

# The Herald

## November 2025

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT  
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
— VOLUME 69 | ISSUE 4

### 2026 Clergy-Spouse Retreat

February 15-17, 2026, Amish Door Village, Wilmot, OH

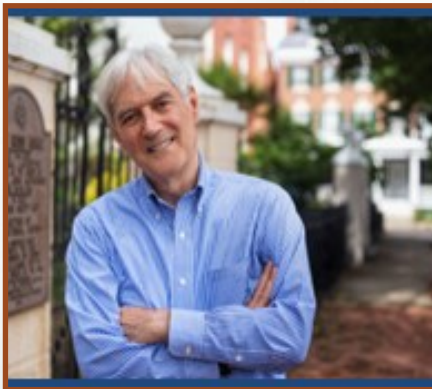
Guest Speaker: Paul Munday-Former Moderator and Pastor

Please join us for a time of relation-building, renewal, learning and rest. The facilities will be different this year as the Ministry Team has decided to try something different. We will be at Amish Door in Wilmot, Ohio and like always the food will be great, but having time to reconnect with everyone will be even greater!! All single and married clergy and their spouses are encouraged to attend. The retreat begins at 4 pm on Sunday, February 15th and finishes with lunch together on Tuesday.

Costs are \$375/Couple (3 days/2 nights, plus 6 meals; \$275/Single (3 days/2 nights, plus 6 meals. Single One Day Registration is available. Single clergy who may want to share a room can do so at the couple rate. Confidential financial scholarships are available by contacting Kris Hawk at kris.hawk@nohcob.org or 330-612-2086. You may register on-line at <https://nodcb.memberzone.com/events/details/clergy-spouse-retreat-2026-1708>

Paul Munday is a minister, consultant, and writer. He has served as a church leader for more than 45 years, in a wide range of roles: pastor, church administrator, denominational officer, workshop leader, denominational staff person, and teacher.

He served as Moderator of the Church of the Brethren from 2019-2021.



Paul Munday

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# Lick Creek Church of the Brethren-Bryan, Ohio-Hottle Grant

*Article provided by Randy Price, Property Director*

Lick Creek Church of the Brethren (Bryan, OH) replaced our sanctuary carpet with assistance of a Hottle Grant through the district. The original carpet was originally installed in 1968 when the sanctuary was built and while it served us well, it was definitely showing its age and had bulges in it that was becoming a tripping hazard. While replacing the carpet, we took advantage of making some other minor changes to enhance the space to work better for us in present times.

Our organ needed repair with no one locally being able to work on it. Following much deliberation, it was decided to eliminate it rather than invest additional funds to repair or replace it. We re-located the piano in conjunction with eliminating the organ which then allowed us to remove partially raised portion of the pulpit area and the piano and organ rails to give us a much larger open space. This allows us to better host larger performing groups and provides increased diversity of what can be done within the space. As a bonus, our piano player can now also see what is being presented on the screens.

We also eliminated the front row of pews (retaining the privacy rail while just shifting it back) to better facilitate things like communion, candle lighting, and performances at the front of the sanctuary. It was previously quite tight in that area, especially for individuals in wheelchairs or with walkers when communion or other interactive things took place up front during services.

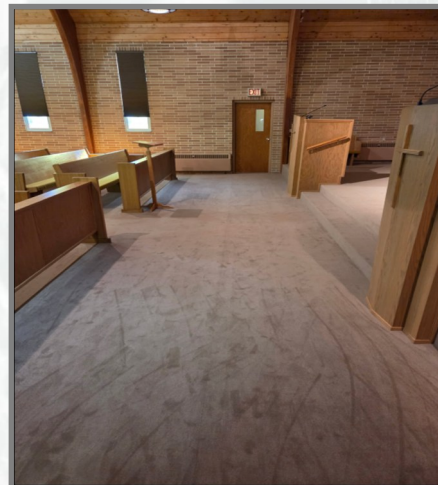
We previously had one short pew on each side of the sanctuary to facilitate individuals in wheelchairs that were directly across from one another. In re-installing the pews, we moved one of the short pews further forward to give those individuals the opportunity to hear better and to see presentation systems better by sitting closer to the front.

We also took advantage of the pews being removed and serviced the hanging sanctuary lighting. We removed the “warm white” colored bulbs and installed new “daylight” colored LED bulbs. This greatly brightened up the space and the LED bulbs have a long life while using less energy.

The men of the church worked together for the removal and installation of the pews, pulpits, railings and the upper stage area, updating the lighting, and restoring the space back to where we could once again worship in it once the carpet was installed. We re-dedicated the space on Sunday August 10<sup>th</sup> following the completion of the renovations. Thank you to the District for aiding us in this project and for your continued support for our ministry here in Bryan, Ohio.



Pictured above: The sanctuary before and during the carpet installation



Pictured above: The sanctuary after the carpet installation and new lights

# Akron Springfield Hottle Grant Thank You

*Article provided by Kim Morckel, Akron Springfield CoB*

To the members of the Congregational Commission of the Northern Ohio District Board,

The Akron Springfield Church of the Brethren wishes to thank you for granting us a \$5000 Hottle Grant to be used for our Back to School Blast which was held on Sunday, August 3, 2025. As stated in the grant application, the Back to School Blast was held from 4-6 pm with a bag of school supplies provided for each child attending. We also opened our Kids Closet where families picked new and used clothing for their children. This year we were able to purchase more new coats, socks and underwear with the monies from the grant. Along with the give aways, we provided games and prizes, a dunk tank, bounce house, hot dogs, water, popcorn and sno-cones for all attending. There were pop-up tents to provide an area for fellowship and rest. At 5:50 pm we had a devotion and prayer for a safe, successful school year for the families, students and staff.

This year's Back to School Blast was widely advertised due to the money we had available from the grant and as a result we were able to give away 230 nylon bags filled with supplies tailored for individual grade levels. This was approximately 100 more than in previous years. We began with 205 prepacked bags – 15 for Preschool, 30 for Kindergarten, First and Second grades, 40 for Third grade and 60 for older students. It was apparent after seeing the long line, that we would be needing more bags, so volunteers packed 25 additional bags and we gave out the last bags just before the "Blast" ended. Included in each bag was a hand written note of encouragement for the student with our church's name.

The following is a list of how the monies were spent –

|                                              |                      |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Advertising –</b>                         | <b>Total 287.39</b>  |
| <b>Games</b>                                 |                      |
| Bounce house, dunk tank, delivery and set up | 528.02               |
| Prizes , suckers                             | 258.99               |
| Punch cards                                  | 8.00                 |
|                                              | <b>Total 795.01</b>  |
| <b>School Bags and supplies</b>              | <b>Total 3468.07</b> |
| <b>Food/ Snacks</b>                          | <b>Total 203.38</b>  |
| <b>Kids Closet</b>                           | <b>Total 720.00</b>  |
| <b>Thanks you' s</b>                         | <b>Total 29.11</b>   |

**TOTAL SPENT 5502.96**

This year's Back to School Blast was our most successful yet in terms of number of families served and number of volunteers involved from our church, Spring Hill Elementary and the church we are yoking with, Eastwood Church of the Brethren. Had we not had the Hottle Grant, we would have had our "Blast", but would not have been able to provide the amount of supplies and clothing given. We would have

needed to cut out some games and food and our advertising budget would have been very low. We thank you again for this grant.

We consider the "Blast" as our big outreach to the community and our members willingly serve on that day and in the days prior with shopping, organizing and packing the bags. 31 volunteered from our congregation. ( we typically have between 30-40 worship each Sunday) We were especially grateful to have 3 teachers from our local elementary help that day and 11 of our brothers and sisters from Eastwood Church of the Brethren help on the day of the "Blast" and with packing, organizing and writing the notes of encouragement. Working together in this way brings us joyful fellowship and a chance to get to know one another more fully. We were a multigenerational group of volunteers with young ones in elementary school to older members in their eighties. Working together on this project helps to reform bonds with some who do not regularly attend, and it revitalizes us as we work together in service to our community as followers of Christ. It is a joy to observe the children reconnecting with their friends they have missed over the summer and delightfully interacting with teachers from their school. The Back to School Blast is a reminder to all that we are members of the community where we worship and seek to be a welcoming presence all year round. We remind those attending that our Kids Closet is open throughout the year providing new socks and underwear and gently used clothing for elementary-aged children. \_ The Back to School Blast serves area families and it brings together our church family with a shared mission and a desire to serve others in love and we plan to continue this ministry.





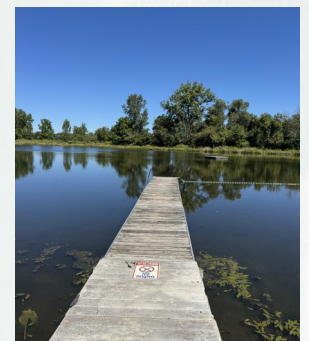
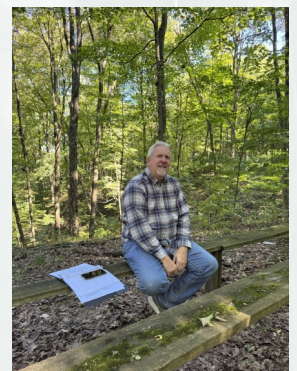
# Labor Day Family Camp

*Article provided by Laura Huffaker, District Administrative Secretary*

It was a joy to be a part of family camp over Labor Day weekend this year. We could not have asked for better weather those few days. Pastor Mike Huffaker of East Chippewa Church of the Brethren was the chaplain of family camp. Even though it was small in attendance, it was great to get away from the hustle and bustle and focus on what the camp has to offer. We were able to enjoy some of the activities that Andrew Kauffman, the camp director had planned. Even though I did not try it as my arrows would have landed anywhere but the target, I think everyone had fun shooting the bow and arrow. A lot more activities were planned. We also had wonderful crafts planned by Jane and Rochelle Matz. A pine cone craft, pottery with the Inspiration Hills logo, and rock painting to name a few and we even had a gentleman come and talk to us about edible plants and a few of us were brave and tried a few, but not me!! Russ Matz was able to take everyone around on the “people hauler” . We were able to go down by the lake and have a picnic. Grady Metz, the new Food Service Manager, was able to get the grill going and we were able to have hamburgers and fixings' down by the lake. Grady was able to fill us up with wonderful food the whole weekend. It did not disappoint!!!!

Pastor Mike was able to lead everyone in bible every morning and on Sunday afternoon he led us in worship down at Inspiration Point at the cross. We ended each night with a camp fire that Andrew started for us. It was definitely a peaceful weekend and it was nice to get away.

As you think and plan for next year, I would definitely recommend going to Family Camp with your whole family. It is a great place to be able to “get away” and focus on your faith as a family.



# Fall Festival October 4, 2025 at Inspiration Hills Camp



## Hottle Grant from Eden Church of the Brethren

Thank you for the \$5,000 Hottle Grant to assist Eden Church in their renovation of their bathrooms. Attached are before and after pictures of the renovation which started on April 23 and completed on June 9. The total cost of the renovation was \$29,183.98.

We truly appreciate your help in this project.

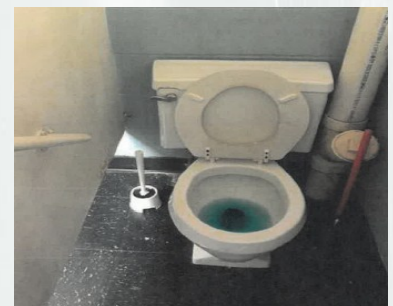
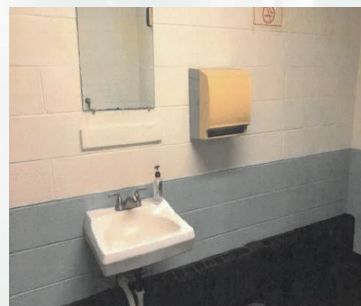
Sincerely, Jill Aldridge, Treasurer, Eden Church of the Brethren



Women's bathroom before renovation



Men's bathroom before renovation



Women's bathroom after renovation



Men's bathroom after renovation

# Inspiration Hills Happenings

## Winter Camp 2026

February 13-16, 2026

Join us for this special event!

It's a long time between summers! This camp is a special opportunity for Junior and Junior High Campers (grades 3-8) to get together with their camp friends and invite a few others along to see what camp is about!

Weather dependent, we will have sledding, snowman-building, winter hiking, and hot chocolate! Winter camp is the perfect way to enjoy our Ohio winter weather and spend time away with God!

Grades: 3-8 (minimum age, 8)

Cost: \$180



## Valentines Dinner 2026

February 13, 2026 6:30 p.m.

Join us for this 2nd Annual Event

Yes, we know it's not ON Valentines day, but it is the night when parents are bringing their kids to Winter Camp. If you are the parent of a 3rd-8th grader, drop off your camper and come have a lovely dinner! Others are also welcome! Single and don't want to spend the night alone, come on out! Married and want to spend a lovely evening with your spouse? Come on over!

Cost: \$18/meal



**Registration Will Open December 1 for both events**

### Junior High Events:

Every other Summer - National Junior High Conference : Will be in June 2027.

### Senior High Events:

First Sunday of May - National Youth Sunday : May 3, 2026

Every 4th Summer - National Youth Conference @ YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO

### FaithX:

In summer 2026, will also run an adult trip and four options of combination junior and senior high trips. Registration for summer trips will open on January 14, 2026.

### Summer Camp at Inspiration Hills:

Junior Camp, Beginners Camp, Junior High, Senior High each have their own week of camp in June and July! Specialty camps are also offered that focus on different topics. Interested in working at camp? Sr High youth can serve as Counselors-in-Training, kitchen staff, or lifeguards. Visit [inspirationhillscamp.org](http://inspirationhillscamp.org) to learn more!

## 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.

Whether a returning or first-time camper, everyone will find a place to take root through shared worship and genuine community while also stretching and growing in faith and character. Join us for this milestone season - discover your roots, celebrate transformation in Christ, and become part of a story that keeps reaching upward and outward for generations to come.

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

Visit [inspirationhillscamp.org](http://inspirationhillscamp.org) to learn more about the different camps!

# Why Support Brethren Disaster Ministries?

*Article provided by Dave Bassett, Pleasant View CoB*

Having participated in several BDM work trips in areas devastated by tornadoes in Dawson Springs, Ky., and flooding in southeastern Kentucky, I have heard stories of survivors who have endured unimaginable loss. When catastrophic disasters strike, local, state, and federal government agencies (police, fire, transportation departments, FEMA, etc) and NGO's (non-government organizations) respond to render immediate aid. But when these agencies leave and the news cycle moves on to the next big story, survivors are still often left financially devastated, with damaged or destroyed homes, and their lives forever changed. This is when BDM steps in, providing long term assistance with repair of damaged housing and/or new builds, and perhaps just as important – HOPE for those struggling to recover.

BDM is currently working with a non-profit housing ministry in Letcher County, Kentucky, called HOMES (Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service) to provide assistance for victims of the devastating 2022 flood in that area. We have established an excellent working relationship with the HOMES staff and work side by side with their employees. The Letcher County work site is scheduled to be open through early 2026; after that a new work site will likely open elsewhere to help with hurricane Helene recovery.

Just as important as the impact on disaster victims is the impact that service through BDM can have on the lives of BDM volunteers. Serving those who have lost so much makes one keenly aware of the blessings of this life that we take so much for granted. BDM

volunteers take seriously Jesus teaching that 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' (Matt. 25:40 NIV), and Paul's admonition to 'serve one another in love' (Gal 5:13 NIV). I often hear volunteers speak about how rewarding the experience of serving others has been and the strong relationships that develop with other volunteers. Northern Ohio District traditionally has work trips scheduled in May and September, but additional volunteers are often needed throughout the year. Adult volunteers of all ages and skill levels are welcomed. Put your faith into action and contact one of the district's Disaster Coordinators for more information. You will be blessed as you work alongside others who have a heart for service.

## BDM Trip to Letcher County, KY September 7-13, 2025

*Article provided by Cindy Peel*

Our trip to Kentucky involved working on new housing rather than working on repairing existing housing. Our host organization, HOMES, is building new houses on the sight of a reclaimed strip mine up above the area of frequent flooding. We worked, basically, on 4 houses. Three of which are in the final stages, so we did a lot of painting there. They were hoping to get one of the families moved in by the first week of October because it would involve handicap accessibility. We felt we had accomplished quite a bit in our five days and the "bosses" were happy with our accomplishments, as well. I always feel a little overwhelmed over everything needing done in a situation like this but, bit by bit, it gets done and families have good houses to live in. We learned a bit about some of the background of HOMES & their mission & the situation of many folks in the area which was very informative & helpful in understanding what our mission is, as well. Thanks to all who support this ministry so we can go and put hands & feet to the gospel.



## 2026 Annual Conference in Fort Wayne Volunteers Needed!!

As you may know, next year's Conference, June 28-July 2, will be held in Fort Wayne. Plans are well under way, and much help is needed for the many volunteer positions. These opportunities include age-group helpers (infant/preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> 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, here is a link for a Google Form indicating what area you would be interested in volunteering for: <https://forms.gle/XyahevqfqwmyrA47>

(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.)



### BDM shares domestic program survey

Brethren Disaster Ministries, including Children's Disaster Services, the Rebuilding Program and Global Response, is undergoing a program review that includes a survey (see information below), stakeholder group meetings, interviews with program volunteers, and discussions with church leaders. **Input is needed from anyone who engages with Brethren Disaster Ministries or the Church of the Brethren on any level.**

The goals of the review include program improvements, increasing the number of program volunteers, improving the volunteer experience, exploring other initiatives that could enhance the Brethren Disaster Ministries, and bolstering the connection between volunteering and faith. The information gathered also will assist Brethren Disaster Ministries in writing a domestic program development grant proposal for the Lilly Foundation.

Will you please help us by participating in the survey and providing your perspectives and suggestions? As much feedback as possible is important for this information gathering and strategic look forward. Visit [www.brethren.org/bdm/survey](http://www.brethren.org/bdm/survey) to complete the survey by Nov. 15. If you miss the survey deadline, you may email your thoughts to [bdm@brethren.org](mailto:bdm@brethren.org).

## 2026 Annual Conference Volunteer Opportunities

June 28 – July 2

### Grand Wayne Convention Center, Fort Wayne

**Hospitality** – This year hospitality efforts will include 1) staffing at several tables (with games, puzzles, etc.) at the Convention Center, 2) greeters at the three conference hotels in downtown Fort Wayne (Sunday only), and 3) meal hosts – a new program where locals will take a group of up to 6 attendees to a meal in a downtown restaurant, providing an opportunity for food and fellowship – everyone will pay for their own meal.

**Ushers for Worship** – For opening worship on Sunday evening, we would like to have all of the ushers be local. You are also encouraged to sign up to usher during other services, including one for Manchester graduates. Training will be provided.

**Age Group Activities** – Volunteers are needed to help with our preschool children (including infants), as well as K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Will include onsite programming as well as field trips.

**Children's Lunch Prep** – Sack lunches will be provided for multiple age groups; food purchase, preparation, and/or delivery are all options for volunteers.

**Onsite Registration** – Assist the Coordinator with full-conference and daily registrations, as well as hand out nametags, etc. to pre-registered attendees.

**Silent Auction** – Provide those interested in bidding on Auction items with a Bidder number; answer questions as needed.

**First Aid** – Doctors, PAs, and nurses are needed to staff the onsite First Aid room, as well as serve one or more shifts on-call. **A CURRENT MEDICAL LICENCE IS REQUIRED.**

**Observers** – This is a new position, created for the 2025 Conference. Observers watch for Border Patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, alerting Conference administrators if Federal agents have entered the building. Each shift will last two hours, and a commitment to three shifts is required. Training will be provided prior to the start of Conference.

Each of these 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. Here is a link for a Google Form indicating what area you would be interested in volunteering for: <https://forms.gle/XyahevqfqwmyrA47> or use the QR code.



# Abounding in the Work of the Lord: Request for Nominations

by Karl Magenhofer, Nominating Committee Chair

The work of the church is constant and I was recently reminded of 1 Corinthians 15:58,

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (NASB 1995)*

While constantly at work, seasons also change in the church. When it comes to nominations for denominational leadership the same is true. We have recently come out of a season of great need and great response as we were filling positions on the Review and Evaluation Committee which is being tasked with some incredibly important work. In our current season, the need is still great, yet the response is underwhelming at best. At the current time we have 20% of the number of nominations we did this time last year. That is not sustainable if we want our ballots to reflect the full depth and breadth of the gifted people we call brothers and sisters in the Church of the Brethren.

I write not just seeking additional nominations, but also with a word for those who have been nominated in the past and not been given the opportunity to serve. I am constantly reminded that God and I do not wear the same watch. His timing and mine are rarely, if ever, the same. I am imploring those who have been nominated in the past and not made it to the final ballot, to be willing to hear the call of your brothers and sisters who are telling you yet again that you have something special to offer the wider church. The same goes for those who have nominated incredibly talented folks in the past and either not had the opportunity to vote for them or have seen the position go to someone else. Do not lose heart or your conviction that the person you nominated is worthy of consideration. Perhaps the time in which they are needed is now.

This is about the spot I should quote someone brilliant, sharing a pithy comment that turns light bulbs on above our heads. You'll have to settle for my dim bulb simply reminding us all that the quality of the ballot and quality of denominational leadership is up to you. Abound in the work of the church by sending in your nominations.

By the way, the deadline for nominations is December 3<sup>rd</sup>, so don't wait! A full list of open positions and digital nomination forms are available here:

[Nominations – Annual Conference](#)

Humbly submitted,  
Karl Magenhofer, Nominating Committee Chair



## 2026 Annual Conference Early Information

Grand Wayne Convention Center  
120 W Jefferson Blvd  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Sunday, June 28 through Thursday, July 2

The Annual Conference Office has shared that the cost of delegate registration for 2026 in Fort Wayne, IN, will be \$350, and for non-delegates registration will be \$175. Conference will meet at the Grand Wayne Convention Center in Fort Wayne, IN. There are three hotels in our Conference Block: the Hilton Fort Wayne, with a room rate of \$128/night plus tax, Hampton Inn and Suites with a room rate of \$135/night plus tax, and Courtyard by Marriott with a room rate of \$132 plus tax. Parking fees have been discounted at a daily parking fee of \$8 has been negotiated for CoB guests for all hotels. Annual Conference registration and housing reservations will open on Wednesday, March 4, 2026. For more information visit: [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac)

## Your Input is Needed

The Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will be in Fort Wayne, Indiana, June 28-July 2, 2026. Conference planners have contracted for a block of hotel rooms, but are trying to determine how many additional hotel rooms will be needed. They are requesting input about your plans to attend Annual Conference and whether you plan to book a room in the hotel block or sleep in the comfort of your own bed and commute. Please take a moment to complete this survey by **December 1:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BP5MWJQ>. It should take less than 60 seconds and your input will be invaluable to the Conference office. Thank you.

# District Conference 2026

## 2025-2026 District Board (\*Elected in 2025)

Chair – Terry Baldwin\*, Lick Creek  
Vice Chair – Mark Pollock, Brook Park  
Secretary – Agnes Hayhurst, Reading

## Congregational Commission

Chair – Beverly Wengerd, Paradise  
Vice Chair – Stephen McLaughlin\*,  
Northern Ohio District  
Secretary – Edith Kieffaber\*, Akron Eastwood  
Member – Scott Brinkman, Sugar Creek West

## Connections Commission

Chair – Jocelyn Siakula\*, Hartville  
Vice Chair – Crystal Zellers, Freeburg  
Secretary – Jane Matz, Ashland Dickey  
Member – Abigail Akyeampong, Elm Street

## Ministerial Commission

Chair – Mike Huffaker\*, East Chippewa  
Vice Chair – Bill Holsopple\*, Lick Creek  
Secretary – Candie Orr, Woodworth  
Member – Steve Keib, Maple Grove

## Stewardship and Finance Commission

Chair – David Bassett, Pleasant View  
Vice Chair – Todd Clemens, Poplar Ridge  
Secretary – Bruce Morckel, Akron Springfield  
Member – Mark Pollock, Brook Park

## Additional Election Results:

Moderator Elect

Paul Bozman, Reading

District Conference Central Committee

Moses Siakula, Hartville

Nominating Committee East

Phyllis Axline, Akron First

Nominating Committee West

Fred Brinkman, Sugar Creek West

Camp Administration Committee

William Fike, Painesville

Russell Matz, Ashland Dickey

Linda Smith, East Chippewa

West View Healthy Living Committee

Laura Kettering, Maple Grove

Good Shepherd Board of Trustees

Barbara Wilch, Lakewood

## District Conference Approves 2026 Budget

Approved the 2026 District Budget as recommended by District Board in the amount of \$166,066—\$29,616 less than the 2025 budget. They also approved the 2026 Inspiration Hills budget as presented in the amount of \$344,914—\$48,633 less than the 2025 budget.

## Church Improvement Loans Available

Church Improvement Loans are available at 0% interest to any congregation of the Church of the Brethren in the Northern Ohio District for building improvements and repairs to the main ministry property. Examples of projects would include building additions, structural repairs, adding handicap accessibility, parking lot improvements, new restroom facilities, replacing an old furnace, adding air conditioning, new lighting, roof replacement, window replacement, painting, signage, etc. Loans can be for up to \$20,000 or more on a case by case basis. Visit [www.nohcob.org/loan](http://www.nohcob.org/loan) or contact the District Office for more information.

## Hottle Grants Available

Hottle Grants up to \$5000 are available starting again in 2026 to congregations for 1. Projects within the church to expand the ministry of the church; 2. Outreach Ministry that impacts not only the church but the community at large and 3. Program Development within the church to stimulate growth or spiritual health. Visit [www.nohcob.org/grant](http://www.nohcob.org/grant) or contact the District Office for information.



## BRETHREN FAITH IN ACTION (BFIA) GRANTS AVAILABLE

This denominational financial resource can aid congregations as they plan outreach ministries, either to expand current ministries or create new opportunities. A church can request grant funds of up to \$5,000 per 12-month period and up to \$15,000 over several years. Congregations have received money for projects such as food and clothing pantries, walk-in freezers, immigrant resettlement, evangelism outreach, radio station programming, school backpacks, weekend food kits for students, racism training, and audio/visual equipment for churches to stream worship.

Here is the link for more information and application: <https://www.brethren.org/faith-in-action/>

# 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.

**Jonah's People-** *Mark Self* is 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.

**Eden** – *Tom Michaels* serving as transitional  
pastor.

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

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

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

Updated 9-19-2025

## 2026 Pastoral Compensation Resources Now Available

A letter was sent out from Kris Hawk regarding the 2026 recommended cash tables and guidelines. The 2026 Pastoral Compensation Guidelines and Tools are now available through the CoB Office of Ministry website at: <https://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/compensation/> or on our website at <https://www.nohcob.org/resources/pastors-resources/2021-salary-guidelines-and-table>

All congregations are encouraged to review these documents on a yearly basis as they prepare the annual budgets.

The Integrated Ministry Agreement is to be completed, and a copy sent to the District Office no later than December 31, 2026. Please contact Kris Hawk if you would like someone trained in this newer form/process to meet with you as you work through this. If you would like paper copies please contact the district office.

# District Prayer Calendar

## November

### Churches/Pastors

Pleasant View, James Washington

Poplar Ridge, Ben Polzin

Reading, Paul Bozman

Richland, Jim Frado

### District Leadership

District Office Staff

### Other Districts

Middle PA, Southern PA

### National Leadership

Nate Polzin, Josh Brockway, Discipleship

Ministries

Church of the Brethren in Congo

## December

### Churches/Pastors

Silver Creek, Jason Martin

Sugar Creek West, Ministry Team

Sugarcreek East, Nelson Brown

### District Leadership

Camp Inspiration Hills Staff

### Other Districts

Puerto Rico, Atlantic Southeast

### National Leadership

Nancy Heishman, Director Office of Ministry

Visit [https://www.nohcob.org/upload/prayer\\_calendar\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nohcob.org/upload/prayer_calendar_2025.pdf)

for a complete copy of our 2025 District Prayer

## Mark Your Calendar

- 11.4 Nominating Committee Meeting at 5:30 pm
- 11.5 Western Area Pastors Gathering at 12:30 pm
- 11.7 BBI Class- New Testament at District Office from 9:30 am-3:30 pm
- 11.8 District Board Meeting at Center CoB from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm
- 11.13 Central Area Clergy Breakfast at 9:00 am at District Office
- Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering at 12:00 pm
- 11.18 Central Committee Meeting at 6:00 pm
- 11.20 CAC meeting at 6:00 pm
- 11.21 BBI Class- New Testament at District Office from 9:30 am-3:30 pm
- 11.26-28 District Office Closed for Thanksgiving

## Committee seeks input from ministers about experiences of Sabbath renewal

The Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee is seeking input from ministers about their experience of taking time for sabbath renewal. As the committee reviews the current denominational paper, "Guidelines for Sabbath Rest," they are eager to learn from ministers, whether fulltime, parttime, multi-vocational, or non-compensated. How are they practicing sabbath? What are the obstacles to taking time for sabbath renewal, whether a regular practice or a formal sabbatical?

A new webpage focused on sabbath renewal has been created and is available here: [www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/sabbath](http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/sabbath). Visit the page to find the link to a survey seeking input from ministers.

Also posted is a brief video about the value of sabbath renewal that features Angela Finet, pastor and author of the new Covenant Bible Study from Brethren Press titled *Sabbath: God's Call to Peace* (purchase at [www.brethrenpress.com/Product\\_p/9780871783769.htm](http://www.brethrenpress.com/Product_p/9780871783769.htm)).

In this video, Finet shares about her recent experience of sabbath rest and the refreshment she experienced during time away from ministerial responsibilities. Her sabbath rest experience followed careful preparation and planning with her congregation.

The committee welcomes input and participation from all ministers in the survey. To share questions or comments, contact the committee by email to [officeofministry@brethren.org](mailto:officeofministry@brethren.org).

## 2026 District Directory

The 2026 will be available in January 2026. I am currently gathering updates for the new directory. If you have any updates, please send them to me by December 15, 2025.

If you have any questions please contact Laura at [laura@nohcob.org](mailto:laura@nohcob.org) or 419-281-3058.

## Request for Directories

Also, it is very helpful to the District Office staff to have updated information from all the churches we serve. If your congregation will be making a new directory for 2026 please send one to :

Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren

1107 E Main Street

Ashland, OH 44805

Thank you! Laura, District Administrative Secretary

## The Fall Area Clergy Meetings

The Fall Area Clergy meetings are scheduled for November 11th-13th. This is a time for fellowship, renewal, and continuing education. Our focus will be on discipleship. What does it look like to be a faithful disciple of Jesus? How do we extend the call to others to follow Jesus and "teach them to observe" all that He commanded? Resources that can be shared with your congregation will provide some direction for our conversation.

The first 1/2 hour is gathering, announcements and sharing, followed by 2 hours of a workshop for 0.2 CEUs. While it is not necessary to pre-register, it does help us to be able to give our host churches an idea of how many are coming as they prepare light refreshments for our gatherings. You can either let Kris Hawk know or click on corresponding link below to register online.

- \* Tuesday, November 11th, 9:00 am - 11:00 pm -  
(Western area) Defiance CoB  
[AreaClergyDefiance](#)
- \* Tuesday, November 11th, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm -  
(Western area) Silver Creek CoB  
[AreaClergySilverCreek](#)
- \* Wednesday, November 12th, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm -  
(Eastern area) Akron First CoB  
[AreaClergyAkronFirst](#)
- \* Wednesday, November 12th, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm -  
(Central area) Paradise CoB  
[AreaClergyParadise](#)
- \* Thursday, November 13th, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm -  
(Central area) District Office  
[AreaClergyDistrictOffice](#)
- \* Thursday, November 13th, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm -  
(Eastern area ) Freeburg CoB  
[AreaClergyFreeburg](#)

# National Youth Conference 2026



Every four years, youth from across the Church of the Brethren gather for a weeklong unforgettable conference! National Youth Conference (NYC) 2026 will focus on Matthew 5:14-16 and the theme “Light within us.” The event will be held

July 18-23, 2026 at YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO. The registration fee, which includes food, lodging, and programing, will be \$625 in January and February, \$650 in March and April and \$675 in May and June. Youth who have completed ninth grade through one year of college at the time of NYC (or are age equivalent) and their adult advisors will gather together. Online registration will open January 5, 2026. Keep your youth up to date at <https://www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/>

Brian Layman, Pastor from Ashland First, was able to go to the advisor preview weekend October 11-13, 2025 and he is going to have an informational pre-planning briefing for anyone interested in learning more. You can choose from either date below:

**Monday, November 17, 7:00 pm via Zoom**

**Saturday, November 22, 10:00 am at the District Office and via Zoom**

Zoom links will be sent out later. We want every youth to have the opportunity to attend this meaningful experience!!

## Youth Leader Wanted

### East Chippewa CoB

We are looking for a youth leader to work for a few hours per week and to lead a youth activity once a month. The ideal candidate would have youth experience, interest in community outreach and creative energy to get a group of youth connected and interested in enjoying Christian based activities together with East Chippewa Church of the Brethren. Work and pay will be negotiable. Please contact Esther Horst at 330-464-0541.



## 2026 Open Enrollment Coming Soon!

Open Enrollment for 2026 benefits will run from **November 7-21, 2025.**

If you have employees who would like to enroll in benefits for the first time or make updates to their information.

This year's Open Enrollment also provides valuable opportunities:

- Free basic life insurance for employees who enroll in any ancillary product (coverage does not extend to dependents or spouses.
- Pre-tax payroll deductions on employee benefits, helping reduce taxable income and maximize savings.

Employees who wish to keep their current coverage do not need to make changes. However, they should carefully review their personal information and contact their church administrators if updates are needed.

Information is available at:

<https://ederfinancial.org/Open-Enrollment-2026#ccde>

## Thank You

Dear Ohio Northern District Office,

Thank you for your patience and your prayers as our organization has worked diligently to reenter 2024 gifts following a ransomware attack last December.

With gratitude for your support and appreciation for your partnership in the mission and ministry of the Church of the Brethren, below please find a summary of your giving in 2024.

**Date: November 21, 2024**

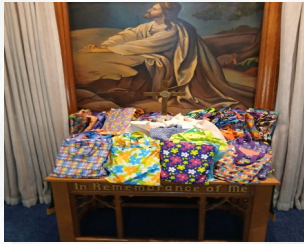
**Gift Designation: Hurricane Helene**

**Gift Amount: \$28,025.58**

Thank you, Traci Rabenstein, Executive Director of Mission Advancement

## Church World Service Kit Program

Article provided by Tina Hunt, Mansfield First CoB



The Ashland and Mansfield First Churches of the Brethren are honored to recognize and express their deepest appreciation for the dedication and sacrifice made by Elsie Fry in her support of the Church World Service School Kit program. Over the course of nine years, Elsie sewed 1,246 of the cutest and most colorful bags that we can only imagine were an extra special blessing to the children who received them. The Mansfield congregation spoke with Elsie to share the love and support from both congregations for her continued use of her gifts to bless others. They gave her a mum plant that could be planted and will return faithfully year after year to remind her of our deep love for her and her faithfulness.



## Healthcare Education

### Scholarship

Article provided by Lisa Snyder, District Treasurer

Tiffany McCullough, Ashland First Church of the Brethren, recently received a Church of the Brethren **Health Care Education Scholarship**. This scholarship is made possible by the Health Education and Research Endowment, and is available to members of the Church of the Brethren enrolled in degree programs for Nursing, Medicine, Dentistry, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and other health professions. Scholarships of between \$5,000-10,000 are awarded to a limited number of applicants each year.

Tiffany did her undergraduate work at BCSU in exercise science and is now attending graduate school at Ohio University. She will complete her Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree when she graduates in May 2026. Tiffany summed it up this way “this scholarship is helping me ease the financial burden of pursuing my seven year Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. This scholarship allows me to focus more on my education and clinical training without the added stress of managing by financial debt and living expenses during my unpaid clinical rotations. With the support of the Church of the Brethren, I’ve been blessed to continue to dedicating my time to becoming the best physical therapist I can be!”

Scholarship application instructions, checklists and application is available at [Brethren.org](http://Brethren.org).

**GIVE IT  
TO  
JESUS**

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

2026 N. Ohio District Conference  
Akron Springfield COB

**Save the Date for  
District Conference  
2026**

**August 14-15, 20256  
Akron Springfield Church**

Moderator Cindy Peel (Retired Pastor) has chosen the theme, “Give it to Jesus” focusing on Philippians 3:7 “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”

Each church should send two delegates plus others to join in the fellowship, planning, and worship.

More information will be coming!!





## Gotha, FL – Camp Ithiel February 22-27, 2026 (20 participants)

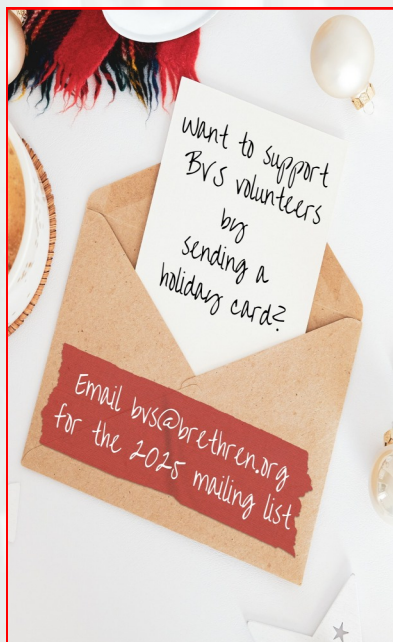
We invite all adults ages 50+ to join FaithX at Camp Ithiel for a week of volunteering, relaxing in the southern sunshine, and growing in faith together! During our trip, we will complete projects at camp that may range from brush and plant removal to kitchen assistance to maintenance and cleaning – there will be options that are suitable for all abilities. We will also have daily worship and devotions, plus plenty of time to fellowship in community. [Registration for this trip is open now!](#) Registration will close on February 1.

FaithX uses a pricing model that allows participants to choose a registration fee that most closely reflects their ability to pay for a FaithX trip. Registration fees for the Older Adult FaithX trip are:

- Supporter (actual cost + extra FaithX support) – \$625
- Standard (actual cost) – \$585
- Subsidized (discounted cost) – \$545

The registration fee includes housing, meals, airport pick-up, transportation during the trip, recreation, and all trip activities. Not covered in the registration fee is personal transportation to/from Florida (flights, train or bus tickets, gas if driving).

Register online at: [https://www.eventsquid.com/contestant-reg.cfm?event\\_id=29588](https://www.eventsquid.com/contestant-reg.cfm?event_id=29588)



Every year, individuals and congregations take time out of their busy fall and winter schedules to write holiday cards to our active volunteers. If you would like to participate in this tradition, please email [bvs@brethren.org](mailto:bvs@brethren.org) for the 2025 volunteer mailing list!



Participants in the 25-hour training learn to provide comfort and encouragement to children by offering the healing young children need in traumatic situations. They learn to create a safe, friendly environment that gives children the chance to engage in therapeutic play activities designed to relieve stress and calm fears.

This training includes a simulated shelter experience (an overnight stay) and will be provided to any group of 15 or more adults interested in working with children after a disaster. Participants completing the course will have the opportunity to become certified Children's Disaster Services volunteers.

Because children can experience personal disasters (when a friend moves away, a pet dies, etc.) people who come in contact with a distressed child can benefit from this training. Many of the concepts taught in the training are appropriate to use at those times as well as after disasters.

## Training 2026 Volunteer Schedule

### February 20-21, 2026

First Presbyterian Church of Beaufort  
410 Church Street  
Beaufort, SC 29902

### February 20-21, 2026

Oakland Church of the Brethren  
8050 Horatio-Harris Creek Rd.  
Bradford, Ohio 45308

### February 27-28, 2026

Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church  
7201 W. Beardsley Road  
Glendale, AZ 85308

**Register now:** <https://www.cognitoforms.com/ChurchOfTheBrethren1/CDSTraining2025>

## Cost

- \$55.00 – early registration fee includes all meals, curriculum, and one overnight
- \$65.00 – late registration fee when mailed less than three weeks before
- \$35.00 – if you have taken the training before and are taking it as a refresher for certification
- \$32.50 – student registration fee
- \$15.00 – administrative fee for Professional Development Hours Certificate or Professional Development Units (PDU) Certificate if applicable

# Northern Ohio District Men's Rebuilding Retreat

Article provided by Northern Ohio Journeymen for Christ, Pastor Dean Foster



The Northern Ohio District "Men's Rebuilding Retreat" at Inspiration Hills Camp was a worshipful, blessing for all who were able to attend. On Saturday October 18, the group got together early in Cherry Lodge. We were there to see old friends and make new ones. Just simple men gathered to worship our one true God who created us, God who loves us beyond measure, God alone who has an important plan for each of our lives. And what better place to consider His blessings than down at camp as He changes the seasons in His magnificent colorful way.

We sat on the couches and folding chairs by the fireplace while singing some praise songs to guitar music. We shared some praises and concerns with prayer to the Lord. We heard the morning message from Pastor Wayne Kissel on Nehemiah 4 about Rebuilding the Wall. At noon the camp provided lunch of sloppy joes, chips, tacos, fruit, cookies and more.

After lunch we asked and learned what brother Andrew needed help with around camp as he wraps things up for winter. Then the whole group went to work. There were heavy and light jobs to do, and many hands got it all done. When we finished it was time to come in for the afternoon message Pastor Mike Connor had prepared on Nehemiah 4.



I knew it was going to be cool to hear two good sermons from gifted preachers like Wayne and Mike on the same day. But what a hallelujah day it was to hear from Wayne, then go to lunch with all those brothers in Christ; work around camp together, then come back to Cherry Lodge and hear what the Holy Spirit had given Mike to share about Nehemiah 4.

Good worship in the morning; lunch and some Godly work around camp; then more Word of God in the afternoon before moving out into the world again. Not a bad templet to start with as we plan and look forward to future Northern Ohio District Men's Rebuilding Retreats. This was too good to let it get away, so keep an eye out for the next one.



## Holiday Office Hours

Please note that the District Office will be closed during the Thanksgiving Holidays beginning November 26-28. We pray you have a safe and blessed time with your friends and family.



## District Staff Hours

The District Office is open Monday through 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).

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).

Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren District Office: 1107 East Main Street

Ashland, Ohio 44805

(419) 281-3058 Office

[nohcob.org](http://nohcob.org)

