

Pastor's *Memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
JUNE 2025

Pre-Conference Workshop

Friday, August 8 from 1 pm- 4:30 pm

Fruit of Discipleship in Shifting Times

Presenter: Josh Brockway

Location: East Chippewa Church of the Brethren

CEUs for Clergy (0.3 CEUs)

Focus: There is little doubt that the church in North America is experiencing dramatic shifts. Using the parable of the fig tree, we will explore together which it means to be tended and nourished so that we might produce the fruit of God's salvation. Josh will focus on the demographic shifts that are impacting the church and wider society all the same. He will then turn to the practices of the church as regrounding us in the salvation of God.



Presenter: Joshua Brockway has served as the Director for spiritual formation for the Church of the Brethren since 2010. His work includes oversight for the Spiritual Directors Network and the Ethics for Congregations polity. He writes frequently for a range of denominational publications and leads workshops and renewal events on prayer, discipleship, and Brethren identity.

Joshua received his Master of Arts from Bethany Theological Seminary and completed his Masters of Divinity at Candler School of Theology. He finished his PhD in Church History at The Catholic University of America having written on the intersections of prayer, liturgy, and asceticism in the writings of John Cassian.

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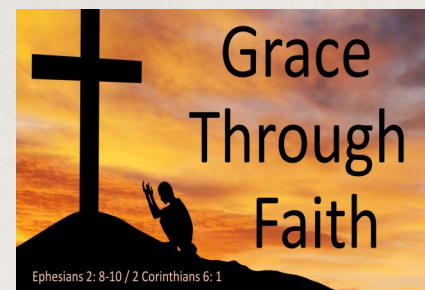
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Ministerial Day of Encouragement Wrap Up

This past fall, as the ministerial commission met and started planning for the upcoming year and setting our goals, we sensed that a common theme among pastors was discouragement, and the feeling of isolation had become a norm within our profession. As we processed this thought the idea of offering pastors and spouses a day of encouragement was conceived. Initially we brainstormed on what this would look like and who would lead this event.



I reached out to Seth and Angela Adkins from the Northwest Ohio area who have been active in church planting, church revitalization, healing ministry and church leadership develop-

ment. As I met with them met sessions started to materialize, which were Hearing from God, Hope and Healing. A fourth session would be on joy. I had previously heard Jep Hostetler do a session on Joy. He has also written the book "The Joy Factor".

This dream became a reality on April 5, 2025, as we gathered at Maple Grove Church of the Brethren. The day was filled with input from our speakers, with each session bringing practical ways to incorporate the main points.



In the session on hope, Seth challenged us to remember who called us into ministry. He reminded us that God had moved you to hear his call,

and God will continue to interact with you as you seek him and pursue him. We ended our session by praying over each other in small groups consisting of 3 to 4 men or women.

In the session on healing Angela offered these steps to healing.

- Don't hide the struggles
- Ask God for Help
- Acknowledge the sin or pain.
- Have faith
- Receive from God.

Healing Blockers

- Lack of forgiveness
- Pride
- Unconfessed sin
- Unbelief



Identify those you need to seek forgiveness from or for.

Make a list- who do you need to forgive.

Ask Jesus who you need to forgive.

Forgive and Pray over the situation.

Seek the divine exchange as you release wait in expectancy of God's movement in your life.

We ended our time praying over situations and events in our lives that needed to be healed. We cried out to God to bring healing and as always God provided for us.

Maple Grove's kitchen committee provided a great meal for lunch and morning snacks. They helped us stay energized throughout the day.



Jep Hostetler brought the message of the joy factor. He shared 6 attitudes that lead to a life seasoned with joy. The six attributes to joy are:

Life is a Gift

Life is sacred. Everyone around you has a creator who loves them. See others as God does as his children.

Life is difficult.

Life is short.

Life is funny.

Life is a Spiritual Journey.

Jep ended his session with some magic to bring joy to some weary pastors.

Seth brought the last session on Hearing from God. In which he asked us to use our imagination to allow God to speak to us. Then using scriptures to define if that was truly from God. He asked us to take some time to clear our minds from all the "noise" and to ask God to speak into our lives.

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Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, as you are already doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11



It was a great opportunity to connect with other pastors and to be re-sourced by Seth and Angela Adkins and

Jep Hostetler. I felt that God used this time to refresh and renew the calling that He had placed on the pastors in attendance and to help those closest to our pastors their spouses, practical ways to stay connected to God, the source of our joy, to tap into the Holy Spirit, to help heal ourselves so that we can be healthy to help others, heal, and to constantly be connected to God through our times of listening and to earnestly pray for each other and our churches throughout the district and those outside our denomination.

As the ministerial commission serves the district, we would like to know ways we can help pastors and spouses strengthen their walks with Jesus and with each other as they journey together.

Thank you to Maple Grove Church of the Brethren and Pastor Steve Keib for hosting, Candie Orr and Erin Beebe for providing childcare, Kris Hawk and Laura Huffaker for registration and brochures.

**Submitted by Pastor Bill Holsopple,
Vice Chair Ministerial Commission**

Women's Zoom Bible Study



We're looking for women who may be interested starting in the fall. Please put the word out to your congregation.

Please contact Cindy Peel by phone, email or text at cynpeel@hotmail.com or 234-417-6242 with any questions or if interested in more information.

Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Akron First— *Rebecca Ebie* is providing pulpit supply.

Center — Joe Routh serving as Interim Pastor.

Jonah's People — *Mark Self* and *Amanda Reidling* are serving as interim co-pastors.

Sugar Creek West — *Ministry Team* providing pulpit supply.

Congregations that have chosen not to seek at this time:

Bristolville— *Ed Agler* serving as interim.

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

Dupont — *Solomon Okang* serving as preacher.

Eden — *Tom Michaels* serving as transitional pastor.

Freeburg — *Ed Wartluft* serving as preacher.

Owl Creek — *David Searcy* serving as interim pastor.

Silver Creek— *Jason Martin* serving as preacher.

District Prayer Calendar

June

Our Churches

Eden, Pastor Tom Michaels

Elm Street, Pastor James Washington

Faith in Action, Pastor Jim Gorrell

District Leadership

Connections Commission, Jocelyn Siakula,
Chair

Other Districts

Idaho/Montana, Northern Plains

Denominational and global CoB

Nevin Dulabaum, Eder Financial

Church of the Brethren in Uganda

Visit our website www.nochcob.org/prayer for a complete prayer calendar for 2025.

Mark Your Calendar

- 6.4** Western Ohio Pastors' Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 6.12** Central Area Clergy Breakfast at the District Office at 9:00 am
- 6.12** Eastern Area Pastors' Gathering at 12:00 pm at the Front Porch Café in Hartville
- 7.2-7.6** Annual Conference at Greensboro, North Carolina
- 7.10** Central Area Clergy Breakfast at the District Office at 9:00 am
- 7.10** Eastern Area Pastors' Gathering at 12:00 pm at the Front Porch Café in Hartville
- 8.8-8.9** District Conference at East Chippewa CoB

If you are not able to attend the District's Annual Conference Delegate Briefing on June 1st at the Ashland First CoB, the Annual Conference officers are hosting a delegate briefing on Wednesday, June 11, at 8:00 p.m. ET . This briefing will take place on Zoom. Registration is required. To register, click here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/>



Brethren Disaster Ministries

We would like to thank our most recent volunteers!! Don Earlenbaugh, Sandy Humphrey, Ruth McCrea, Deb Rising, and Linda Smith spent a week in Letcher County, Kentucky volunteering with Brethren Disaster Ministries. May 5-9 was the week we committed to send volunteers from Northern Ohio and gave of their time to help those in need who are recovering from flooding in the area in 2022.

We appreciate all our volunteers and look forward to sending the next group September 7-13. We already have five volunteers ready to go! We will have the weeks for 2026 scheduled at the end of July, so please be on the lookout for those dates and perhaps consider joining us as we serve others in Christ's name.

Contact our Disaster team- Sandy Humphrey, 330-603-9073, Kim Morckel, 330-618-2379, or Pete Snyder, 419-685-0903.



Northern Ohio District Conference 2025

Registration is now open for District Conference at East Chippewa CoB on August 8-9. Register on-line at <https://nohcob.org/register>

Paper forms and additional information are available at <https://nohcob.org/district-conference>

Office & Staff Summer Schedule

The District Office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 2 pm.

The Office will be closed the week of June 29th as Kris and Laura will be attending Annual Conference. Please contact Kris at 330-612-2086 or krishawk@nohcob.org as needed during that week.

Laura Huffaker will be on vacation June 25th through July 6th.

Kris Hawk will be on vacation Monday, July 21st through the 28th.

District Executive Minister, **Kris Hawk** takes Monday as her day off.

Administrative Secretary, **Laura Huffaker** is in the office Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. She can be reached at 419-281-3058 or laura@nohcob.org.



Annual Conference registration is open!

Annual Conference is July
2nd—7th in
Greensboro, NC
Register at

[https://www.brethren.org/
ac2025/registration/](https://www.brethren.org/ac2025/registration/)

Church of the Brethren Ministers' Association
Pre-Annual Conference Continuing Education Event

A PLACE FOR EVERY BODY: DISABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND THE CHURCH

July 1-2, 2025 • Greensboro, North Carolina



JEANNE DAVIES serves as the Executive Director for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network. Jeanne has a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary, a Graduate Certificate in Disability and Ministry from Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, and a Graduate Certificate in Homiletic Peer Coaching from Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Jeanne is the author of *Believing and Belonging: An Accessible Anabaptist Membership Curriculum*, an illustrated curriculum of 26 lessons for youth and adults written at a third-grade reading level.

In the U.S., more than 25% of adults have some type of disability. About 8.5% of children have been diagnosed with a developmental disability. People living in rural areas experience higher rates of disability than those in urban areas. Whether we are aware or not, we have many disabled people in our congregations. Many more are not present because of barriers to access and belonging. Jesus invited everyone to the table, meeting needs and calling forth gifts. How might we create congregations that have a place for everybody, and live into the fullness of the body of Christ?

Jeanne will guide us through three sessions:

Tuesday evening: What Disables Us?

Wednesday morning: Creating Accessible Congregations

Wednesday afternoon: Accessible Worship

Suggested Reading:

- *Everybody Belongs, Serving Together: Inclusive Church Ministry with People with Disabilities* by Terry DeYoung and Mark Stephenson
- "Toward Accessible Worship: The Experiences and Insights of Christians with Disabilities," *Journal of Disability and Religion*, 2024, Vol. 28, No. 2, 189-219, by Erik W. Carter, Michael Tuttle, Emilee Span, Charis Ling and Tiffany B. Jones
https://bcdd.soe.baylor.edu/sites/g/files/ecbvkj1796/files/2024-11/toward_accessible_worship_the_experiences_and_insights_of_christians_with_disabilities_1.pdf

ARRIVAL/REGISTRATION

Tuesday, July 1

4:00 - 6:00 pm

EVENT

Tuesday, July 1

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Wednesday, July 2

9:00 - 11:45 am / 1:15 - 4:00 pm

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER

offered Tuesday, July 1 to all attendees, 5:00 - 5:45 pm, just prior to the opening session (advance registration required for meal; attendees' children may be included if registered)

LUNCHEON

(available for purchase)

Wednesday, July 2

12:00 noon - 1:00 pm

More information and registration:
www.brethren.org/ministryoffice



Church of the Brethren

Register online at www.brethren.org/ministryoffice beginning March 5, 2025
or by mail using the 2025 Event Registration Form on reverse



Intercultural Jubilee Celebration

THEME: Embracing Being Together & Awakening
Our Paths to the Future (Rev 7:9)

Join us for a day or three days of worship,
fellowship, study, and rejoicing, celebrating
in nature with good food. A special
gathering of being in the presence of God,
where all of us Brethren are enjoying one
another's culture, peacefully, simply and
together. All are welcome ❤️

NOVEMBER 18 – 21, 2025

2037 Hempel Ave, Gotha, FL
CAMP ITHIEL

COME JOIN US!



Registration will be opened soon.
Early bird registration 5/20/2025 and
Regular Registration is 8/1/2025
Early Registration: \$100 & Regular
Registration \$150 per person to defray
expenses.



For more information:
<https://www.brethren.org/intercultural/>



Church of the Brethren
Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.