

# GIVE IT TO JESUS

*Philippians 3:7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

August 14-15, 2026  
N. Ohio District Conference  
Akron Springfield COB

## The Herald

District Conference Issue  
May 2026

2026 Northern Ohio  
District Conference  
August 14-15

Akron Springfield  
Church of the Brethren,

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN | MAY 2026

### Message from the Moderator

Cindy Peel, Akron Springfield CoB



In her book, “Keeping Your Cool When Your Anger is Hot!”, June Hunt writes, “Because of our unprecedented access to technology, to some degree we all have control issues – so much so that we are unaware of its influence on how we think and the role it plays in our problems with runaway anger.

At the touch of a button or the flick of a switch, we exercise a level of command over our environment that our ancestors would never have imagined possible. We have thermostats to regulate room temperature, light bulbs to “extend” the day, timers on everything from coffeepots to automatic sprinkler systems, and cars and planes that can condense months of travel by foot into a few hours’ journey.

Kids & adults alike play home video games & watch what happens in the world using a device called a “controller.” We **order** our food, **manage** our careers, **master** our money, and **secure** our retirement. The list could go on and on. Clearly, we’ve made control a way of life.”

In the midst of this, we are reminded that Paul gave up everything – including his control – to the Lord Jesus. Why? Because, he found something in Jesus that

he could find nowhere else: a righteousness beyond his control, a peace beyond what the world can give and a love beyond all limits.

A story is told that an acquaintance once asked a friend of Paul’s why Paul did what he did & behaved as he did. Paul’s friend answered the acquaintance, “Don’t you know? Paul is in love.” And, that is where we find something worth giving everything for – in being in love with Jesus, our Lord, our Savior & our Friend. And, in knowing that “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Let us take everything we have – including our control – and give it to Jesus.

*Philippians 3:7-11 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

Cindy Peel  
District Conference Moderator



# In This Issue

- Message from the Moderator ..... 1
- District Conference Schedule ..... 2
- Pre-Conference Workshop ..... 2
- Conference Speakers ..... 3
- District Conference Officers and Central Committee ..... 3
- Ice Cream Social ..... 3
- Insight Sessions ..... 4
- Youth and Children Activities .. 4
- Service Projects and Special Offerings and Peace Auction .... 5
- Conference Lodging ..... 6
- Delegate Authorization..... 7
- Adult Registration ..... 8
- Jr. & Sr. High Registration ..... 9
- Child Registration ..... 10
- Lenten Services ..... 11
- Dist. Conference Business Items 11
- Inspiration Hills Happenings .. 11
- Pastoral Placement ..... 12
- Mark Your Calendar ..... 12
- District Prayer Calendar ..... 12
- Heralds and Pastors Memo ..... 12
- Day of Encouragement Wrapup 13
- East Chip 90th Celebration ..... 13
- Annual Conference Delegate Briefing ..... 14
- Annual Conference ..... 14
- Part Time Pastor ..... 15
- Education Opportunities ..... 15
- Brethren Press ..... 15
- Canned Good Drive..... 16
- District Office Hours ..... 16

# Northern Ohio District Conference 2026 Schedule of Events

## Friday Schedule

11:00 a.m.	Exhibit & Peace Auction Set-up Begins
12:00 p.m.	Registration Begins
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Pre-Conference Workshop, “Five Core Principals for Missional Movement”
5:00 p.m.	Dinner (in Fellowship Hall)
6:00 p.m.	Opening Worship (in Sanctuary), Guest Speaker: Ryan Braught
7:15- 8:15 pm	Insight Sessions
8:15 p.m.	Ice Cream Social (in Fellowship Hall)

## Saturday 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)
4:30 -5:30 pm	Closing Worship (in Sanctuary), Moderator: Cindy Peel
5:30 p.m.	Installation of Moderator
5:30 p.m.	Dinner (in Fellowship Hall)
	Reorganization of the Board (Elected board members are to attend)



## **Pre-Conference Workshop** **Friday, August 14 from 1:00 pm- 4:00 pm** **“Five Core Principals for Missional Movement”** **Presenter: Ryan Braught**

CEUs for Clergy (0.3 CEUs)

Everywhere you turn, there’s a new church model, framework, or strategy promising growth, but without a missional mindset, even the best structures struggle to form disciples who live as sent people. In this session, we’ll explore five core principles as the foundational building blocks of missional movement, helping you cultivate leaders, shape culture, and steward mission in ways that fit your unique context.

# Conference Speakers

## Friday Evening, August 14th

Ryan Braught  
District Conference Guest Speaker



Ryan Braught is the Church Planter/Pastor of the Veritas Community in Lancaster, PA as well as the Program Manager of

the Part Time Pastor: Full Time Church program of the Church of the Brethren. Ryan also works as a Circuit Rider within the Part Time Pastor: Full Time Church program as well as being a barista in Lititz, PA and a Snowboard Instructor at Roundtop Mountain Resort in Lewisberry, PA.

Ryan is the husband of Kimberly and they have been married for almost 30 years, father to Kaiden who is 22 and a Senior at Messiah University, and father to Trinity who is 19 and a Sophomore at Indiana University of PA. In his free time Ryan likes to read, watch movies, listen to music and podcasts, snowboard, and hang out with his family.

## Ice Cream Social following Friday Evening Worship

Come and enjoy ice cream and fellowship from Eder Financial. The event is free to all and will follow our evening worship on Friday. We hope to see you there!



Ice Cream Social

## Saturday Evening, August 15th

Cindy Peel  
Annual Conference Moderator



I am a retired pastor & respiratory therapist. I have served as pastor at the Marion 1st COB, the Woodworth COB, Akron Eastwood & Akron Springfield COBs. I grew up in the Kent COB and graduated from The Ohio State University

and Bethany Seminary. I have served in many capacities at the district level including district board, nominating committee, strategic planning committee, camp counselor & chaplain. I live alone with my dog, Millie and my three cats, Taco, Mattie & Bindi. I enjoy gardening, jigsaw puzzles & mysteries.

## District Conference Officers & Central Committee Members

**Moderator**, Cindy Peel, Akron Springfield CoB

**Moderator-Elect**, Paul Bozman, Reading CoB

**Past Moderator**, Mike Conner, Painesville CoB

**Clerk**, Ashley Harris, Freeburg CoB

Michelle Brumbaugh, Eden CoB

Deb Rising, Ashland First CoB

Moses Siakula, Harville CoB

# Insight Sessions

## **Friday Evening/August 14 from 7:15 pm—8:15 pm**

**Congregations Sharing What is Going Well?** - Presented by Connections and Congregation Commission

What is working in your church? Sometimes it is hard to think about different ways to connect.

**Living a Questionable Life** – Presented by Ryan Braught

Often when we hear the phrase “questionable life” we tend to think in negative terms. But what if we as followers of Jesus lived a questionable life? A way of living in the world, in our neighborhoods, and in our families that would provoke questions and open up opportunities to share the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. In this insight session we will explore what it means to live a questionable life, as well as how we can, as 1 Peter 3:15 says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

**Planned Giving** - Presented by Eder Financial-Dan Radcliff

Provide information about qualified charitable donations from your IRA to make charitable contributions tax deductible even if you do not itemize. Also, it will include end of life giving through wills, trusts, etc.

## **Saturday Afternoon/ August 15 from 1:15 pm—2:15 pm**

**Exegeting our Neighborhoods** – Presented by Ryan Braught

The word exegete means to interpret, and many times is only used in relation to the scriptures. But we, as followers of Jesus, in the place where we live, need to interpret or understand our missional context. We need to exegete the neighborhood so that we could know what good news looks and sounds and feels like so that we could be Jesus in our neighborhoods. In this insight session we'll explore the 4 spiritual practices that will help us exegete or understand our missional contexts.

**Immigration/Deportation** - Presented by Connections Commission

Talk about what is happening with the Immigration and Deportation in our nation.

**Inspiration Hills - 60 Years of Ministry** - Presented by Andrew Kauffman, Camp Executive Director

In 1966, the story of Inspiration Hills began with a vision for a dedicated space in Northern Ohio. Six decades later, that story continues to unfold through the changing landscape and the evolution of the camp itself. Join us for an Insight Session as we reflect on our 60-year history, tracing the milestones of how the camp has grown and changed from its earliest days to the present. We will look back at the development of our grounds and discuss the specific updates and transitions that have taken place over the last year. Come celebrate this significant anniversary as we honor the enduring legacy of the camp.

## Youth and Children Activities

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

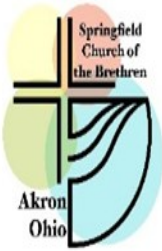
Children's Activities (K-5th grade) are provided by Akron Springfield CoB staff during Insight and Business Sessions.

Jr. & Sr. High Activities are provided. More information to follow!

Online registration is now available at <https://nohcob.org/district-conference>

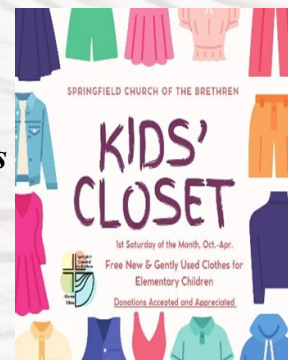


# Service Projects and Special Offerings



*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*

## 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

## 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)

This year, in addition to the offerings taken during the worship service, there will also be offering boxes available for each of the above purposes outside the sanctuary. There will also be an offering box for the Peace Endowment Fund in the same location. That way, even if you cannot attend the worship service where the offering goes for a specific purpose, you will still have the opportunity to give. Thank you for your generosity.

## HOTELS AND CAMPGROUNDS IN OR NEAR AKRON SPRINGFIELD CoB

A block of rooms has been reserved at:

### **Comfort Suites**

953 Edison St. NE (Rt. 619)  
Hartville, OH 44632  
Phone: 330-587-4347  
3.4 miles from the Church

### **Holiday Inn Express Akron Regional**

898 Arlington Ridge East  
Akron, OH 44312  
Phone: 330-644-5600  
5.4 miles from the Church

### Room Prices

King Suite-\$109.00  
Double Queen Suite-\$109.00

### **Quality Inn**

2873 S. Arlington Rd.  
Akron, OH 44312  
Phone: 234-542-8314  
8.6 miles from the Church

Cut off date for reservations **July 17, 2026**

When calling reference: Northern Ohio  
District CoB and use Group Number  
HU41N2

## **Campgrounds**

### **Other Options:**

#### **Hilton Garden Inn Akron**

1307 E Market St.  
Akron, OH 44305  
Phone: 330-733-2900  
4.2 miles from the Church  
(accessible from I76, I77 and Rt.8  
and Akron/Canton Regional Airport)

#### **Clear Water Park**

(Yogi Bear's Camp Resort)  
12712 Hoover Ave. NW  
Uniontown, OH 44685  
Phone: 330-877-9800  
9 miles from the Church

#### **Countryside Campground**

2687 State Route 43  
Mogadore, OH 44260  
Phone: 234-521-4782  
6 miles from the Church

\*PLEASE NOTE: Comfort Suites will fill to capacity on weekends during the summer months due to the Hartville Kitchen, Hartville Hardware, and the Hartville Market Place and Flea Market being tourist attractions. Other hotels mentioned are also very busy at this time of year.

PLEASE GET YOUR RESERVATIONS IN  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

**Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren**  
**2026 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.

**CONGREGATION NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Delegate 1</b>	
Name	
Complete Mailing Address	
Phone Number	E-mail Address

<b>Delegate 2</b>	
Name	
Complete Mailing Address	
Phone Number	E-mail Address

<b>Delegate 3</b>	
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 14-15, 2026. Northern Ohio District Conference at Akron Springfield

**YOU MUST REGISTER BY August 3 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS**

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

All delegates and non-delegates must complete this form or register on-line at

<https://nohcob.org/district-conference>

Each congregation must also 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.

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:

<b>Friday Dinner</b> <input type="checkbox"/> \$13.00	<b>Saturday Lunch</b> <input type="checkbox"/> \$13.00	<b>Saturday Dinner*</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Italian Sub meal \$10.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Ham and Cheese Sub meal \$10.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey and Cheese Sub meal \$10.00
--	---	---

Special dietary needs? \_\_\_\_\_ Total Meals: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Saturday dinner will be a boxed meal so that those who have to travel a distance can take it with them to eat on their way if they wish. Everyone is also welcome to eat their meal onsite and enjoy the fellowship.

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 Insight Sessions? Yes  No   
(The cost is included in registration fees.)

Please add together your Registration Fee, & Meal Costs  
(Make checks to "Northern Ohio District") Total Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Youth Registration Form

August 14-15, 2026. Northern Ohio District Conference at Akron Springfield

**YOU MUST REGISTER BY August 3 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS**

Send Registration Forms and checks to:  
Northern Ohio District, 1107 E. Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805  
You may also register on-line at [www.nohcob.org/district-conference](http://www.nohcob.org/district-conference).

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Senior High (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)     Jr. High (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)     Youth/ Jr. High Advisor

Congregation Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  MF  Age/Grade

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   
Are you a delegate Yes  No

**Meals** (Dinner on Friday, Breakfast, Lunch and Supper on Saturday) **for advisors, youth, & Jr. Highs are covered by the District.**

**Choose your sub option for Saturday's Box Supper.**

Saturday Supper (choose one)  Italian  Ham and Cheese  Turkey and Cheese  
Saturday dinner will be a boxed meal so that those who have to travel a distance can take it with them if they wish. Everyone is also welcome to eat their meal onsite and enjoy the fellowship.

Special dietary needs? \_\_\_\_\_

**Lodging** is provided on Friday night at Kris and Duane Hawk's home for youth and advisors 1937 Pressler Road, Akron, OH – 5 miles from the church).

**How will you be coming to conference?**

With My Family     With My Youth Leader     Driving Myself

Youth are expected to stay for the entire conference (including overnight) and to participate in all youth activities. If you can only participate for part of the conference, please text Kris at 330-612-2086.

Youth registration begins at 4 pm on Friday, August 14th.  
In addition to this Conference Registration form, you must complete the Youth Registration Form at [www.nohcob.org/youth](http://www.nohcob.org/youth)

**There is no cost for youth to attend conference.**

# Child Registration Form

August 14-15, 2026. Northern Ohio District Conference at Akron Springfield

**YOU MUST REGISTER BY August 3 IF YOU WANT TO ORDER MEALS**

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

You may also register on-line at <http://www.nohcob.org/district-conference>

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Congregation Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  M/F  Age/Grade

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip Code

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Contact Information at Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your/your child's first conference? Yes  No

**Choose your meal options. Children's meals are covered by the District:**

- Friday Dinner  Saturday Lunch  Saturday Supper - boxed meal (choose one) \*  
 Italian  Ham and Cheese  Turkey and Cheese

\*Saturday dinner is a boxed meal so those who travel a distance can take it with them if they wish. Everyone is also welcome to eat their meal onsite and enjoy the fellowship.

**Special dietary needs or allergies?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preschool Children:** Child care is provided during the pre-conference workshop, business sessions, worship services, & insight sessions. Register children who will be in Child Care & note what sessions your child be in Child Care:

Pre-Conference	Friday Worship	Saturday Business	Saturday Worship	Insight Sessions

**Grade School Children:** Children's activities are provided for children in kindergarten through 5th grade during the Pre-conference workshop, Saturday business sessions, and insight sessions. Register children who will participate in Children's Activities and mark what sessions your child will be joining the children's activities.

Pre-Conference	Friday Insight Sessions	Saturday Business	Insight Sessions

Who will pick your child up from child care or children's activities? \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you attending the Ice Cream Social Friday after worship? (cost included in registration fees.) Yes  No

**There is no cost for children to attend conference.**

## The Central and Eastern Area Lenten Services

The Central and Eastern Area Annual Lenten Services for 2026 were uplifting, relaxing and a time for spiritual renewal for all who attended. We were able to see friends from other churches that we are not always able to see. Afterwards fellowship and finger foods were provided by all the churches. The offering for the churches that was collected went toward the **Student Ministry Fund (BBI)**. The total collected for the Central Area was **\$1,759**. The total for the Eastern Area was **\$1423.55**. This is truly a blessing for the Student Ministers Fund.

The Student Ministers Fund was established pre-1969 initially for the purpose of providing scholarships to district members who are training for Christian ministry. With the development of the Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI) the purpose was expanded in 2017 to also include expenses of running the BBI ministerial training program in the Northern Ohio District (stipends to Ministry Education Director/instructors/other program costs). Guidelines and applications for scholarships are available from the District Office.

## District Conference Business Items / Delegate Scholarships

Each congregation in Northern Ohio is encouraged to send two delegates to our District Conference on August 14-15 at Akron Springfield Church of the Brethren in Akron, 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, including registration, meals, and lodging. 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. 2027 Budget for the District
3. 2026 Budget for Inspiration Hills Camp
4. Finalizing the withdrawal of Sugarcreek East Church of the Brethren from the denomination.
6. Opportunities to learn about & celebrate the good ministries happening in our district and denomination.

## Annual Fall Festival and Chicken BBQ September 26

There is no better place to see the changing leaves than at Inspiration Hills. Join us for our annual **Fall Festival**, a day designed to bring our neighbors and supporters together. As a premier **Northern Ohio family event**, we open our grounds to the public for a day of laughter, fellowship, and crisp autumn air. Please make sure you join us for a day of family fun, great food, and Christian fellowship!

## 2026 Summer Camp Schedule

Bike Weekend	June 5-7	Grades 6-12
Senior High Camp	June 7-12	Grades 9-12
Wilderness Weekend	June 12-14	Grades 9-12
Junior Camp	June 14-19	Grades 3-5
Junior High Camp	June 14-19	Grades 6-9
Beginners Parents Camp	June 28-July 1	Grades 1-3
Song and Story Fest	July 5-11	Families
Bring Your Big Camp	July 12-15	Ages 3-8
Mountain Adventure	July 26-31	Grades 6-12
Labor Day Family Camp	September 4-7	Families



Visit [www.inspirationhillscamp.org](http://www.inspirationhillscamp.org) for more information and registration forms.

# Pastoral Placement

## Congregations actively in the search process:

**Brook Park** – Search Committee meeting this month. *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. Complete service May 2026.

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

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

Updated 3-14-2026

# Mark Your Calendar

- 5.6 Western Pastors Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 5.10-5.16 BDM Workcamp
- 5.14 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at 9:00 am at District Office
- 5.14 Eastern Area Pastors Gathering at 12:00 pm
- 5.16 District Board Meeting at 10:00 am at Richland COB
- 5.19 Northern Ohio Pastors Gathering at 10:00 am
- 5.21 CAC Meeting at 6:00 pm
- 5.31 Annual Conference Delegate Briefing at 3:00 at Mansfield CoB
- 6.28-7.1 Annual Conference at Fort Wayne, IN

# District Prayer Calendar

## June

### Churches/Pastors

Elm Street, James Washington

Faith in Action, Jim Gorrell

Freeburg, Ed Wartluft

### District Leadership

Connections Commission, Jocelyn Siakula, Chair

### Other Districts

Idaho, Northern Plains

### National Leadership

Nevin Dulabaum, Eder Financial

Church of the Brethren in Uganda

## July

### Churches/Pastors

Hartville, Anthony DiMarco

Jonah’s People, Mark Self

Lakewood, Gene Wyse

### District Leadership

Congregational Commission, Beverly Wengerd, Chair

### Other Districts

Southern Plains, Western Plains

### National Leadership

Annual Conference June 28-July 2, 2026

Church of the Brethren in Venezuela

Visit [www.nohcob.org/prayer](http://www.nohcob.org/prayer) for a complete copy of our District Prayer Calendar.

## Future 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!!!

Registration for District Conference is now open. Register on-line at <https://www.nohcob.org/district-conference> or use the forms on pages 8-10 in this issue of the Herald.

# Day of Encouragement 2026 Wrap-Up



The 2nd annual Day of Encouragement was held Saturday, April 18th at Maple Grove Church of the Brethren. This event was put on by the Ministerial Commission, Mike Huffaker (East Chippewa) , Bill Holsopple

(Lick Creek) , Steve Keib (Maple Grove) and Candie Orr (Woodworth).

three was Worship and Mike and Bill helping lead singing and Jamie Spencer (Eden) was able to bring his guitar. Thanks to Jamie Spencer for helping with the music. We then ended the day with our fourth session was “Joining God in His Divine Dance”. Thank you to Maple Grove and Steve Keib for hosting and providing great snacks and lunch for everyone.

It was a great opportunity to connect with other pastors and have Galen help and lead this uplifting workshop.



Galen Hackman, who has served the Church of the Brethren and other churches/ministries, as a pastor, missionary, teacher, writer and mentor led the workshop for pastors and spouses, other church staff and lay leaders. The first session was “The Unstressed Pastor” and session two was “Walking in our Calling.” Session



## 90+ Celebration at East Chippewa



*Names of those in photograph; top row l-r Wayne Hochstetler, Pastor Mike Huffaker, middle row l-r, Marie Anderson, Joann Sinesky, Janet Burkholder, Pearl Cormany, Carroll Roth, bottom row l-r, Ferne Smucker, Bill Burkholder, Martha Kauffman, Lela Horst, Delbert Kettering, Marlene Widmer (not pictured Cleo Everson, Ellen Moore, Liz Leatherman and Bill Ramsdell)*



*Article provided by, Annette Kelbly, East Chippewa CoB*

East Chippewa Church of the Brethren took a queue from the Olivet Church to celebrate the lives of those members 90 years old and older. Thank you Olivet Church for such a meaningful idea! Pastor Mike Huffaker and I visited those locally and called those who have moved away to be with family, but still maintain their membership at East Chippewa. On Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, we honored 16 members and invited their family as well, with a special service that recognized their life, involvement and dedication to the church. We started with the youngest at 90 and worked our way up to the oldest at 106. The average age of this group is 94 years, 4 months. Each 90 year old that attended was given a corsage. We had 164 people in attendance which was really inspiring. Afterwards we continued the celebration with a carry-in meal and a cake. Unfortunately, a week before, one of the honorees, Bill Ramsdell, passed away but was still recognized and celebrated. The church was full of family and friends, and it truly was a celebration of love.



Registration for District Conference is now open. Register on-line at <https://www.nohcob.org/district-conference> or use the forms on pages 8-10 in this issue of the Herald.

# 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.



## Pre -Conference Event

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

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

## Annual Conference Volunteer Opportunities

Now that registration is open for the Fort Wayne Annual Conference, it’s time to get serious about volunteering; many thanks to those of you who have already raised your hands!

There is a particular attention for ushers for the Sunday night worship service – our goal is to have ALL of the ushers be from Indiana and Northern Ohio. In addition, the Tuesday evening service will be ushered by Manchester University graduates from any and all years – many of you will likely fall into both categories, and are welcome and encouraged to participate both days, or any day at all, of course.

Each of the other positions will be scheduled in shifts of one or more hours, making it easy for you to contribute just the amount of time you have available. If you are interested in helping with any of this important work, please complete the form found at <https://forms.gle/XyahevfgqwmYrA47>. For more information, feel free to contact Joel and Donna Kline at 630-337-1926, [soph\\_mini@yahoo.com](mailto:soph_mini@yahoo.com). Thank you!

A bulletin insert to share information about volunteering at AC is available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xRmDU6GHc2Qp3PzWcTR10zoHmTTYLSrO/view?usp=sharing>

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MINISTERS' ASSOCIATION  
PRE-ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENT

**Redeeming AI: Biblical Guidelines**  
June 27-28, 2026 prior to the 2026 Annual Conference, Fort Wayne, IN  
Dr. Russell Haith, Presenter

Artificial intelligence has been moving fast, yet many experts say we are still in the early stages—the first drops of rain before the downpour. Now we see coming toward us AI assistants and advisors, tutors for children, aides for the elderly, and even AI companions and romantic partners. People will draw the line at different points, yet more and more of us are on speaking terms with machines. What does it mean for ministry and for the future of humanity? Christian theology offers crucial insights for charting a pilgrim path through this new territory. Join us for learning and conversation on what happens when artificial intelligence meets ancient biblical wisdom.

**RUSSELL'S THREE SESSIONS INCLUDE:**

- Boomers and Doomers**  
A lively look at the optimism and anxiety surrounding AI—and how it affects the church
- In the Image of God**  
How to keep humanized machines from mechanizing us
- For the Road Ahead**  
Tool kit and first-aid kit for ministry in an AI world

**ARRIVAL / REGISTRATION**  
Saturday, June 27  
3:00-6:00 p.m.

**EVENT**  
Saturday, June 27  
6:00-9:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 28  
9:00-11:45 a.m.  
11:15-4:00 p.m.

**LUNCHEON**  
(Available for purchase only until June 1)  
Sunday, June 28  
12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.

Beginning March 2026  
Register online at [www.brethren.org/ministryoffice](http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice)  
or by mail using the 2026 Event Registration Form on reverse

Russell Haith (PhD, MDiv Princeton Theological Seminary) is professor of theology and human science at Bethany Theological Seminary. He has been a pastor for multiethnic congregations and a writer for a New York advertising agency. His books include *Eyes of the Heart: Seeing God in an Age of Science*, *From Exorcism to Ecstasy: Eight Views of Baptism*, and the forthcoming *Godlike Power: Saving Our Humanity in the Age of AI*.

Russell enjoys running in big cities and traveling with his wife Judi, who grew up in Kenya, along with their two children. Recently they adopted a stray dog, Fili, after years of saying “absolutely not.” He looks forward to coming to the conference and connecting with fellow ministers.

# Part Time Pastor; Full Time Church offers Listening Sessions

**JOIN US FOR A LISTENING SESSION!**



Are you a multi-vocational pastor (MVP) within the Church of the Brethren? Do you work a job, or multiple jobs, as well as leading a congregation? Are you more than part time but not paid on scale? Would you like to share with someone about your journey as an MVP? Will you not be able to attend Annual Conference this year in Fort Wayne, Indiana?

This is your chance to meet with Ryan Braught, program manager of the Part Time Pastor; Full Time Church program, various “circuit riders” from the program, as well as other MVPs within the Church of the Brethren. This is an opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas, hopes, dreams, and how the Part Time Pastor; Full Time Church program of the Church of the Brethren might walk alongside you, support you, and encourage you.

**There will be three online Listening Sessions in addition to an in-person Listening Session held at Annual Conference this summer:**

**Session I:** Tuesday, May 26, from 7-8:30 p.m. (Eastern time). Register at <https://forms.gle/iQcLx5bLMyjPhPvm8>

**Session II:** Wednesday, July 29, from 7-8:30 p.m. (Eastern time). Register at <https://forms.gle/LANW8VRXVc938S1FA>

**Session III:** Monday, Aug. 24, from 7-8:30 p.m. (Eastern time). Register at <https://forms.gle/fuzTdeg5rc9KrpVj8>

We'd love to meet you and spend time listening to you.

## Education Opportunities



**Brethren Academy  
for Ministerial  
Leadership**

### Multivocational Ministry - Online

August 19-October 13, 2026

Instructor: John Fillmore

Credit: MS

Registration Deadline: July 22, 2026

[Course Brochure](#)

### Cultivating an Everyday Faith - Online

September 23-November 17, 2026

Instructor: Joan Daggett

Credit: MS, FCR

Registration Deadline: August 19, 2026

### Introduction to New Testament - Online

October 21-December 15, 2026

Instructor: Matt Boersma

Credit: BHTS, FCR, BTS

Registration Deadline: September 16, 2026

To sign up or for more information, go to: <https://bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/brethren-academy-course-listings/>



## New for fall 2026

*Salt & Light: A Guide for Biblical Studies* blends the quarterlies from Brethren Press and MennoMedia. This Bible study uses the same Bible outlines as before, and includes suggestions for group study. The new size takes the place of both regular and large print.

The first quarter of this product, Fall 2026, will be available in July 2026. If you have a standing order for *A Guide for Biblical Studies*, your standing order will automatically become *Salt & Light* in the fall.

[Review a sample lesson and learn more here!](#)

# Peanut Butter and Canned Goods Challenge

The Northern Ohio Church of the Brethren Connections and Congregational Commissions invite all the churches to participate in a District Wide Canned Food and Peanut Butter food drive. According to statistics approximately 1.8 million people in Ohio face hunger. That is approximately 1 in 7 residents, including over 517,000 children. Food banks in Ohio report record numbers due to higher living costs, ending benefits and supply chain issues. While we as a district in the greater denomination, might not be able to fix this growing problem, we might have the ability to feed some. Matthew 25:35 ESV states, “*For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*”

So, what can you do to help? **For the month of May**, we will be having a friendly food drive among the Northern Ohio COB churches. Each congregation will collect canned food or peanut butter (that is not expired). We ask that you tally up the total oz of food, weekly if possible, and email it to [laura@nohcob.org](mailto:laura@nohcob.org) or call the District Office at 419-281-3058. There will be **Two Winning** congregations. The **First winner** for the highest total oz collected and the **Second winner** for the total number of oz divided by the typical Sunday morning attenders for a total oz per attender. At the end of May, the winning churches will be awarded each a “one of a kind” trophy for bragging rights only! At the end of May after the calculations are computed we ask that you donate the canned food and peanut butter to a local food pantry, shelter, soup kitchen of your

choosing. We want to collect food and help those we live among. We might not know when people are going hungry, but we can be willing to do something about it.

If you have any question or need more information, feel free to reach out to [laura@nohcob.org](mailto:laura@nohcob.org) or call the District Office at 419-281-3058.

JOIN US FOR A FRIENDLY  
NORTHERN OHIO CHURCH  
OF THE BRETHREN

## CANNED FOOD AND PEANUT BUTTER FOOD DRIVE

— FOR THE MONTH OF —  
**MAY 2026**

Each church is invited to collect **canned goods** and **peanut butter** throughout the month of May. At the end of May 2026, please total the **number of ounces (oz)** collected.

**A UNIQUE TROPHY WILL BE GIVEN IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:**

- **Highest Total Collected** —  
The church with the greatest total ounces collected
- **Highest Per Attendee** —  
The church with the highest ounces collected based on average attendance (*ounces per attendee prize*)

Please email your totals to:  
**LAURA@NOHCOB.ORG**

After the collection, we invite you to donate all items to a **local food pantry of your choice** to support your community.

**QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION?**  
Contact **LAURA@NOHCOB.ORG**  
or call the district office at **419-281-3058**

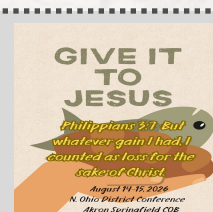
## District Office Hours

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 having surgery on Thursday, May 7th. After surgery she will be working from home until May 26th before returning to the office.

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.



Registration for District Conference is now open. Register on-line at <https://www.nohcob.org/district-conference> or use the forms on pages 8-10 in this issue of the Herald.