



The Herald

Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren

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Northern Ohio District Response to Deportation Defense—Thank you!

During our fall District Board Meeting the board learned that 39 Church of the Brethren congregations had been impacted by various concerns around immigration. The board felt that caring for our brothers and sisters in Christ was our scriptural mandate and wanted to provide a way to respond for our churches and individuals that felt called to help. The board approved matching the first \$10,000 in donations made to this fund from our district. \$10,011 came in quickly and we were able to send a check to the **DDR team in the amount of \$20,011**. More has been received and forwarded for this cause. Thank you for the generosity of this District and thank you for the work you do for Christ’s Kingdom. God is definitely doing good things!

The Deportation Defense Response (DDR) Team was initiated by four Church of the Brethren Districts (Atlantic Northeast, Atlantic Southeast, Virginia, and Pacific Southwest), whose churches and members are most affected by detention and deportation of immigrants. The Church of the Brethren Office of Intercultural Ministries and On Earth Peace joined to help.

Since the initial request made at the 2025 Annual Conference to fund the work of the Deportation Defense Response Team more than \$220,000 has been raised to provide more than 90 grants to Church of the Brethren congregations that have been distributed to members and families to assist with legal fees, and provide for families of those that have been deported.

As of February 2026, 21 individuals connected to the Church of the Brethren have been detained, and of those, 12 have been deported. Every individual has connections to family members left without an income provider or living in fear of being arrested, detained, and/or deported. Many of these people came to the United States through pathways that were legal at the time they came.

See page 6 for ways we can continue to help.

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Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

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

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

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.

Congregations that have completed the Search Process:

Eden- *Jamie Spencer* began serving as pastor at Eden Church of the Brethren January 1, 2026.

Jonah's People- *Mark Self* installed as pastor at on December 7, 2025.

Mark Your Calendar

- 3.6 BBI-Ministerial Leadership and Administration at 9:30 am at District Office
- 3.12 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at 9:00 am at District Office
- 3.12 Eastern Area Pastors Gathering at 12:00 pm at District Office
- 3.12 Nominating Committee Meeting at 6:00 pm
- 3.14 District Board Meeting at Lakewood CoB at
- 3.17 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting at 5:30 pm at District Office
- 3.19 CAC Meeting at 6:00 pm
- 3.19 LEAD Workshop at 7:00 pm
- 3.20 BBI-Ministerial Leadership and Administration at 9:30 am at District Office
- 4.1 Western Pastors Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 4.7 Executive Committee Meeting at 5:00 pm at District Office

A weekend of Warmth and Win at Camp Inspiration Hills

Article Submitted by Sandra Washington, Pleasant View Church of the Brethren

The winter chill of Ohio was no match for the warmth shared by the Pleasant View Church family during our recent retreat to Inspiration Hills. It wasn't just a weekend away; it was a beautiful tapestry of fellowship, laughter, and a little bit of friendly competition.



Puzzling It Out

The weekend kicked off with a true test of patience and collaboration. Dave Bassett, Stan Castor, Erich and the rest of the crew huddled around the community table to tackle a massive 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. There's something special about the way a deep conversation flows when everyone is focused on finding that one elusive corner piece or a specific splash of color. Whether it was the Bassett family or the Caster family leaning in to help, the project became a symbol of how we all fit together as a congregation.

Valentine's Victories and Bingo Joy



With Valentine's Day on the horizon, the spirit of love was in the full swing! We spent our afternoons gathered for games, where the stakes were high—mostly in the form of heart-shaped boxes of chocolates. Everyone showed off their winning streaks.

The Drivers and The Caster Family filled the room with cheers. Sue, Jodi, and Mallory were all smiles as they claimed their sweet prizes. From the bingo cage spinning to the final "Bingo!" shouted across the room, the excitement was infectious. Seeing the pure delight on everyone's faces—especially as they clutched those Valentine's treats—reminded us that the simplest moments often hold the most grace.

A Spirit of Fellowship



Between the Food, games, puzzles and the prizes, the real highlight was the fellowship. Whether we were sharing a meal in the kitchen or just sitting by the wood-paneled walls of the lodge, the connection between members was palpable. It was a weekend to recharge our spirits, strengthen our bonds, and appreciate the wonderful community we have at Pleasant View. We left Inspiration Hills with full hearts, a few extra boxes of chocolate, and memories that will carry us through the rest of the winter.

IRS issues standard mileage rates for 2026

Beginning on January 1, 2026, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 72.5 cents per mile driven for business use, up 2.5 cents from 2025.
- 20.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving* purposes, down a half cent from 2025.
- *does not apply to moving expenses for clergy.
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations; the rate is set by statute and remains unchanged from 2025.

Hottle Grant-Pleasant View Church of the Brethren

Article Submitted by Susan White, Pleasant View Church of the Brethren

We at Pleasant View Church would like to thank the Hottle Grant for the funds we used to purchase 3 new monitors that we use every Sunday in our worship service and an additional one in the nursery. Your grants also enabled us to update our internet service between the Church, Fellowship Hall and parsonage. We are blessed by the assistance from the Hottle Grant and members who improve our technology.



Prayer Calendar March

Churches/Pastors

Ashland Dickey Andrew Cuffman
Ashland First, Brian Layman
Bethel, David Wyant
Black River, Mark Teal

District Leadership

Nominating Committee, Paul Bozman, Chair

Sister Districts

Shenandoah
Virlina

National Leadership

Don Fitzkee, AC Moderator
Dawn Baldwin, our Standing Committee Delegate
Church of the Brethren in Brazil

[Updated 2026 Prayer Calendar Here](#)

Jamie Spencer Licensed and Installed as Pastor as Eden CoB

It was a time of celebration as Jamie Spencer was licensed and installed as pastor of Eden Church of the Brethren during morning worship services on December 14, 2025. He began as pastor on 1/1/2026.

Jamie is a bi-vocational and will continue working full-time at his warehouse job. Jamie attended Fairless High School. He currently is attending the BBI classes through the District.

Jamie and his wife Kristen have 2 children, Kadence and Javin.



Jamie, Krista and their children are pictured here with Transitional Pastor Tom Michaels who is serving as Jamie's mentor; and Bill Cherry and Matt Holstein, Eden's Pastoral Committee members. **The congregation celebrated with a wonderful meal together.**

Reading Church of the Brethren 200th Anniversary Celebration

Article Submitted by Agnes Hayhurst, Reading Church of the Brethren



Saturday, October 18, 2025, Reading Church of the Brethren Celebrated 200 Years of serving Christ and the Community since 1825. We started the evening celebration with a catered meal for everyone attending the celebration with a couple of our former pastors attending.

Music was provided by the Howenstine family singers, who provided us with the beautiful music for evening service. Nancy Howenstine was the pianist for the evening and one of the songs they sang was “Faces in the



Clouds” that was written by Nancy Howenstine. The Howenstine family and our pastor worked together to choose all the music for the evening. There were also memory moments from a couple of our past pastors, Pastor Richard Kidwell and Pastor Larry Bradley. Board Chair, Margaret Kimes gave a history moment of Reading Church and Deacon Sarah Sanor talked about the role of the deacons in the church.



Our guest speaker was Pastor Gabriel Nelson, from the Midland Church of the Brethren, Midland, Michigan. His message came from Ephesians 3:14-19, “The Core of Being Brethren”. He continued his sermon on Sunday October 19, 2025, during our normal worship service. After the Sunday Worship service we had a lunch of leftovers from the evening before.

It was a joy to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of Reading Church of the Brethren with the community and members of the church past and present.

Reading Church of the Brethren 200th Anniversary Committee members were Pastor Paul Bozman, Elaine Bonar, Lee Johnson, Debbie Krug, Rita Nutter, Jim Wagner and Agnes Hayhurst. Also Alan Howenstine was instrumental in getting the family together and working with us on the music.



Mackenzie Bozman Licensing

Article Submitted by Agnes Hayhurst, Reading Church of the Brethren



On November 23, 2025, Kris Hawk held a ceremony for Licensing Mackenzie Bozman at Reading Church of the Brethren with her parents, Pastor Paul Bozman and Lynne Bozman present along with her grandmother Lois Holsopple. Mackenzie Bozman has gone through the required steps to qualify for Licensing and is currently going to school for her Master in Divinity. She is an active member of the congregation in helping run



the YouTube worship service online and has also read scripture in the worship service,



Happenings at Inspiration Hills Camp

Volunteer Wood-Splitting Days- March 27-28, 2026- There is nothing like the warmth of a campfire at summer camp or a cozy fireplace in the winter. To make those moments possible, we need your help! Join us for camp service days of hard work and great fellowship as we split, stack, and stock our wood supply for the upcoming seasons.

What to Bring & Details: Equipment: If you have chainsaws, log splitters, or mauls, please bring them! (Please label your tools). **Gear:** Work gloves, boots, and ear/eye protection are highly recommended. **Perks: Lunch is on us!** We will provide lunch each day to fuel the crew.

Annual Work Weekend- April 24-25, 2026- Each year we host volunteers from across Northern Ohio to help us get the camp ready for summer. Join us overnight or just for the day on Saturday as we tackle indoor and outdoor projects to make sure our campers have the best possible summer experience. Projects typically include:

- **Landscaping:** Leaf removal, trail clearing, and flower planting.
- **Deep Cleaning:** Getting cabins and the Dining Hall sparkling clean.
- **Maintenance:** Painting, carpentry repairs, and setting up seasonal equipment.

Stay & Serve: We want to take care of our workers! **Food:** Lunch is provided on both Friday and Saturday to keep you fueled. **Lodging:** For those coming from a distance or wanting to work both days, some overnight lodging is available Friday night at no cost to volunteers.

60th Anniversary Shine-Up Work Day- May 2, 2026- The "Shine-Up" is a one-day, all-hands-on-deck volunteer event to prepare Inspiration Hills Camp for its milestone 60th Anniversary celebration. It is a day of community service where we tackle the "visual" projects—cleaning, painting, and clearing—that our small staff cannot do alone.

Who is it for? Everyone! We have organized the work into three "Crews" so people of all skill levels can contribute: **Paint & Polish Crew:** For those who want to see immediate results (Painting cabins, waxing floors). **Demo & Debris Squad:** For those who like heavy lifting and outdoor work (Clearing brush, moving materials). **Detail & Finish Team:** For those who are handy with tools or meticulous (Installing gutter guards, fixing windows).

Time: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. **Location:** Meets at the Dining Hall. **Perks:** Breakfast (Coffee/Donuts) and Lunch (Cookout) are provided for all volunteers.

Interested in helping raise funds or donating funds to these projects? [Click here for our fundraising page.](#)

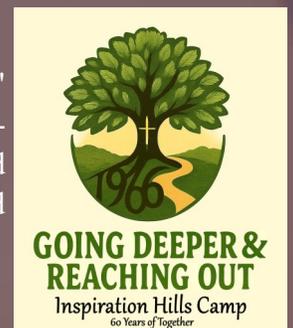
You can register for these events at the Camp Inspiration Hills Website at <https://www.ih.camp/>

Summer Camps 2026

For 2026, our camp invites families and churches to celebrate "Going Deeper & Reaching Out" - a theme that honors the camps 60 years of faith, strong friendships, and spiritual formation. This summer, campers will both revisit the legacy that grounds our community and embrace new opportunities to flourish through creative experiences, outdoor adventure, and hands-on service, all in a Christ-centered environment.

Here are our camp offerings for this summer:

- June 5-7 Bike Weekend
- June 7-12 Senior High Camp
- June 12-14 Wilderness Weekend
- June 14-19 Junior High Camp
- June 28-July 1 Beginners Camp/
- July 5-11 Song & Story Fest
- July 12-15 Bring Your Big Camp
- September 4-7 Labor Day Family



Ohio Valley Song & Story Fest: Can We See a New World Coming? July 5-11, 2026

This year in our district at Inspiration Hills, Burbank, OH

A unique Family Camp in the glacial valleys of Northern Ohio

Can you see a new world coming in these bleak times of greed, self-destruction and fear? Can we envision a different world, a new and better community where everyone is free, enjoying justice and love and peace?

At the Fest, through music and stories and community interaction, we open ourselves to the holy so that our life and work is guided by the energizing Spirit of Life. We want to help birth and become God's Beloved Community.

Song & Story Fest #30:

This is the thirtieth summer in a row for these Song and Story Fests and our fourth visit to Inspiration Hills, the Church of the Brethren camp for Northern Ohio. We will be gathering the week after Annual Conference in Fort Wayne, IN. We will begin Sunday evening, July 5, with supper at 5:30 pm, an opening campfire, and some music and dancing. The Fest will close Saturday morning, July 11, after breakfast, worship, and hugs.

An Intergenerational Camp for All Ages - Single persons and families of any size and shape will enjoy this combination of performance and participation in the woodlands of northern Ohio.

On Earth Peace co-sponsors the Fest, providing leadership, administrative support, and liability insurance coverage. "Inspiration Hills will be held harmless in case of accident, injury, or death during this event."

Registration and Fees

Registration includes all meals, on-site facilities, and leadership and is based upon age. Children 5 and under are welcome, no charge.

Adults \$450
Teens 13 - 19 \$270
Children 6 - 12 \$180
Maximum Total Fee per Family - \$1150

Please register now and remit the entire fee by June 1. Registrations after June 1 should add 10% as a late fee. No discount for off-site, tent or RV housing.

Daily Fee (if coming for 4 days/nights or less) - \$60/adult, \$40/teen, \$30/child, \$150/family, includes all meals and program. Lodging is an additional \$20/night/person.

We want you to come, regardless of your finances. We will work with you. Contact Ken at bksmeltz@comcast.net or 814-571-0495 for help.

And if you are willing to contribute to our help fund, add your contribution on the registration fee tally.

Register here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQOFfEWeUTiXcWcw1hcGcDUUSpEzNX9wH4IPKWgCjuw-ZBTw/viewform> and pay on-line or send a check to the address below:

On Earth Peace, P. O. Box 188; New Windsor, MD 21776

For general questions, email the Song and Story Fest planning committee at songandstoryfest@gmail.com or call Tina at 510-778-4484.

We expect a high turnout, so be advised to register early!



Deportation Defense Response

(Continued from page one)

How we in Northern Ohio can continue to help:

We can donate:

To donate via check, please send a check payable to Atlantic Southeast District with "DDR" in the memo line and mail it to:

Atlantic Southeast District,
64954 Orchard Dr., Goshen, IN 46526.

To send checks larger than

You can also donate online at https://www.onearthpeace.org/legal_mutual_aid_fund_donations

All the funds received go to grants for immigrant members of Church of the Brethren congregations.

We can pray:

- Pray for all who have been detained, deported, and those who suffered the trauma of detention and have thankfully been released. An updated list will be provided soon.

- Pray for people seeking asylum, green cards, and citizenship and for upcoming court dates.

- Pray for those whose TPS (Temporary Protected Status) has expired.

- Pray for a unified resistance to all injustice against immigrants.

- Pray for all government officials.

- Pray for all legal professionals, faith leaders, and community leaders supporting immigrants.

You can learn more:

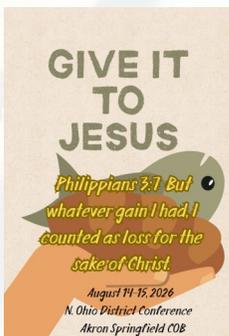
Watch this 6-minute video (click the link or search for this title on YouTube).

[Walking with our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters](#)

Northern Ohio District
District Conference
August 14 & 15, 2026
Akron Springfield Church of the
Brethren
Moderator: Cindy Peel



In 2026, District Conference will be at Akron Springfield CoB.



Moderator Cindy Peel (Akron Springfield) has chosen "Give It To Jesus" as the theme with a focus on Philippians 3:7.

This year's conference will feature Ryan Braught (See bio) who will speak at Friday's evening worship service and Cindy Peel will speak at the Saturday afternoon service.

More details on the Conference will follow in the coming months – the Pre-Conference Workshop, Insight Sessions, all promise to bring together a weekend of worship, growth, fellowship, and fun.

Conference registration will open May 1, 2026. Coupled with other events that will be happening in and around Akron at that time, lead to a recommendation that **lodging reservations should be made early.**

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Hartville, 3.4 miles from the church. All the rooms are suites and feature a 2-person sofa bed in addition to the King or Queen beds. You can receive the Northern Ohio District group rate by clicking the link

[Reserve Your Room Now](#)

Or by calling (330) 587-4347 by July 17, 2026.

Other hotels are available 15-20 minutes from the church. Camping is also available.

You can find all the lodging information at:

https://www.nohcob.org/upload/hotel_and_campground_information.pdf

Ryan Braught



Ryan Braught is the Pastor/Church Planter of Veritas. Along with his wife and kids he founded Veritas in 2009. He is the husband of Kim, and father to Kaiden (who is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology at Messiah University) and Trinity (who is attending Indiana University of PA

majoring in Fashion Design.) Ryan has a BS in Telecommunications from Kutztown University and a Master of Arts in Religion from Evangelical Theological Seminary. Besides his work with Veritas, Ryan began working November 17, 2025 as an independent contractor to manage the Church of the Brethren Part Time Pastor: Full Time Church program. He has served as a "circuit rider" for the program since 2003, serving under the auspices of the Ministry Office. He is a barista at Slate Cafe in Lititz and teaches Snowboarding at Ski Roundtop. Ryan also loves to read, listen to music, snowboard, and spend time with his family.

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.

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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)

# SiSterns Retreat April 26, 2026



9:00 am-3:00 pm  
Camp Inspiration  
Hills  
4819 W. Easton Rd  
Burbank, OH 44214

Theme: Renew & Rejoice  
Guest Speaker: Tina Hunt



Tina is the pastor at Mansfield First Church of the Brethren. She also serves as Ministry Education Director of the Northern Ohio District and Director of the Buckeye Brethren Institute (Ministry Training Program on NODCOB).

Tina is an elected member of the denomination's Mission and Ministry Board. She is wife to Nelson (47yrs), Mom to Ann and Beth, and Mema to Penelope, Caden, and Asher. She is a published author of Advent, and Lent to Easter Devotionals. Her passion is studying and sharing the Word. Favorite activities are word games and riding her bike. A student at heart, Tina is looking forward to starting her Doctorate of Ministry program this fall.

Tina will lead us using scripture from Psalm 104:30-34. Our retreat will be centered around renewing and rejoicing, using camp as a place to gather for this special time.

We will have scripture led chair yoga, afternoon breakout sessions, expert-led camp hiking, and we would love to put together health kits for BDM. Please see attached list of items to bring with you to assemble kits!

Register online at [sistersretreat](http://sistersretreat) or email your information to [laura@nohcob.org](mailto:laura@nohcob.org). Cost is **\$25 per person** which does include lunch.

Please see the attached brochure!!



## Northern Ohio Central Area Church of the Brethren Annual Lenten Services

Services start at 6:30 p.m.

“Last Words of Jesus”

Feb. 22, 2026 – Mike Huffaker at Mansfield First CoB (Forgive Them) 889 Grace St, Mansfield, OH 44905

March 1, 2026 – Tina Hunt at Paradise CoB (Woman, Behold) 3000 Apple Creek Rd, Smithville, OH 44677

March 8, 2026 – Terry Vaught at East Chippewa CoB (I Thirst) 7207 Chippewa Rd, Orrville, OH 44667

March 15, 2026 – Jim Frado at Ashland First CoB (In Paradise) 122 E 3rd St, Ashland, OH 44805

March 22, 2026 – Brian Layman at Richland CoB (Forsaken) 786 Linn Road Mansfield, OH 44903

## Northern Ohio Eastern Area Church of the Brethren Annual Lenten Services

Services start at 7:00 p.m.

Feb, 22, 2026- Jamie Spencer at Akron Springfield CoB, 3500 Albrecht Ave, Akron, OH 44312

March 1, 2026- Bruce Jacobsen at Akron Eastwood CoB, 581 Darrow Rd, Akron, OH 44305

March 8, 2026- Joe Routh at Mt Pleasant Church, 4152 Mt. Pleasant St NW, North Canton, OH 44720

March 15, 2026- Mike Huffaker at Center CoB, 2811 Ravenna Ave NE, Louisville, OH 44641

March 22, 2026, Festival of Choirs at Eden CoB, 4437 Richville Dr SW, Canton, OH 44706

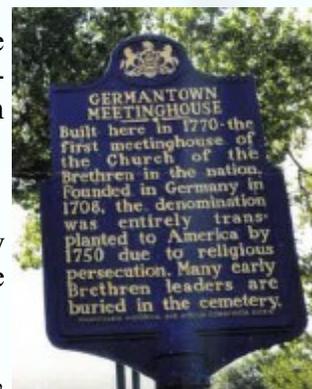
Let's worship together as Ohio brethren this Lenten season. Everyone is invited to attend these Lenten services. Please feel free to bring your neighbors, co-workers and your whole family. Please take these evenings to relax and worship with friends you don't see all the time. Fellowship and finger food will follow.

# Preserving Germantown Meetinghouse & Cemetery



**Germantown Church of the Brethren**

*We walk alongside their footsteps*  
A capital campaign to preserve the Germantown, Pennsylvania property and the history of the Church of the Brethren in America.



*What needs to be accomplished?*  
Spiritual descendants of the early Brethren share a precious treasure in the Germantown property and

cemetery. With that treasure come needs to care for and maintain the meetinghouse, parsonage, and cemetery. Hundreds of people are buried in the cemetery, including many early Brethren leaders such as Alexander Mack, Sr. Funds are needed to address the immediate care and maintenance needs of these historical facilities.

**Immediate needs include (projected costs and are not listed in any particular order of priority):**

1. Improve cemetery entrance -- \$5,000
  2. Repair fencing around cemetery -- \$25,000
  3. Conduct headstone maintenance -- \$20,000
  4. Update meetinghouse roofing -- \$90,000
  5. Update meetinghouse basement (including foundation repair) -- \$50,000
  6. Baptismal marker repair/maintenance -- \$2,000
  7. Complete parsonage renovations -- \$90,000
  8. Additional site maintenance costs -- \$18,000
- Projected total cost - \$300,000



## ***How can you be involved?***

We are the beneficiaries of those who have preceded us. Our mission and ministry have been blessed many times over by gifts from the early Brethren. Today we are charged with safeguarding a future Brethren voice for the generations that follow.

You are invited to join with zeal in sharing the story of the early Brethren in America, and keeping it alive today and for future generations!

Together we can make Christ's footprints more visible in neighborhoods across the country and around the world. By caring for and preserving these sites where the faith of our spiritual ancestors began in this country, we can strive for faithfulness in the present as we walk alongside their footsteps, and share the witness of the Brethren into the future.

Click on the link to give <https://donorbox.org/germantown-campaign>



**Germantown Cemetery**

## **Moving to America**

Due to growing persecution and economic hardship, Brethren began immigrating to North America in 1719 under the leadership of Peter Becker. Most Brethren left Europe by 1740, including Mack, who brought a group in 1729. The first congregation in the New World was organized at Germantown, Pennsylvania in 1723.

The Germantown congregation was formed when six persons were baptized in the Wissahickon Creek on Christmas Day in 1723. They held a Love Feast afterwards. As the first Brethren congregation in America, Germantown is the mother church of all the Brethren groups that trace their origins to Schwarzenau, Germany. In 1770 the congregation built the first Brethren meetinghouse. Additions were added to the meetinghouse in the late 1890s and in 1915.

During a period of inactivity by the congregation, the Germantown Trust was established to oversee the property when the church was not used. The building and grounds became the property of the Church of the Brethren because it was the largest of the Brethren-related denominations in the Germantown Trust. Twenty years later congregational activity resumed, and the Germantown Church of the Brethren currently worships and ministers in the Germantown facilities.

In the years since 1723, all the groups descended from the Germantown origins seek to hold to the New Testament faith and practices of the Brethren.



*Wissahickon Creek in winter*

# Youth/Young Adult Updates

## National Youth Conference

### The Details:

- Write something yourself or with some friends
- Have the option to read it yourself during worship or have someone read it on your behalf
- Get creative around the theme "Light Within Us" based on Matthew 5:14-16

#### Worship Elements

**Call to worship:** Gathers people into the moment  
**Responsive Reading:** Back and forth from a leader to many  
**Prayer:** Thanking God, asking God of something, or specific to an event, day, person, etc.  
**Invocation:** Prayer asking for God's presence with us  
**Scripture Jam:** Sharing scripture using several "voices" in conversation  
**Creative Elements:** Worship elements using one or more of our 5 senses  
**Other:** Get creative and create something not on the list

Still need to register for National Youth Conference 2026?  
Visit: [brethren.org/nyc](http://brethren.org/nyc)

**Registration Cost:**  
• January - February: \$625  
• March - April: \$550  
• May - June: \$675

This year at National Youth Conference 2026 we are inviting YOU (the youth participant) to write and send in various worship elements! Submit your original elements [using this link](#). You can anticipate hearing from the

NYC office in the spring of 2026. Contact Rachel Johnson ([rjohnson@brethren.org](mailto:rjohnson@brethren.org)) with questions!

**NYC 2026 registration opened on Jan. 5, 2026, on the first Monday of the new year, at 11 a.m. (central time) / 12 noon (Eastern time).**

National Youth Conference will be held on July 18-23, 2026, at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo.

Read more at [www.brethren.org/news/2025/nyc2026-registration-opens-jan-5](http://www.brethren.org/news/2025/nyc2026-registration-opens-jan-5)



Young Adult Conference (YAC) offers people ages 18-35 a chance to enjoy fellowship, worship, recreation, Bible study, service projects and more... with other fantastic young adults!

- Who are you as an individual?
- Who are you in community?
- How does the Holy Spirit connect your individual identity with your identity within community?

Come explore these (and more) questions! New this year: YAC MAX is free! (Stay later on Sunday for a simple lunch and lots more time to hang out with people!)

## Registration

Online registration opened up **Monday, Jan. 12.**

- 18 year old first time attendee = \$100
- Saturday only (includes 3 meals and programming but no lodging) = \$75
- Early bird (January/February) = \$200
- Regular (March/April) = \$250
- Late (May/June) = \$275

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due within two weeks of registering.

Contact Becky Ullom Naugle in the Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office with questions ([bullomnaugle@brethren.org](mailto:bullomnaugle@brethren.org), 847-429-4385).

[Connect with us!](#)



## Continuing Education Opportunities



The final Ventures Courses offered for the 25-26 series are:

- Saturday, May 2: "God's Earth, Our Home: Engaging Creation Care through Faith", presented by David Radcliff.

Continuing education credit is available for \$10 per course. During the registration process, you will have the opportunity to pay for CEUs and give an optional donation to the Ventures program. Register and learn more at [www.mcpherson.edu/ventures](http://www.mcpherson.edu/ventures).

### Introduction to Preaching

Onsite Hybrid (Bethany Theological Seminary)  
May 19 – 22, 2026 (Two Zoom sessions before May 19)  
Instructor: Dava Hensley  
Credit: BTS, MS, FCR  
Registration Deadline: **March 24, 2026**  
[Course Brochure](#)

### Multivocational Ministry

Online  
August 19-October 13, 2026  
Instructor: John Fillmore  
Credit: MS  
Registration Deadline: **July 22, 2026**  
[Course Brochure coming](#)



More information can be found at <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/>



Annual Conference 2026  
Sunday, June 28 – Thursday, July 2

Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Grand Wayne Convention Center  
120 W Jefferson Blvd

More information can be found at <https://www.brethren.org/ac2026/>

Annual Conference registration opened at 12:00 Noon Central Time on Wednesday, March 4, 2026.

## AC Volunteers Needed!

As you may know, next year's Conference, June 28-July 2, will be held in Fort Wayne. Plans are well underway, and much help is needed for the many volunteer positions. These opportunities include age-group helpers (infant/preschool through 5th grade), onsite registration, worship service ushers, hospitality, and silent auction volunteers.

Of all of these, the organizers are most in need of ushers – 35-40 for each of the five worship services. This year, with so many relatively local congregations, we hope that the Sunday evening service might be ushered exclusively by Indiana and Northern Ohio congregations. Manchester University grads – any and all years – are also being asked to consider ushering at a second service (day to be determined). (If you happen to fall into both of these categories, you are more than welcome to sign up for both!)

If you are interested in ushering or any of the other volunteer opportunities, you may register at: <https://forms.gle/XyahevfgfqwmyrA47> or use the QR code provided.

(Please note that if you are interested in attending JUST worship on any day, you do not need to register for Conference. Single day registration is also available for a nominal fee.)



Click on each link to find out what is happening in our Denomination:

### Denominational News

[Newsline, February 21, 2026](#)

[Newsline, Feb 14, 2026](#)

[March Messenger](#)

[BVS Update](#)

[Brethren Press Children's Books](#)

**BRETHREN Disaster Ministries**  
Rebuilding Homes - Nurturing Children - Responding Globally

**WE ARE HIRING!**  
OPEN POSITIONS:

- Director, Brethren Disaster Ministries
- Program assistant, Children's Disaster Services

**APPLY NOW**

[www.brethren.org/about/employment](http://www.brethren.org/about/employment)  
[COBApply@brethren.org](mailto:COBApply@brethren.org)

**JOIN TODAY**

**WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE**

**Join BVS/FaithX in 2026!**  
Offering year and week-long service opportunities.

**BVS Orientations**

- July 27 - August 4  
Inspiration Hills Camp
- September 15-23  
Camp Emmaus
- Ages 18+
- **Apply by June 24th**
- Open House Zoom Call  
◦ February 17, 8pm EST

**FaithX Trips**

**Jr. and Sr. High (6<sup>th</sup> grade - age 19)**

- June 9-14 University Park, MD
- June 14-19 Winston-Salem, NC
- June 21-26 Rodney, MI
- July 5-10 Hershey, PA

**Adult (ages 18+)**

- June 14-22 Northern Ireland

**Older Adult (ages 50+)**

- February 22-27 Gotha, FL

**We Are Able**

- July 13-16 Sturgis, MI

**Register by April 1st!**

**BVS**

<https://www.brethren.org/bvs>  
<https://www.brethren.org/faithx>

# Day of Encouragement

Saturday, April 18, 2026

9:00 am-3:00 pm

Maple Grove CoB

960 Township Rd 964 Ashland, Ohio



**Galen Hackman**

This workshop is available to clergy and spouses and church leadership.

This workshop will be lead by Galen Hackman. Galen Hackman has served the Church of the Brethren and other churches/ministries, as a pastor, missionary, teacher, writer, and mentor.

He began his ministry pastoring at the Mohler Church of the Brethren, then several fulltime pastorates in Pottstown and Schuylkill, going over to work with the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria

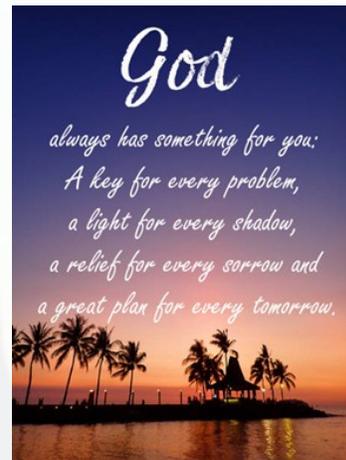
(the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria—EYN) teaching at Kulp Bible College, also authoring material for use in the Theological Education by Extension Program. That material has since been translated for use in various mission settings worldwide. Teaching for the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center in the ACTS Program, Galen has served as adjunct faculty at Evangelical Seminary in My-

erstown and has written study guides for the Covenant Bible Study series and for the Guide for Biblical Studies. He recently finished a book (along with a Nigerian author) on Peace and Nonviolence for use by EYN in training pastors. Galen holds bachelor's and master's degrees in biblical and theological studies and has completed several certifications in coaching, transitional leadership, and consulting.

He and his wife, Doris, live in Akron PA and together they have three married children and twelve grandchildren.

Costs are **\$25.00/couple or \$15.00/single** which includes meals, snacks and sessions. Childcare will be provided. Please pre-register your child(ren) so we have adequate background checked caregivers. Please see the attached registration form/flyer to register or register online at [Day of Encouragement 2026](#) on or before April 12, 2026.

This event is sponsored by the Ministerial Commission: Mike Huffaker, Bill Holsopple, Steve Keib, and Candie Orr.



## District Office Hours

The District Office will be closed Friday, April 3, 2026 in observance for Good Friday.

**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 on vacation the week of March 22nd.

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).

- 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.

