

Pastor's *memo*

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN | OCTOBER 2026



Men's Retreat at Camp Inspiration Hills

Speaker: James Washington, Pastor of
the Elm Street and Pleasant View CoB
Congregations

Theme: Peacefully, Simply, Together

When: October 10, 2026, 9am-3pm

Registration starts at 9:00 am
and the program begins at 9:15 am with worship

Cost: \$35 per person/includes lunch (contact Kris Hawk at
krishawk@nohcob.org or 330-612-2086 for scholarship funds if
needed)

Please register by October 2, 2026 for meals at [www.nohcob.org/
mens's retreat](http://www.nohcob.org/mens's-retreat) or contact Laura Huffaker at the District Office at
laura@nohcob.org or 419-281-3058.

Come enjoy time of fellowship, worship, prayer, reflective
meditation, sharing testimonies, or work projects at Camp if
interested during the day.

Please see attached brochure for additional information.

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2027 Clergy- Spouse Retreat at Amish Door

Our District Clergy-Spouse retreat will be held February 14th-16th at the Amish Door in Wilmot, Ohio. This is a time for relationship-building, renewal, learning, and rest. The food and facilities are great, but the fellowship is even greater! Keith and Linda Funk will provide leadership for this event. Single and married clergy and their spouses are encouraged to attend. Please see the attached brochure.

More information to follow!!

Hottle Grants Still Available for 2026

The Congregational Commission of the Northern Ohio District Board invites your congregation to submit a Hottle Grant proposal for the commission's consideration by October 30, 2026.

Support from the Hottle Fund up to \$5000 is provided for:

- Project grants within the church to expand the ministry of the church.
- Outreach Ministry grants that impact not only the church but the community at large and may include changes to the physical plant.
- Program Development grants within the church to stimulate growth or spiritual health and may include changes to the physical plant.

The guidelines for the Hottle Growth Grant are available on the Northern Ohio District web site or contact the District office.

Articles for The Herald, Fall Issue Due October 20 *Stories to Share*

The Northern Ohio District Office will soon begin drafting the Fall Issue of The Herald. We will be using a different format as well. If you have an article you would like to contribute to The Herald, October 2026 Fall Issue, please send it to the District Office no later than October 20, 2026. Please keep your article between 150-200 words and provide a couple of pictures (digital preferably) to accompany the article if you like. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the District Office 419-281-3058 or email laura@nohcob.org. Thank you!

Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Brook Park – Search Committee completed profile and ready to interview. *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 chosen not to seek at this time:

Akron First- *pulpit supply*

Freeburg – *Ed Wartluft* serving as preacher.

District Prayer Calendar

October Prayer Calendar

Churches/Pastors

Marion, Rick Hicks
New Philadelphia, Dave Hobbs
Reading, Paul Bozman

District Leadership

District Disaster Ministries Team

Sister Districts

Northern Indiana
South Central Indiana

National Leadership

Jeff Carter, Bethany Theological Seminary
Church of the Brethren in Rwanda

District Events Calendar

- 10.7 Western Pastors Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 10.8 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at 9:00 at District Office
- 10.8 Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering at 5:30 pm
- 10.10 Men's Fellowship Retreat at Inspiration Hills
- 10.13 Executive Committee Meeting at 5:00 pm at District Office
- 10.15 CAC Meeting
- 10.22 Central Committee Meeting

Eder Financial to Transition Employee Benefits and Investment Services to Everence Financial

During the second half of 2026, Eder Financial will be transitioning employee benefits, retirement investing and institutional investments to Everence Financial, formerly Mennonite Mutual Aid. This means that if you have a retirement plan or your church has institutional investment assets, you are effected by this transition. This transition is expected to be completed by Spring of 2027. For more information, visit <https://ederfinancial.org/Transition>. For more information about Everence Financial, visit <https://www.everence.com/>.

Eder Financial will continue offering ancillary insurance products for pastors for the foreseeable future.

If your congregation is making contributions to the Eder Retirement Plan for your employees, you will need to fill out a new adoption agreement with the Mennonite Retirement Trust (Everence's employee retirement plan). For a time, all employees with retirement holdings will have accounts open with both Eder and Everence until the transition is completed in the Spring of 2027. If your congregation has organizational investing assets with Eder, you will need to fill out new forms with Everence. If you have questions during this time of transition, please reach out to the Everence District Office at 540-362-1816.



Eder Financial

BOLD. BALANCED. TRUSTED.

Eder Financial announces open enrollment for eligible employees on Nov. 9-20

Eder Financial will conduct open enrollment for 2027 benefits from Monday, Nov. 9, through Friday, Nov. 20. Open enrollment is the once-a-year opportunity to update insurance coverage. Eligible pastors and staff members of congregations, districts, and camps can purchase short- and long-term disability, life, vision, dental, critical illness, and accident insurance from Eder Financial again this year.

Eligible participants who want to keep their current coverage do not need to re-enroll, but prior to open enrollment, all eligible participants should visit ederfinancial.org and log in to the Health and Life Benefits [member portal](#) to verify and update their personal information to ensure they receive important benefits-related communications.

Buckeye Brethren Institute Upcoming Classes

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

Instructor: Paul Bozman

This course will examine the theological concepts that led to the development of the Church of the Brethren, particularly as understood by historical Anabaptism and Pietism. We will also study how those concepts have evolved and influenced the Brethren movement into becoming the church we know today. By the end of the course, the student will:

1. Be able to recount the origin and development of the Brethren from 1708 to the present day including important historical figures. This includes familiarity with the history and activity of the Brethren in his or her particular community or region.
2. Be able to articulate the beliefs, basic values, and special emphases that are characteristic of Brethren faith and life.

3. Become familiar with the way these values and beliefs have expressed themselves in organization and ecumenical expressions.
4. Be able to describe and conduct the various ordinances of the Church of the Brethren

This class is available to those interested in the ministry and to licensed ministers moving towards ordination. Ordained and Commissioned clergy can also take this class for CEU's (1.5 CEU's for attendance at all three Friday sessions) at a cost of \$25.00. And anyone can take this class for personal enrichment.

Visit our webpage nohcob.org/BBI to register or for more information.

2027 License Renewals and Approval for Employment

2027 License Renewals and Approval for Employment forms have been sent out via email to Licensed Ministers and Church Board Chairs.

Please be sure to fill out your forms and return to the District Office no later than October 31, 2026. The Ministerial Commission will be reviewing renewals and presenting them to the District Board the beginning of November. Thank you!

BRETHREN FAITH IN ACTION GRANT FUNDS

Formed by funds generated from the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, the Brethren Faith in Action Fund provides grants to fund outreach ministry projects that serve their communities, strengthen the congregation, and expand the reign of God.

Such ministries will honor and continue the legacy of service that the Center has epitomized while also addressing the dynamics of the present age. Grants of up to \$5,000 per congregation or ministry project per year are awarded, with a maximum of \$15,000 allocated to any one ministry project over multiple years. For more information, or to apply visit <https://www.brethren.org/faith-in-action/>.

Save the date!

The dates for the 2027 National Older Adult Conference (NOAC) have been announced. The next NOAC will take place on Sept. 6-10, 2027. More details coming soon!

2027 Annual Conference Nominations Daytona Beach, Florida

You can help shape the future of the Church of the Brethren. As we prepare for the 2027 Annual Conference ballot, every member is invited to prayerfully consider potential nominees. Who comes to mind as a faithful leader? Whom might God be calling to serve? Take time to listen, pray, and submit the names of those you believe can help guide our church into the future.

For more information and to nominate someone you know go to: <https://www.brethren.org/ac/nominations> Submit all nominations by December 9, 2026. The earlier, the better!

2027 Salary and Benefit Information

The 2026 Pastoral Salary and Benefit information packet has been emailed to pastors, church board/leadership team chairs, and church treasurers. It can also be found online at <https://www.nohcob.org/resources/pastors-resources/2021-salary-guidelines-and-table> If you would like paper copies of the information, please contact the District Office at 419-281-3058.

2027 Self-Allocation Reporting

The Church of the Brethren has discontinued their process of churches reporting their self-allocation pledges. It is important that our district still receives your pledges, as we work at budgeting responsibly. So we will be sending information to each church on how to report your budgeted pledges to the district and to Inspiration Hills.

Adults 50+ are invited to Camp Ithiel, Feb. 21-26 for the 2027 Older Adult Church of the Brethren FaithX experience.



Whether FaithX is familiar to you or completely new, you're invited to come, lend a hand, and share a meaningful week in community.

Space is limited to 20 participants, and registration is open now. Learn more and register: www.brethren.org/faithx/older-adult

Discipleship and Leadership Formation Creates Video Resources

The Church of the Brethren Office of Discipleship and Leadership Formation has created several video resources for congregations. Included are resources related to Spiritual Gifts, the Congregational Ethics Paper and Learning to Wash Feet (a discipleship development resource). All of these resources are available free of charge to Church of the Brethren congregations. To access these resources, visit <https://www.brethren.org/dlf/video-learning/>



Run with Purpose. Join Team CWS!

Church World Service is proud to be an official charity partner of the 2026 Indianapolis Monumental Marathon on November 7, 2026. Through Team CWS, participants can run either the Half Marathon or Full Marathon while raising funds to support CWS programs around the world and the local work of CWS Indianapolis.

Team CWS participants will receive:

- A premium Team CWS racing singlet or t-shirt
- Coaching support from Olympic Trials qualifier Evan Gaynor
- Access to a private pre- and post-race tent
- A pre-race team meal
- Fundraising support from CWS staff

Our goal is to raise \$25,000, with 70% supporting CWS programs around the world and 30% supporting the local work of CWS Indianapolis.

Learn more and register:

Half Marathon: <https://haku.ly/f3905e2c45>

Full Marathon: <https://haku.ly/585fbc0a77>

Turn your miles into meals, resilience into refuge, and compassion into concrete change.



Global Food Initiative grants can help churches address hunger in their communities

Did you know that the Church of the Brethren's Global Food Initiative (GFI) grants can help churches address hunger in their communities? GFI grants can support church-based community gardens, nutrition education, cooking classes, food pantries, community meals, blessing boxes, and more.

GFI is the primary way that the Church of the Brethren addresses hunger and food insecurity in the US and around the globe. Donations to the GFI fund enable grants supporting food security and hunger-related initiatives around the world. GFI also funds local church projects in the United States by supporting Church of the Brethren congregations as they seek to be "Jesus in the neighborhood."

The Global Food Initiative (GFI) is an ongoing fund established by the Church of the Brethren to enable Brethren to participate effectively in addressing pressing world hunger needs. The fund will respond to proposals to address domestic hunger and homelessness, as well as hunger and development needs around the world. GFI primarily seeks to address food insecurity through education, capacity building, and by equipping people with tools and resources to secure their own food. Priority is given to applications that focus on sustainability and addressing root causes of food insecurity. Funding is not guaranteed, but all applications will be considered and reviewed thoroughly.

More information and the application can be found at <https://www.brethren.org/gfi/eligibility/>.

District Office Staff Schedule

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.

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.

Check us out on Facebook or the district website 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.





Refresh. Renew. Reconnect.

Clergy Spouse Retreat

FAITH • FELLOWSHIP • REST

Join us for a peaceful and uplifting retreat designed to help you step away from the busyness of life and draw closer to God and one another.



DATE:

February 14–16, 2027

(Sunday afternoon–Tuesday lunch)



LOCATION:

Amish Door Village

1210 Winesburg Street, Wilmot, OH 44689



ACCOMMODATIONS:

Comfortable rooms and delicious meals provided



WHAT TO EXPECT:

Worship • Teaching • Prayer
Fellowship • Quiet Time • Nature
and much more!



GUEST SPEAKER:

Keith Funk

Keith currently serves as the Ecumenical and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Heartland Center for Spirituality, Dominican Sisters of Peace. He is an ordained minister (34 years) in the Church of the Brethren. He has served in the pastorate for 33 years in Ohio and Kansas.

*Come
away and
rest a while.*

MARK 6:31



**All ordained, commissioned, licensed
clergy, interims, and spouses are invited.*

More information will be coming soon.



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

Men's fall retreat

Peacefully, Simply, Together

PASTOR JAMES WASHINGTON
Elm Street Church of the Brethren
Pleasant View Church of the Brethren

THEME:

Peacefully, Simply, Together

WHERE:

Inspiration Hills Camp
4819 W. Easton Road
Burbank, Ohio 44214

WHEN:

October 10, 2026
9am–3pm
Registration starts at 9:00am and the program
begins at 9:15am with worship

COST:

\$35 per person includes lunch.
Scholarships available.

REGISTRATION:

Please register by October 1, 2026 for meals.
www.nohocob.org/mensretreat or contact
Laura Huffaker laura@nohcob.org 419-281-3058

Come enjoy time of fellowship, worship,
prayer, reflective meditation, sharing
testimonies, or work projects at Camp if
interested during the day.

In a season of thanksgiving and giving let us as the **NORTHERN OHIO CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN CHURCHES** come together to give a life changing gift to

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL to help fight against **HUNGER, POVERTY, AND HOPELESSNESS** around the world.

Quarter and coin collection

Use your churches quarter tube, a bucket or an ark to collect coins in the hopes that we as a district will collect \$5000 to be able to purchase an ark from Heifer International.

We will be collecting coins (and other donations) from Thanksgiving 2026 through the end of 2026. The district office will collect checks through January 15, 2027.

A friendly competition to collect coins. A joining together to purchase from Heifer International. Each Ark includes two water buffaloes, two cows, two sheep and two goats, along with bees, chicks, rabbits and more. Entire communities will have milk, eggs, honey and wool. Provide income by supplying an abundance of goods to sell. Sustain farming by providing livestock to work the land. Provide necessary training. Improve the lives of families for generations by multiplying and Passing on the Gift.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

alternative giving opportunity

