

Pastor's *memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
SEPTEMBER 2016

Greetings from the New Youth Coordinator, Esther Harsh

I'd like to thank those who have welcomed me to the position of District Youth Coordinator with kind words and encouragement. I am looking forward to reconnecting with many of you and meeting new faces as we work together. It is my hope to see the youth program continue to develop and grow, so the youth in the district will further strengthen their relationships with Christ and will be equipped with skills to share their faith in order to offer the love and hope of Christ to those around them. The years that I was active in the youth programs in the district were crucial to my own faith development, and I'm eager to help build solid leaders among our youth in the district.

I will be contacting youth leaders and workers in the upcoming weeks, so we can continue to get to know each other and in order to discuss future program ideas and events. Feel free to contact me at esther@nohcob.org or at [330.880.7161](tel:330.880.7161) if you'd like to connect. Again, thank you for welcoming me to this position!

In Him,
Esther Harsh

About Esther Harsh: Esther is a graduate of Malone University (2005) with specific training in Youth Ministry, and she brings a wealth of experience to the task. She served as a missionary in Ukraine for over six years, teaching life skills to orphans and orphanage graduates through personal relationships. Esther's experience also includes working as the Educational Director for the Boys and Girls Club of Massillon.

Esther brings strong relational and administrative gifts to this role. She also brings a depth of faith and a gift for communicating that faith – and instilling a desire to grow in discipleship and ministry.

She and her husband, Jason (Pastor of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren) have two teen-age daughters, Kristina and Olya from Ukraine that became part of their family two years ago.

Esther began her ministry August 29th. She will be working part-time. Esther will be in the office on Mondays with additional office time as needed.



Table of Contents

Greetings from the New Youth Coordinator	1
Stories to Share	2
Clergy Spouse Retreat	2
Youth Advisors Team	2
District Staff Schedule	2
Pastoral Placement	3
District Prayer Calendar	3
Mark Your Calendar	3
Business Items from Annual Conference	4
Attachments	4

Stories to Share

Each church received a check for \$1000 in June, and another \$1000 check in August. This money came from the Hottle fund, a \$2 million gift to the District from the estate of Dwight Hottle.*

In the October issue of the Herald, we want to include stories of how this money was used in your church. Please send your stories to julie@nohcob.org or call the District Office at 419-281-3058. These don't need to be complicated; they can be as short as several sentences, or as long as you like. Staci Williams (Licensed Minister from Poplar Ridge and writer) will put these together in an article to help us celebrate God's work through these gifts.

In addition to sharing these stories with each other, this will also allow us to share with the Hottle family how some of this amazing gift is being used.

*The money for the grants to churches for outreach ministries is also provided by this fund. See the District Conference Wrap Up newsletter for more information.

Clergy-Spouse Retreat – Save this date!

Our District Clergy-Spouse retreat will be held February 19th-21st at the Holiday Inn French Quarter in Perrysburg (Toledo area). This is a time for relationship-building, renewal, learning, and rest. The food and facilities are great, but the fellowship is even greater! Single and married clergy and their spouses are encouraged to attend. More information to follow.

*Seen on a bulletin board at
Dupont Church of the Brethren*

***“WHEN THE PREFERENCES OF
THE CHURCH MEMBERS ARE
GREATER THAN THEIR PASSION
FOR THE GOSPEL, THE CHURCH
IS DYING.” Thom Raines***

Youth Advisers Team and Youth Cabinet Team

The Fellowship Commission of the Northern Ohio District is rebuilding the Youth Advisers Team and Youth Cabinet Team. We would like for Pastors and church leaders to be in prayer as we seek adults and youth (grades 9-12) in the congregations who the spiritual gifts to serve these positions. More information and nomination forms will be available on the District web site. If you have questions, please contact Billi Janet Burkey at (330) 418-1148.

“The healthy body is being constantly renewed. This is also just as true mentally and spiritually. There is so much in God's Word about renewal of life that it is strange that any conscientious Christian would be afraid of change in his outlook on life or even in his religious ideas. Of course, the fear is that change would mean loss of faith, but this is never true if the faith is in the living God and not in one's ideas of God. God never changes, but our minds must be open to new knowledge or grow stagnant. When we quit growing we begin to die. Renewal can come to anyone at any time by turning to God in faith.” Anna Mow Source: [So Who's Afraid of Birthdays](#)

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

Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Bethel – Congregational profile completed.
Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Brook Park – Interim Pastor Search Committee has been formed and is interviewing candidates.
Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Lakewood – Search Committee formed and profile complete. Interviewing candidates. **Gene Wyse** serving as interim.

Brook Park – Interim Pastor Search Committee has been formed and is interviewing candidates.
Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Moving forward towards calling:

Chippewa – **Bill Eley** serving as interim and beginning the Commissioning process.

Dupont – **Dan Wust** Commissioned in the Church of the Brethren and called as Pastor on August 11th.
Installation service September 11, 2016.

Lick Creek – **Bill Holsopple** called as pastor.
Installation service scheduled for September 18th.
Dr. Nancy Berkheiser serving as interim.

Marion First – **Rick Hicks** serving as interim.
Commissioned pending congregational call vote
September 25th.

Owl Creek – **Charles Barnhill** installed as Pastor
August 28th. Commissioned in the Church of the
Brethren.

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

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

East Nimishillen – **Matthew Reed** serving as interim.
Congregational profile complete, but not actively
seeking at this time.

Eden – **Wayne Scott** serving as interim.

Lake Breeze – **James Washington** serving as
interim.

Pleasant View – **Les Bartley** resigned as pastor
effective in November.

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

Paradise – Congregation arranging pulpit supply.

Mark Your Calendar

- **September 17**—Inspiration Hills Fall Festival & 50th Anniversary Celebration, Inspiration Hills, Burbank, OH
- **September 23-24**—District Board Orientation Meeting, Inspiration Hills, Burbank, OH
- **October 8**—Transition Team Listening Session, 9am to 11am, Akron Springfield CoB, Akron, OH
- **October 8**—Transition Team Listening Session, 10am to 12pm, Pleasant View CoB, Elida, OH
- **October 9**—Transition Team Listening Session, 3pm to 5pm, East Chippewa CoB, Orrville, OH
- **October 15**—SISTERS' 2016 Fall Retreat, New Philadelphia CoB, New Philadelphia, OH
- **October 20**—Ministry to Dementia Patients, 10am to 3pm, Good Shepherd Home, Fostoria, OH
- **October 25**—Executive Committee Meeting, Dinner 5pm, District Office, Ashland, OH

District Prayer Calendar

August 28—September 3

Lakewood CoB (Interim Gene Wyse) and Lick Creek CoB (Pastor Bill Holsopple)

September 4—September 10

Mansfield First CoB (Pastor Vaughn Loose) and Maple Grove CoB (Interim John Ballinger)

September 11—September 17

Marion CoB (Pastor Rick Hicks) and Mohican CoB (Pastor Paul Bartholomew)

September 18—September 24

Mount Pleasant CoB (Pastor Bruce Jacobsen) and New Philadelphia CoB (Pastor Max Canfield)

September 25—October 1

North Bend CoB (Pastor Patrick Bailey) and Owl Creek CoB (Pastor Charles Barnhill)

Business Items from Annual Conference

Here are the New Business items that were presented to the delegates at Annual Conference in Greensboro along with their actions:

New Business Items

1. Query: Same Sex Weddings The 2016 Annual Conference adopted a motion from the floor to refer the concerns of the query to the Leadership Team in consultation with the Council of District Executives to bring clarity and guidance concerning the authority of Annual Conference and districts regarding the accountability of ministers, congregations, and districts, bringing recommendations to the 2017 Annual Conference.

This item took the bulk of the discussion time. Standing Committee brought the recommendation that “the consequence for officiating or providing leadership at a same sex wedding is the termination of the ministry credential of the one officiating or providing leadership at a same sex wedding. This shall be for a period of one year, pending review by the district ministerial leadership team. Standing Committee has determined that this item requires a 2/3 majority vote as a controversial issue. If this recommendation is approved, the proposed new polity would become an item of new business at the 2017 Annual Conference and would require a 2/3 majority vote to be adopted as a change in polity as of the 2017 Conference. “

While the recommendation received a majority vote, it was not the 2/3 required for this change in polity to be adopted. So the delegates referred the query as stated above.

Kris Hawk, our Interim District Executive, represents our District on the Council of District Executives (CODE). The next full

meeting of CODE is scheduled for January. Some preliminary conversations have already begun.

2. Query: On Earth Peace Reportability/Accountability to Annual Conference and Query: Viability of On Earth Peace as an Agency of the Church of the Brethren Recognizing that the Review and Evaluation Committee has the responsibility to consider the balance and unity of denominational agencies, the 2016 Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation to refer the “Query: On Earth Peace Reportability/Accountability to Annual Conference” and the “Query: Viability of On Earth Peace as an Agency of the Church of the Brethren” to the Review and Evaluation Committee for their consideration.
3. Query: Continuing the Study of Our Christian Responsibility to Care for God’s Creation The 2016 Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that a Creation Care study committee be appointed to work, in consultation with Brethren Benefit Trust and other relevant organizations, to develop ways to support and extend our knowledge of renewable energy production with our financial investments and involvement in community projects to reduce our contributions to greenhouse gas concentrations and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.
4. Query: Living Together as Christ Calls The 2016 Annual Conference adopted Standing Committee’s recommendation that the concern of the query be adopted and be referred to the Mission and Ministry Board.

More information can be found at <http://www.brethren.org/ac/2016/>

ATTACHMENTS

- Inspiration Hills Camp is Turning 50! Come Join the Celebration, September 16 & 17, 2016
- Mansfield First Church of the Brethren 90th Anniversary Celebration, October 1 & 2, 2016
- East Chippewa Church of the Brethren is hosting IGNITE: 2016 for senior high youth, October 1, 2016
- Ministry to Persons with Dementia & their Families Good Shepherd Home Workshop for Pastors, Chaplains, Stephen’s Ministers, Volunteer Lay Visitors, October 20, 2016
- Crisis in Nigeria, Call for Volunteers, Nigerian Workcamp, November 4-21, 2016, January 11-30, 2017 and February 17-March 6, 2017

