

# Pastor's *memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN—MAY 2026



## Meet the Annual Conference Moderator/Delegate Briefing

*Sunday, May 31 from 3pm – 5 pm*

*at Mansfield First CoB, Mansfield, OH*

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, May 31 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm**. Don Fitzkee, Annual Conference Moderator, will hold our Annual Conference Delegate Briefing at Mansfield First Church of the Brethren. This session is for Annual Conference delegates, pastors, and all who would like to know more of what will be happening at

Annual Conference this year in Fort Wayne, Indiana on June 28th -July 2nd at the Grand Wayne Convention Center. Come hear about “Imagine” based on Act 2:17-18 (theme for Annual Conference), the fellowship and learning opportunities at Conference this year. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome to attend!!

Don Fitzkee is Pastor of Worship at the Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and 2026 Annual Conference Moderator. Previously he served for 20 years as a non-salaried “free minister” in the Chiques congregation, near Manheim, and was Director of Development at COBYS Family Services, an agency affiliated with the Atlantic Northeast District. Don has served in various denominational leadership roles including chair of the Mission and Ministry Board. He earned a Bachelor’s in Sociology from Elizabethtown College, spending his junior year abroad in Marburg, Germany, through Brethren Colleges Abroad. Following coursework at Bethany Seminary and Evangelical School of Theology, he earned a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Eastern Baptist (now Palmer) Theological Seminary. Following college Don served through Brethren Volunteer Service as Editorial Assistant for *Messenger* magazine, which opened doors to other writing opportunities and denominational roles.

Don enjoys disc golfing and riding bike, dabbles in gardening and apple trees, and tries to walk a few miles several times a week. He and his wife, Carolyn, live near Manheim and are parents of Galen and Marianne. In recent years Don & Carolyn have found joy in making new friends through their congregation’s refugee resettlement ministry.

## In This Issue

Annual Conference Delegate Briefing.....	1
District Prayer Calendar.....	2
District Events Calendar...2	
Pastoral Placement.....	2
The Central and Eastern Area Lenten Services.....	2
District Conference.....	3
District Resources.....	4
District Office Hours.....	4

Church of the Brethren  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
June 28-July 2, 2026



**Registration is now open for Annual Conference!!**

**For more information or to register, go to:**

**<https://www.brethren.org/ac2026/>**

# District Prayer Calendar

## May Prayer Calendar

### Churches/Pastors

Defiance, Eugene Yenser

East Chippewa, Mike Huffaker

Eden, Jamie Spencer

### District Leadership

Ministerial Commission

Mike Huffaker, Chair

### Sister Districts

Missouri Arkansas / Southeastern

### National Leadership

On Earth Peace

Church of the Brethren in Spain

## June Prayer Calendar

### Churches/Pastors

Elm Street, James Washington

Faith in Action, Jim Gorrell

Freeburg, Ed Wartluft

### District Leadership

Connections Commission

Jocelyn Siakula, Chair

### Sister Districts

Idaho / Northern Plains

### National Leadership

Nevin Dulabaum, Eder Financial

Church of the Brethren in Uganda

# District Events Calendar

5.31 Annual Conference Delegate Briefing from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Mansfield First CoB

6.2 Central Committee Meeting at 6:00 pm by Teams

6.3 Western Pastors Gathering at 12:30 pm

6.11 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at 9:00 am at District Office

6.11 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering at 12:00 pm

6.15 District Board Meeting at 7:00 pm by Zoom

6.16 Northern Ohio Pastors Gathering at 10:00 am

6-28-7.1 Annual Conference at Fort Wayne, Indiana

7.20-7.23 National Youth Conference in Estes Park, Colorado

8.14-8.15 District Conference at Akron Springfield CoB in Akron, Ohio

## Northern Ohio District Pastoral Placement

### Congregations actively in the search process:

**Brook Park** – Search Committee completing profile. **Ryan Lopez** serving as interim pastor.

**Center** – Profile completed. **Joe Routh** serving as interim pastor.

**Swan Creek** - Beginning to talk about the process. Members of congregation providing leadership

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

**Akron First-** **Wayne Kissel** serving as interim pastor.

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

**Silver Creek**— **Jason Martin** serving as interim pastor.

Updated 5-28-2026



## Buckeye Brethren Institute 2026-2027 Classes Available

Classes are held at the District Office from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. Classes are available by Zoom.

### Teaching and Learning in the Church

Meeting Dates August 28, September 11, and September 26, 2026

### History, Beliefs, and Practices of the Church of the Brethren

Meeting Dates October 23, November 6, and November 20, 2026

### Biblical Interpretation

Meeting Dates January 15, January 29, and February 12, 2027

### Introduction to Pastoral Care

Meeting Dates April 2, April 16, and April 30, 2027

Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI) is the Northern Ohio District's training program for those considering ministry or working towards ordination or even personal enrichment. The full program consists of 12 courses over three years. Cost is minimal thanks to the District Student Minister's Fund which supplements the program expenses.

Individual classes can be taken by clergy for CEU's (1.5 CEU/course). Cost is \$25 for CEU's. Interested non-clergy are also welcome to attend.

Please contact Tina Hunt, Ministry Education Director, at tmh4957@gmail.com for more information.

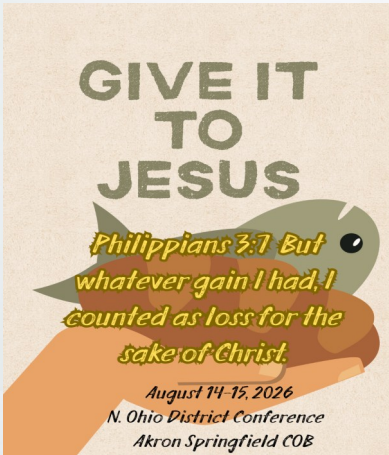
# District Conference

August 14-15, 2026

Akron Springfield Church of the Brethren, Akron, OH

Mark your calendars and be sure to attend this year's District Conference, August 14-15. Registration and Delegate forms are available as well as online registration at <https://www.nohcob.org/district-conference>. YOU MUST REGISTER BY AUGUST 3 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS.

Conference booklets are being sent to anyone who has registered and indicated they wanted a conference booklet. Conference books are detailed with information about worship, insight sessions, pre-conference workshop, and other events. Ryan Braught will be leading the Pre-Conference Workshop on Friday afternoon from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. and he will be bringing the message on Friday night at 6:00 p.m. Cindy Peel serves as moderator for this special event in the life of our District. She will be bringing the message on Saturday Afternoon at 4:30 p.m. More information is available at : <https://www.nohcob.org/district-conference> or by paper forms that were in the May District Conference Herald. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

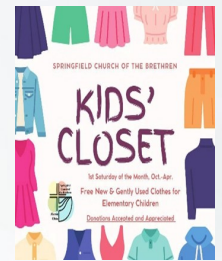


## Service Project

Please consider bringing the items listed below to District Conference to help support Akron Springfield's Church of the Brethren Kid's Closet!!!

- New or gently used clothing for babies, toddlers, and elementary ages children.
  - New Socks and Underwear.

Sizes needed are newborn through size 14 for boys and girls



## Coming at District Conference!

August 14-15, 2026

### The Silent Auction For The Peace Endowment Fund

Support District Peace Education Efforts!

### We Need YOU to Donate!

handmade items and goodies (handcrafted items, artist's work, homemade food) for the auction! Themed baskets are welcome too.

#### Donate by:

- Bringing your donated items to the Auction Table *Friday, Aug 14 by 5 p.m.*
- Provide an estimate of their value
- Note what a minimum starting bid should be

Money raised by the auction goes to support 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!



Come prepared to bid on items in the auction too!



(cash, check, or credit card accepted)

## Offerings

Friday, August 14, 2026 - District Conference

### Expenses

The District Conference Central Committee works to be frugal while providing a meaningful time of worship, business, and fellowship. The registration cost is low so there will be no financial barrier to those that want to attend – but that means this offering is needed to supplement registration to help cover the costs of printing, speaker travel/honorariums, and more.

Saturday, August 15, 2026 - Camp Inspiration Hills

A special offering will be taken for **Inspiration Hills Camp** during Saturday evening's worship. Our district camp needs the generous support of our churches and members to continue this vital ministry in our district.



## Pictures from the Sisters Retreat on April 25, 2026 at Camp Inspiration Hills



## District Resources

### Hottle Grants for Outreach Ministries

The District Congregational Commission is responsible for distribution of money from the Hottle Fund to District Churches for establishing new projects and ministries or impacting outreach in their communities. The grants up to \$5000 from the Hottle Fund are available 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 and may include changes to the physical plant.

We are now accepting applications for 2026. Grants are approved at regularly scheduled District Board Meetings. For more information or a grant application form, please contact the Northern Ohio District Office or you can access it online at <https://www.nohcob.org/resources/church-resources/hottle-grant-application-and-guidelines>

### Pastor's Memo and the Herald

In the next few months we are looking at different options on how we distribute the Pastor's Memo and the Herald as Publisher is discontinuing in October 2026. Look for changes coming soon!!!

## District Office Hours

**The District Office regular hours are Monday—Friday from 9 am to 2 pm.**

District Executive Minister, **Kris Hawk** takes Monday as her day off. She can be reached at 330-612-2086 or [krishawk@nohcob.org](mailto:krishawk@nohcob.org). Kris will be in Fort Wayne, Indiana June 25th-July 2nd for District Executive meetings and Annual Conference.

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](mailto:laura@nohcob.org). Laura will be on vacation June 8th-12th. She will return to the office Monday, June 15th.

Check us out on Facebook or the district website [nohcob.org](http://nohcob.org) for more information about Northern Ohio District Ministries. Click on the icons below or use your tablet/smart phone to connect to our website via the QR Code.

