

Northern Ohio Church of the Brethren
District Conference 2023

BACK TO OUR FUTURE

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

The Herald

District Conference Issue

2023 Northern Ohio

District Conference

August 11-12

Maple Grove Church of the Brethren

Ashland, Ohio

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MAY 2023 / VOLUME 67 / ISSUE 2

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Message from the Moderator

James Washington, Northern Ohio District Moderator and
Pastor of the Elm Street and Pleasant View congregations

Our theme for this year's District Conference is based on Paul's writing to the church in Corinth:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:10-11.

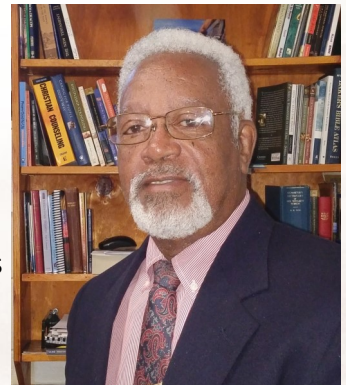
Here, Paul lays out the blueprint, or gives us a sense of direction regarding how we are to continue to build on the foundation that has already been laid – how we are to move forward. I am convinced, according to Paul's writing, that we cannot move forward without looking back, past how our grandmothers used to do church, to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 where Jesus said, “Therefore, go and make disciples **of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

I believe that Jesus' Great Commission is connected to Revelations 7:9-10 where John writes, “after this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from **every nation and tribe and people and language** standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands, and they were shouting with a great roar, salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb.”

If we believe this is the way it should be, then we should be making a deliberate effort to create a multicultural church starting now. If we are to be the church for all people, we cannot minister to people in other countries and yet walk by people we see daily who are hurting and feeling the devastating impact of injustice here in this country. To me, this is like the story Jesus tells of the Good Samaritan.

For far too long the church has been ministering in other countries, but at the same time neglecting to reach out to and invest in people of color in this country. If we are to be the church that God wants us to be, we must be willing to embrace people of all races, cultures, and from all countries. And we must be willing to learn to worship God together in new ways, as we look back to our future building on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Pastor James Washington, Northern Ohio District Conference Moderator



Northern Ohio District Conference 2023 Schedule

Friday, August 11 Schedule

11:00 a.m.	Exhibit & Peace Auction Set-up Begins
12:00 p.m.	Registration Begins
1:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Pre-Conference Workshop, Speaker: Stephen Reid
5:00 p.m.	Dinner (in Fellowship Hall)
6:30 p.m.	Opening Worship, James Washington preaching
8:00 p.m.	Ice Cream Social

Saturday, August 12 Schedule

8:30 a.m.	Worship Service (in Fellowship Hall)
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.	Business Session (in Fellowship Hall)
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (in Fellowship Hall)
1:15 – 2:15 p.m.	Insight Sessions
2:30 – 3:45 p.m.	Business Session (in Fellowship Hall)
4:00 -5:00 p.m.	Insight Sessions
5:15 p.m.	Dinner (in Fellowship Hall)
5:15 p.m.	Reorganization of the Board (For newly elected and continuing board members)
6:30 p.m.	Worship Service, Guest Speaker: Stephen Reid Installation of Moderator
8:00 p.m.	Closing



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Registration for District Conference is now open.

Register on-line at nohcob.org/register or use the

forms on pages 6-8 in this issue of the Herald.

Youth and Children Activities

Childcare (toddlers and preschoolers) is available during the Pre-Conference Workshop, Worship Services, Business Sessions and Insight Sessions.

Children's Activities (K-5th grade) are provided by Maple Grove CoB staff during Insight and Business Sessions.

Jr. and Sr. High activities are provided by Taylor Peterson, District Youth Coordinator. Youth registration begins at 4:00 p.m. Friday and activities continue overnight through Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m. See page 4 for youth schedule details.

**Plan to attend our Ice Cream Social
Friday evening!**



Ice Cream Social

Conference Speakers

James Washington

Friday Evening Worship



In 1959 at the age of 16, James Washington began a serious relationship with God. He was ordained as a deacon in 1966 and ordained to the ministry in 1977 at the Greater Mount Calvary Baptist Church. In the latter part of 1978, James founded the Bethel Temple Community Church in

Pomona CA. He studied theology at the University of La Verne, under Prof. Vernard Eller, and studied pastoral counseling at Claremont College under Prof. Howard Clinebell.

Early on, James played lead guitar for the Christian Crusaders in Fort Worth Texas, and more recently he played bass guitar for the Bittersweet Gospel Band in Los Angeles California. He is a singer, songwriter, and musician.

James served on the anti-racism training team for the Church of the Brethren from 2003 to 2007. He and Sandra founded *Best Friends Ministries*, sharing African American culture through music and plays as well as working with youth. He wrote one book that is at the publishers and is working on his second book at the publisher's request.

James co-founded *Time Out Ministries*. Time out is an acronym for, *today's interaction may encourage our unity tomorrow*, focusing on finding ways to embrace our diversity as the people of God.

James serves as the Pastor of both the Pleasant View and Elm Street Church of the Brethren congregations in the Lima area. He has served on the Pacific Southwest and the Northern Ohio District boards and is currently a member of the Allen County Mental Health Advisory Board. James and his wife, Sandra, have been married for 18 years, have a blended family of nine children, and a truckload of grand and great-grandchildren.

Throughout his life's journey, loving and enriching relationships were created with many people who have been blessings in his life.



Dr. Stephen Reid

Saturday Evening Worship



We welcome Dr. Steve Reid. Steve holds a B.S. in religion from Manchester University, an M.Div. from Bethany Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Emory University. He has served on several seminary faculties including Academic Dean at Bethany Theological Seminary.

He is currently Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity & Belonging at Baylor University. He is the author or editor of such books as, *Experience and Traditions. A Primer in Black Biblical Hermeneutics* (Abingdon 1991), *Listening In: A Multicultural Reading of the Psalms* (Abingdon, 1997), *Prophets and Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) and *Psalms and Practice. Worship, Virtue, and Authority* (Liturgical Press, 2001). He and his wife Kathy have authored *Uncovering Racism*. (Brethren Press, 2000) He has served Presbyterian, Baptist, Mennonite, and Church of the Brethren congregations. He is a member of Lower Miami Church of the Brethren in Dayton Ohio. Steve and Kathy have four children and seven grandchildren, and two dogs named after Star Wars heroes.



The 4th Street Baptist Praise Team will provide music Saturday evening.


Maple Grove Church of
the Brethren




August 11 - 12, 2023

CONTACT


Taylor Peterson
YOUTH COORDINATOR


 (419)571-0612


 taylor@nohcob.org

 nohcob.org/youth

SOCIAL

 [/nohcoboyouth](https://www.facebook.com/nohcoboyouth)

 [@nohcoboyouth](https://www.instagram.com/nohcoboyouth)

 [@nohyouth](https://twitter.com/nohyouth)

If advisors or youth need contacted during the weekend in case of an emergency, please call or text Taylor throughout the day at 419.571.0612. Transportation will be provided. Meals and activities are FREE for youth!

Contact Taylor if you need a ride to/from the conference!

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

grades 6 - 12

FRIDAY

4:00 Youth Registration
5:00 Dinner: Pizza, Games
6:30 Opening Worship
8:00 Ice Cream Social
8:45 Depart for Inspiration Hills
11:30 Lights Out

SATURDAY

7:30 Breakfast at Camp
8:30 Youth Insight Session, Stephen Reid 9:30
Service Project at Camp
12:00 Lunch at Camp
12:30 Activities around Camp
3:30 Depart for Maple Grove CoB
4:00 Insight Session: Calling the Called
5:15 Dinner
6:30 Worship, Speaker: Stephen Reid 7:30
Depart

WHAT TO BRING

Youth Registration Forms (Medical Form, Photo Release)

Bible	Sleeping Bag/Bedding
Friends	Pillow
Notebook + Pen	Board Games
Water Bottle	Clothes
Hygiene Items	Swimsuit
Tennis shoes	Towel

Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren
2023 DISTRICT CONFERENCE DELEGATE AUTHORIZATION FORM

Mail the form to: Northern Ohio District, 1107 East Main Street, Ashland, Ohio 44805

Please do not include any payments with this form.
All payments should be sent with the Registration Form along with any choices for meals and camp lodging (if applicable).

CONGREGATION NAME: _____

Delegate 1	
Name	
Complete Mailing Address	
Phone Number	E-mail Address

Delegate 2	
Name	
Complete Mailing Address	
Phone Number	E-mail Address

Delegate 3	
Name	
Complete Mailing Address	
Phone Number	E-mail Address

Delegates Authorized by: (Pastor, Clerk, or Moderator)

Sign below, name and title

Number of Delegates: District Polity says: "There shall be two (2) for each member church or fellowship with 200 or fewer members. Larger churches shall have one (1) delegate for each additional 100 members or fraction thereof. One delegate should be a church board member. No elected delegate shall serve more than two years in succession, except in those congregations where the average weekly worship attendance is (35) or less.

Adult District Conference Registration Form

August 11-12, 2023 Northern Ohio District Conference

YOU MUST REGISTER BY JULY 28 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS

Send Registration Forms and checks to:
Northern Ohio District, 1107 E. Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805

All delegates must also complete this form. Each congregation must provide a delegate authorization form signed by the church's pastor, moderator, board chair, or clerk. This is verification that the delegate has been chosen by the congregation to represent them at conference. You may now also register on-line & print conference materials from the District Website: www.nohcob.org/register

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Are you a Delegate? Yes No

Congregation Name _____

Your Name _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip Code

Phone Number (____) _____ E-mail _____

Is this your first conference? Yes No Do you want a Conference Book? Yes No

Registration Fee: \$25.00 pre-registration (\$35.00 on site) \$ 25.00

Choose your meal options:

Friday Dinner

\$14.00

Saturday Breakfast

\$7.00

Saturday Lunch

\$10.00

Saturday Dinner

\$14.00

Special dietary needs? _____ Total Meals: \$ _____

Camp Lodging Option:

Friday Night

If a Family, how many are staying?

• \$25.00 ind. or • \$50 for family Friday _____

Saturday Night

• \$25.00 ind. or • \$50 for family Saturday _____

Continental Breakfast included with overnight stay.

(People staying at the camp will need to bring their own bedding and towels.)

Total Lodging: \$ _____

Are you attending the Pre-conference event? Yes No

Do you wish to receive CEU's? Yes No

Are you attending the Ice Cream Social Friday after worship? Yes No

(The cost is included in registration fees.)

Please add together your Registration Fee, Meal Costs, and Lodging
(Make checks to "Northern Ohio District")

Total Cost: \$ _____

Jr. High / Sr. High Youth / Youth Advisor Registration Form

August 11-12, 2023 Northern Ohio District Conference

Send Registration Forms to: Northern Ohio District, 1107 E. Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805

PLEASE REGISTER BY JULY 28TH

You may also register on-line & print conference materials from the District Website: www.nohcob.org/register

Senior High (9th-12th) Junior High (6th-8th) Youth Advisor

Congregation Name _____

Your Name _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip Code

Phone Number (____) _____ E-mail _____

Is this your first conference? Yes No

Are you a delegate? Yes No

Registration Fee: No charge for youth.

Registration Fee: \$ 0.00

Meals: Meals will be provided for youth at no charge.

Special dietary needs? _____ **Total Meals:** \$ 0.00

***Lodging:** Youth will lodge at Inspiration Hills at no charge

(bring your own bedding and towels) **Total Lodging:** \$ 0.00

Total Cost: \$ 0.00

How will you be coming to District Conference?

With my Family With my Youth Leader Driving Myself

If you need help with transportation call Taylor at 419-571-0612

*Youth are expected to stay overnight at Inspiration Hills Camp on Friday and participate in all youth activities.

Youth registration begins at 4 pm on Friday, August 11th.

In addition to this Conference Registration form, you must complete the Youth Registration Form at www.nohcob.org/youth (if you have completed this in the last calendar year, no need to complete it again).

Child Under 12 Registration Form

August 11-12, 2023 Northern Ohio District Conference

YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER BY JULY 28 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS.

IF YOU ARE REGISTERING ADULTS, USE ADULT FORM

Send registration forms to: Northern Ohio District, 1107 E. Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805 or register online at www.nohcob.org/register

Child 1

Child 2

Congregation Name

Congregation Name

Child's Name M/F Age/Grade

Child's Name M/F Age/Grade

Address (Street, City, State)

Address (Street, City, State)

Parent's Name

Parent's Name

Parent's Phone Number

Is this your child's first conference? Yes No

Parent's Phone Number

Is this your child's first conference? Yes No

Parent's contact information at conference

Parent's contact information at conference

Who will pick up children from their activities?

(Children under 12 do not pay registration or meal costs)

Who will pick up children from their activities?

(Children under 12 do not pay registration or meal costs)

Please mark the meals you want for your child.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Friday			
Saturday			
	Totals No Charge		

Please mark the meals you want for your child.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Friday			
Saturday			
	Totals No Charge		

Preschool Children: Childcare is provided during Pre-Conference, worship on Friday and Saturday, and Saturday business sessions and insight sessions. Please indicate below if/when your child will be in Child Care.

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Conference	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Business Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Worship	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Insight Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Worship	

Preschool Children: Childcare is provided during Pre-Conference, worship on Friday and Saturday, and Saturday business sessions and insight sessions. Please indicate below if/when your child will be in Child Care.

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Conference	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Business Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Worship	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Insight Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Worship	

Grade School Children: Children's activities are provided for children in grades 1 through 6 during the Saturday business sessions and insight sessions. Register children who will participate in Children's Activities. Will your child attend Children's Activities on Saturday? Yes No

Does your child have any special needs, food allergies, etc.? Yes No Explain:

Parent or Guardian's Signature:

Grade School Children: Children's activities are provided for children in grades 1 through 6 during the Saturday business sessions and insight sessions. Register children who will participate in Children's Activities. Will your child attend Children's Activities on Saturday? Yes No

Does your child have any special needs, food allergies, etc.? Yes No Explain:

Parent or Guardian's Signature:

Lodging for District Conference 2023

A block of rooms has been reserved at:

Wingate Distance from Maple Grove: 6.9 miles
1392 Enterprise Pkwy Drive Time: 13 minutes
Ashland, OH 44805 Phone: (419) 281-2900



Rate is \$89 for a King or Double Queen Room – **Must reserve by 7/9 for this rate**

Let them know you are from the Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren

Camping

Inspiration Hills Camp Distance from Maple Grove: 16 miles
4819 West Easton Rd Drive Time: 23 minutes
Burbank, OH 44214 Phone: (419) 846-3010
\$25/person, \$50/family Please bring your own towels/bedding



Other Lodging Options

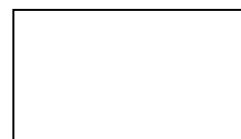
Super 8 Motel Distance from Maple Grove: 7 miles
736 US-250 Drive Time: 12 minutes
Ashland, OH 44805 Phone: (419) 281-0567



Hampton Inn Ashland Distance from Maple Grove: 6.7 miles
2055 E Main St. Drive Time: 12 minutes
Ashland, OH 44805 Phone: (419) 903-0900



Quality Inn Distance from Maple Grove: 6.8 miles
741 US-250 Drive Time: 12 minutes
Ashland, OH 44805 Phone: (419) 281-8090



Our Local Service Project:



Please consider donating these new items to Ashland's Pregnancy Care Center

Baby Needs

- ◆ Diapers & Wipes—Preemie through Size 6
- ◆ Baby food, formula, & Cereal (date not expired)
- ◆ Baby wash, shampoo, lotion
- ◆ Infant toys & books
- ◆ Bibs & burp clothes
- ◆ Blankets
- ◆ Baby clothes—Premier through size 3T
- ◆ Diaper bags
- ◆ Bottles, nipples, pacifiers & teethers

General Needs

- ◆ Paper products (tissues, toilet paper, paper towels)
- ◆ Recloseable sandwich & gallon bags
- ◆ Garbage bags (kitchen & large trash)
- ◆ Lysol/ Clorox disinfectant spray & wipes



Giving Opportunities at District Conference

Coming at District Conference!

August 11-12, 2023

The Silent Auction For The Peace Endowment Fund

Support District Peace Education Efforts!



The Peace Task Team organizes an annual auction to raise money for the District Peace Endowment Fund. This fund supports District peace education efforts.

As one of the Historic Peace Churches, we are committed to teaching Christ's message of peace

— peace within ourselves as we make our peace with Jesus; peace within our families, our congregations, and with our friends; peace in our communities; and peace in the world with our friends and those we may call enemy. The Peace Endowment Fund was established in 1982 to support efforts in the District to teach the things that make for peace!



We Need YOU!

→ to bring handmade items and goodies (handcrafted items, artist's work, homemade food) for the auction!

→ to come prepared to bid on the donated items in the auction!

Donate by:

- ! Bringing your donated items to the Auction Table Friday, Aug 11 by 5 p.m.
- ! Giving us an estimate of their value
- ! Noting what a minimum starting bid should be

How to Bid:

- ! The Silent Auction runs from 5 p.m. Friday to the start of worship Saturday evening.
- ! The person with the highest bid when Saturday evening worship starts, takes the item home in return for their contribution to the Peace Endowment Fund!
- ! All items should be picked up after worship on Saturday evening.

We appreciate all those who support peace education efforts by donating items or by bidding in the auction!



Friday, August 11th at 6:30 p.m.

A special offering will be taken during worship for the **District Conference Fund**. This fund provides for conference expenses, including but not limited to supporting host church expenses, ice cream social, conference speakers travel and expenses, delegate materials, books and handouts, youth and children's activities, display area, insight sessions and much more!

Saturday, August 12th at 6:30 p.m.

A special offering will be taken for **Inspiration Hills** during worship. Our district camp needs the generous support of our churches and members to continue this vital ministry in our district. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

You may also give at anytime during conference through the Offering Boxes that will be available for each of these opportunities.

Putting the Heart in Hartville

The Hartville Church of the Brethren was featured in the April 2023 issue of the Messenger in an article entitled, “The End of the Road...or the Beginning / Faced with challenges, some churches are closing with dignity or re-inventing church life.” With the Section Title of “Putting the Heart in Hartville” author Walt Witschek tells the story of the congregation following the “re-inventing” pathway. Here is an excerpt (reprinted with permission). You can subscribe to Messenger at www.brethren.org/messenger

What if a congregation didn't just reach out to its surrounding community? What if it were completely wrapped around it, immersed in it? That's where Hartville (Ohio) Church of the Brethren finds itself, just a few years after it thought it was going to have to turn out the lights.

Like many congregations, Hartville—located in a small town between Akron and Canton—found itself growing smaller and older. Its building was showing wear, and it could no longer keep up with the maintenance. Conversations ramped up about closing and selling the building to another church group in town. But then another possibility took shape.

Hartville pastor Anthony DiMarco had connected through a community organization with Norm Wengerd, CEO of GentleBrook, a Hartville nonprofit that provides housing and other services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, seniors, and others. And it happens to be located on property adjacent to the Hartville church. GentleBrook was looking for additional space, and an idea began to take shape. DiMarco, who was already doing chapel services for GentleBrook residents on Sunday afternoons, took a proposal to the congregation for GentleBrook to purchase the church building and five-acre property, while the congregation would continue to rent space to use for worship and other activities. Discussions continued, and eventually a contract was finalized in January 2020.

GentleBrook now uses portions of the building during the week, while the congregation has full use of the sanctuary and some offices and can use the full building on weekends. It's a rent-free agreement for the first 10 years, with extensions after that to be negotiated. An exciting added dimension was a proposal to do ministry together.

Jocelyn Siakula, who formerly worked for Brethren Volunteer Service, was hired in a joint position as director of family and youth ministry. Some of the work was delayed by the pandemic, but it has blossomed into doing chapel services, summer camps, and special activities, as well as a re-imagined worship experience at Hartville that is intentionally inclusive of those with various abilities. That provides a welcoming space for GentleBrook residents who attend. “We're coming up with different ways to be together, and I'm really excited about that,”

DiMarco says. “We're starting to see what we had initially envisioned in our minds.”

Sunday mornings now begin with a “devotional time,” about half an hour that includes scripture reading, prayer, and a sermon, followed by fellowship time with donuts and coffee. That's followed by the “J&K service,” taking its initials from two congregation members who were strong advocates of the changes before passing away

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but also doubling as symbols of the service's mission: Joyful Kindness. Some people come for parts of the morning, some for all parts of the morning, some for all.

A typical J&K service has announcements, sharing joys and concerns, prayer, singing, scripture, a mini-sermon, and then an intergenerational small group conversation time around tables for about 30 minutes, using topical questions that are inclusive and interactive. A wide variety of leaders of all ages guide the discussion.

“We've really seen growth in people,” Siakula says. “It's a more intimate space in which to share and talk about scripture.” “It's like Sunday school, Bible study, and vacation Bible school all wrapped up into one,” DiMarco adds. “It's given us a chance to do more teaching, too. People are asking questions they wouldn't normally have asked. That's been really exciting.”...

It's been a lot of changes for the century-old congregation, but members have embraced them.

“As a congregation, once we made this big change, I think people are more free now to be able to adjust and redirect and change things as they come,” Siakula says. “We're always changing and editing and making adaptable or inclusive things that we never thought of. When the need arises, then we just figure out how to change it and move forward. It's broken down barriers. Now it's, ‘I can't imagine our service without this.’”

Some bonuses have come from the significant shifts, too. GentleBrook takes care of all the building maintenance now, so funds that had been set aside for roof repairs were able to be sent instead to a mission project in Zambia, for example. And closer to home, a few staff members who accompany the GentleBrook residents to activities at the church have started attending worship regularly. It's still not a large congregation, but the energy is tangible.

“God's really doing something here,” DiMarco says. “It's exciting. We're small, but we're doing the work we're supposed to be doing. Whereas before all the focus was on keeping the lights on and the door open, now we're actually doing ministry. Hopefully we're being faithful with a little, and God will give us more to do in the future.”

Walt Witschek



Shannon Kahler resigns as Camp Executive Director

Shannon Kahler, Executive Director of Inspiration Hills has resigned effective December 31, 2023. Shannon has faithfully served in this role for 14 years through many joys and challenges, including navigating through a pandemic.

In her letter of resignation to the Camp Administration Committee (CAC), Shannon wrote "It has been a pleasure to work with you over the last 14 years and I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve the Northern Ohio District in the camp ministry. I treasure the time that I have spent with the campers, staff, and members of the district and I continue to pray for the many ministries and changed lives that will be a part of Inspiration Hills in the years to come. "

We are grateful for Shannon's commitment to camp, including leading through another summer camping season! Watch for details on how we will celebrate Shannon's ministry.



Pine Lodge Matching Fund Opportunity

The Northern Ohio District has received a wonderful gift from the estate of Darlene Bucher. The District Board, at their March 11th meeting acted on the recommendation from the Stewardship and Finance Commission to use \$12,797.40 from the gift (1.2) to provide matching funds for donations given to repair Pine Lodge at Inspiration Hills Camp. To date, \$7,673.79 has been received, bringing over \$15,347.58 to the camp for this project. Donations are still being matched. Make checks payable to "Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren" or "NOHCOB" and mail to the District Office at 1107 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805.

Annual Conference Delegate Briefings held by our Stand- ing Committee Delegate

Dawn Baldwin (Lick Creek) serves as our Standing Committee Delegate to Annual Conference, beginning her service last August. Dawn provided two delegate briefings in our district to help prepare delegates for the important work at Annual Conference this year. Here are excerpts from her report to the District Board:

At the District level, 2 AC delegate briefings have been hosted. Mansfield First COB graciously hosted the first briefing on April 30th with 16 participants and 11 congregations represented. Dupont COB graciously hosted the second briefing on May 7th with 36 participants and 7 congregations. [Additionally, Kris Hawk, Terry Baldwin and myself were present at both briefings.]

A portion of each AC delegate briefing focused on two recommendations from the COB Manual of Organization and Polity, Chapter 1, The Annual Conference. The manual recommends that:

- Delegates serve as ex-officio members of the church board/leadership team from the time of their election through Annual Conference and six month following to help interpret and implement official statements
- Delegates, upon election, should be consecrated for their important tasks by a spiritual commissioning service in the local congregation.

Dawn encourages each of us to be involved in implementing these recommendations in our local congregation if practical.

Please surround Dawn with your prayerful support as she serves the Northern Ohio District on Standing Committee at the 2023 Annual Conference.



Yearbook Forms are Past Due

Even if you missed the April 15th deadline for the Yearbook Forms, please complete and return them as soon as possible. This information is vital for our district as well as the denomination.

If you need replacement forms, contact Jim Miner, Yearbook Specialist, at 800-323-8039, ext. 320 or a direct line at 847-429-4320, or email yearbook@brethren.org.

District Youth Update

Spring Rally



We are very excited to announce that district youth rallies are back!

On April 21-22 there was a junior and senior high rally held at camp. We had 23 youth attend from four different congregations. We had an awesome time at camp while we participated in some service projects, activities, worship, and we heard from three different speakers that covered our verse for the weekend, 1 Peter 2:9-10.

The youth were able to dive deeper in their relationship with Jesus as well as meet other youth from the district and fellowship with them. We are looking forward to more district youth events this year.

We can't wait to see you at District Conference!

Winter Lock-In

The district youth program kicked off 2023 with a winter lock-in at Ashland Dickey. We had an awesome night of fellowship as we went bowling, had a cookie decorating contest, and heard an amazing message from Mark Hupp.

We had 27 youth attend this event from five different congregations. We are very excited for future youth events in 2023. Thank you all for the support!



District Prayer Calendar

May Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

County Line, Chris Ewing / Defiance, Eugene Yenser
Dupont, Solomon Okang / East Chippewa, Brad Kelley

District Leadership

Ministerial Commission—Steve Simmons, Chair

Sister Districts

Missouri/Arkansas Southeastern

National Leadership

On Earth Peace/Church of the Brethren in Spain

June Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

East Nimishillen, James Lee / Eden, Wayne Scott
Elm St., James Washington / Faith in Action, Jim Gorrell

District Leadership

Connections Commission—Bruce Morckel, Chair

Sister Districts

Idaho/Northern Plains

National Leadership

Nevin Dulabaum, Eder Financial/CoB in Uganda

July Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

Freeburg, Ed Wartluft / Hartville, Anthony DiMarco
Jonah's People, Bob Simonsick /
Lake Breeze, Stephen McLaughlin

District Leadership

Congregational Commission—Mark Pollock, Chair

Sister Districts

Southern Plains/Western Plains

National Leadership

Annual Conference July 4-7 in Cincinnati
CoB in Brazil

August Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

Lakewood, Gene Wyse / Lick Creek, Bill Holsopple
Mansfield, Tina Hunt / Maple Grove, Stephen Keib

District Leadership

Steward and Finance Commission—Dave Bassett, Chair

Sister Districts

Illinois/Wisconsin/Michigan

National Leadership

Carl Fike, Chari of Mission & Ministry, CoB in India

Northern Ohio District Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Ashland Dickey – Jeff Messner has resigned effective September 30. Search Committee is completing congregational profile.

Bristolville (full-time) – Ed Agler serving as interim. Search Committee interviewing.

Woodworth – Steve Simmons serving as interim. Search Committee interviewing.

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.

Brook Park – Ryan Lopez serving as interim.

East Chippewa—Brad Kelley has resigned effective December 31, 2023.

Freeburg – Ed Wartluft serving as preacher.

Sugarcreek East – Nelson Brown serving an interim pastor.

Silver Creek – Ric Beals serving as preacher.

National Older Adult Conference (NOAC)

September 4-8, 2023 Lake Junaluska, NC

NOAC is a Spirit-filled gathering of adults 50 and older who love learning and discerning together, exploring God's call for their lives and living out that call by sharing their energy, insight, and legacy with their families, communities, and the world. Online registration opens May 1. Past participants will receive an e-mail soon with updated information. For more information: <https://www.brethren.org/discipleshipmin/noac/> KEYNOTE SPEAKERS • Mark Charles, speaker, writer, consultant on the complexities of American history, race, culture, and faith • Ken Medema and Ted Swartz Ken is a singer/songwriter and "sneaky" theologian. Ted is a Mennonite actor and writer. • Osheta Moore, writer, pastor, speaker, and podcaster.

From the District Stewardship and Finance Commission

2023 has been another year marked by inflation and volatility in the financial markets, but the Northern Ohio District continues to be in a sound financial position. We are thankful to all our churches that support the District's budget through self-allocations. This is the main source of funds for our general fund budget, and the work and ministry of the District would not be possible without your continued support.

As we have seen several churches initiate the process of withdrawal from the District, the Stewardship and Finance Commission has developed a checklist of legal and financial steps that should be taken to protect both the withdrawing church and the District during this process. Financial settlement funds that are generated from these withdrawing churches will be used to offset related legal fees, to support any members from the withdrawing churches who wish to remain Church of the Brethren through a time of transition, and to offset loss of future self-allocation funds to the District budget.

The District was the recipient of a bequest from the Darlene Bucher estate in the amount of \$24,594. Darlene was the wife of Gordon Bucher, the District Executive of the Northern Ohio District from 1958 until 1991. Half of these funds will be used to replenish the Excellence in Ministry Fund. The other half will be used as matching funds to encourage donations to renovate Pine Lodge at Inspiration Hills Camp. Making upgrades to Pine Lodge (new windows, exterior maintenance, etc.) will make the building more rent-able and help preserve the building for future generations. We thank the Bucher family for this generous gift and for the impact this gift will have on the ministry of the Northern Ohio District and Inspiration Hills Camp.

The Stewardship and Finance Commission has initiated the review of a Financial Policies document for Inspiration Hills Camp to bring their written policies and procedures more in line with those that have been adopted for the District by the District Board. The goal is to be able to audit the camp's financials quarterly as we are currently doing with the District's financials. We are fortunate to have Lisa Snyder serving as Treasurer for both the District and the camp, making this transition much easier. We encourage your continued support for both the Northern Ohio District and Inspiration Hills Camp. You can be assured that there is proper accounting and oversight in place for all financial transactions through the Stewardship and Finance Commission, through the quarterly reviews by the accounting firm of Whitcomb and Hess, by Lisa Snyder as our District Treasurer, Cindy McNaull as our District Financial Secretary, and the District Office staff, all working as your "financial team". They are all doing excellent work on your behalf.

We look forward to what God has in store for us in the 2023-2024 year!

Self-Allocation Giving in 2024

As we go into the fall season, many churches will be setting their budgets for 2024. It is easy to fall into the habit of carrying the same numbers forward from the previous year when considering our self-allocation giving to the District and Inspiration Hills Camp. Self-allocation giving makes up about half of the District's annual general fund budget, and we are so thankful for your generous support. Although a much smaller percentage of the camp's budget, self-allocation giving is still an important source of income for the camp. While giving to the District has increased slightly in recent years, giving to the camp has been erratic and has not increased significantly over time. During the past 11 years, self-allocation giving to the camp averaged \$54,367, with giving in 2022 coming in at \$54,798. Over that same time period, inflation has increased costs by 31.03% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, consumer price index). Especially during the past two years, inflation has severely impacted the cost of operating the camp. The loss of self-allocation giving from churches leaving the District will also be a significant challenge for both the District and the camp going into the future. As you prepare your church budgets for 2024, please remember the needs of the District and the camp and the importance of these ministries. Your generous support is truly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Bassett, Commission Chair; Dave Hobbs Vice Chair; Charlene Kuhn, Secretary; Ed Chase, Member

Pre-Conference Workshop A Multi-Cultural Look at the Psalms

Presenter: Stephen Breck Reid

Date: Friday, August 11th

Time: 1:00 pm—4:30 pm

Location: Maple Grove Church of
the Brethren

CEUs for Clergy (0.3 CEUs)

Stephen Breck Reid maintains that every reader of the biblical text views it through the lens of other contexts. Our culture, experiences, and stories influence what we bring to, and take away from, Scripture. Focusing on the Psalms--specifically what the writer of the Psalms has to say about what it means to be human--Steve Reid will help us look beyond our inadequate and sometimes harmful assumptions about the Psalms by considering readings from African American and Latino perspectives. Reid draws on recent historical, critical, literary, and rhetorical scholarship of the Psalter, combined with an imaginative reading of African American, Latino, and other non-dominant cultural materials, to provide a compelling glimpse of a multicultural reading of Scripture.



District Brethren Disaster Ministries Update

A word from the district disaster coordinator team - We are excited to be volunteering our first week for the year in Dawson Springs, KY on May 21-27 - a little less than 2 weeks away! We have five people committed to going and we have openings for 2 more. We will be working with Habitat for Humanity on new homes that are being built for folks who lost everything in a tornado in 2021. Our second week in Dawson Springs will be September 3-9. At this time we have 2 people committed to going and we hope to have a total of 7 that week also. Please pass the word for us and encourage others to consider participating in this ministry opportunity. Remember there is no cost to go and there are many blessings ahead as we fellowship, work and live with like-minded believers, help others and serve in the name of Jesus. If you'd like to go but our weeks don't suit you, there are often openings other weeks during the year and we would be happy to look into that if you're interested.

There are other ways you can help this ministry. Please keep those volunteering and those who live and work in Dawson Springs in your prayers. Perhaps you could help a volunteer attend by offering to house sit or pet sit during the week?

Please call or email any of us on the team with questions, suggestions and/or an interest in serving.

Sandy Humphrey 330-603-9073 / sandiques@hotmail.com
Kim Morckel 330-618-2379 / kmorckel@netscape.net
Pete Snyder 419-281-3001 / pwsnyder@bright.net

District Events Calendar

- 05.11 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering
- 05.13 District Board Meeting at North Bend CoB
- 05.16 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering
- 05.17-19 New and Renew Conference
- 05.20 BBI Ministerial Leadership and Administration
- 05.21 Brethren Disaster Ministries Trip
- 06.06 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering (Zoom)
- 06.07 Western Area Pastor's Gathering
- 06.08 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering
- 06.10 Camp Administration Committee Meeting
- 06.20 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering (Zoom)
- 07.04-08 Annual Conference in Cincinnati
- 07.12 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at Tim Horton's
- 07.13 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering
- 07.18 Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering (Zoom)
- 07.27 Camp Administration Committee Meeting
- 08.11 Pre-Conference Workshop 1:00-4:30 pm
- 08.11-12 District Conference at Maple Grove CoB

Registration for District Conference is now open.
Register on-line at nohcob.org/register or use the forms on pages 6-8 in this issue of the Herald.

District Conference Business Items / Delegate Scholarships

Each congregation in Northern Ohio is encouraged to send two delegates to our District Conference on August 11-12 at Maple Grove Church of the Brethren in Ashland, Ohio. (Churches with more than 200+ members can send an additional delegate). There are confidential scholarships available to cover the cost of sending delegates to Conference. Please contact Kris Hawk at 330-612-2086 for more info.

While the business agenda is not yet finalized, here are some of the items that will come to the delegates this year:

1. Ballot for District Leadership positions
2. 2024 Budget for the District
3. 2024 Budget for Camp Inspiration Hills
4. Closing the Ross Church of the Brethren
5. Finalizing the withdrawal of County Line, Mt. Pleasant, and Zion Hill churches from the denomination.
6. Opportunities to learn about & celebrate the good ministries happening within our district and broader church.