annual Conference ballot.

We encourage you to talk with the person you are planning to nominate, to gauge their interest, but more importantly to talk with them about the gifts and skills you see in them, to encourage them to prayerfully consider the call, and to encourage them to fill out the information following your nomination. The nomination isn't complete until they have responded."

The deadline for nominations has been extended to **January 4th** and we hope to have strong representation from Northern Ohio among the names submitted to be considered for the ballot.

Go to: [www.brethren.org/ac/nominations](http://www.brethren.org/ac/nominations) to make your nomination or for more information.

You may also contact our District Standing Committee Representative, Dawn Baldwin at [mabaldwind@bluffton.edu](mailto:mabaldwind@bluffton.edu)

For more information. You may contact the district office for a paper copy of the form.

"Please do your part to nominate people for next year's Annual Conference ballot. You can help shape the future of the Church of the Brethren! As you pray about this, who comes to mind – whom is the Lord prompting you to nominate for leadership in this Body of Christ?"

(Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Director of Annual Conference)

**Open positions to which Northern Ohio District people can be nominated:**

- Moderator-elect
- **Mission and Ministry Board (area 2) - this includes Northern Ohio. Our district has not had a representative on the board for over 10 years.**
- Program and Arrangements Committee
- Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees-Laity and Clergy
- Eder Financial Board
- On Earth Peace Board
- Pastoral Benefits and Compensation Advisory Committee.

More information about each of these positions can be found at <https://www.brethren.org/ac/nominations/>



## OFFICE HOURS / STAFFING

The District Office will be closed December 23rd through January 2nd for Christmas and New Year's.

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 at 330-612-2086 or [krishawk@nohcob.org](mailto:krishawk@nohcob.org).

The office will also be closed January 6th—11th while Kris is at meetings for the Council of District Executives. She will be returning phone calls and emails during that time.

Administrative Secretary, Erin Beebe is in the office Monday 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)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- 12/23-1/2 District Office Closed for Christmas
- 1/4 Western Area Pastors Luncheon
- 1/6-11 Kris Hawk attending Winter District Executive Meetings
- 1/10 Nominating Committee Meeting
- 1/11 Central Area Pastors Breakfast
- 1.21 BBI Class: History of Christianity
- 1/28 Clergy Tax Seminar
- 2/7 Executive Committee Meeting
- 2/11 BBI History of Christianity (Class 1)