



April, 2018
Southern Ohio District Newsletter
Printable Version

Letter from Denominational Leadership Team

The Leadership Team of the Church of the Brethren has issued a letter calling for Christ-like discourse at this time in the life of the church. The Leadership Team of the denomination includes the general secretary, the Annual Conference officers, a representative of the Council of District Executives, and the director of the Annual Conference office.

Here is the full text of the letter from the Leadership Team:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We as the Leadership Team of the Church of the Brethren are painfully aware that the difference of opinion around Biblical authority and interpretation, particularly with regard to matters of sexuality, has led to deep divisions and brokenness within our denomination. In the face of that division we are seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we strive to find ways to help bring healing and wholeness in our life together.

We have received many letters and emails expressing deep concerns from all perspectives. Many of those have been respectful expressions of concerns and opinions. We encourage and welcome these expressions.

We are aware, however, that in the debate among us some have expressed their concerns using harsh, unkind rhetoric, shaming, name-calling, and invalidation of the personhood of those with whom they disagree. This disrespectful and sometimes violent rhetoric is extremely hurtful to those it is directed toward and is destructive to us as a body of believers. This type of communication and behavior, often used to point out the spiritual failure of the other, is in itself a spiritual failure of the speaker to live as a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are aware that these harsh communications are being sent not only to leadership but also to individuals through emails, letters, and social media posts, bringing great pain to those individuals and their circles of support. These destructive communications need to stop. If you have written such communications, we encourage you to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with those who have been hurt by your actions. We call all to a place of humility and repentance, seeking how we may grow more and more like Christ, who calls and empowers us to be in a place of love, respect, grace, and forgiveness for one another. Any expressions short of that will only deepen our struggle and will work against God's purpose among us.

The Leadership Team acknowledges that we have a long journey before us, a journey that will have some difficult and painful passages as we move through a time of intentional discernment toward a compelling vision for our life together. Our repentance and collective commitment to love, respect, and forgive one another are keys necessary to open the door for the Holy Spirit's work among us.

Praying for the peace of Christ amid our disagreement,

David A. Steele, general secretary of the Church of the Brethren

Samuel Kefas Sarpiya, moderator of Annual Conference

Donita J. Keister, moderator-elect of Annual Conference

James M. Beckwith, secretary of Annual Conference

David D. Shetler, district executive representative to the Leadership Team

Chris Douglas, Annual Conference director

Conversations About Biblical Authority

The Mid-West Council of District Executives is sponsoring a Biblical Authority Conference (CEUs will be available) on April 23-25, 2018 for pastors, ministers, and other church leaders of congregations in Illinois and Wisconsin, Michigan, Northern Indiana, Northern Ohio, Southern Ohio/Kentucky, and South Central Indiana Districts. The conference will be held at Hueston Woods. Speakers/presenters include:

Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis

Marbury E. Anderson, Chair in Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary

Rev. Jason Barnhart, Director of Brethren Research and Resourcing, Brethren Church

Dan Ulrich, Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies, Bethany Theological Seminary

Denise Kettinger Lane, Associate Professor of Brethren Studies and Director of the MA Program, Bethany Theological Seminary

Ted Swartz of Ted & Co. performing "The Big Story"

New Carlisle Church of the Brethren Hosts Missy Buchanan

Go-Go, Go-Slow, No-Go, a worship and workshop event, explores the topics of aging and faith. What are some of the "joys and jolts of aging?" How can congregations bring their generations together to learn from each other? How can congregations encourage spiritual formation of older adults? What would spiritual formation be for the Go-Go, Slow-Go and No-Go Older Adults in our congregations. In other words, what do we need to hear and understand for our present and future ministry?

A popular author/writer and speaker on topics of aging and faith, Missy Buchanan was one of the keynote speaker for the 2017 Church of the Brethren National Older Adult Conference. She has appeared on Good Morning America with co-anchor Robin Roberts and her mother, Lucimarian Roberts. The elder Mrs. Roberts personally found Buchanan's books to be a great source of encouragement and comfort. A native Texan, Missy loves spending time with her family, her husband, Barry, three grown children, and the grandchildren. This event will be hosted by the New Carlisle Church of the Brethren on April 13 and 14, 2018. For more information and to register, call the New Carlisle Church of the Brethren at (937) 845-1428. You may also email Vicki Ullery, Associate Pastor, at ncbrethren01@aol.com. Registration is open now.

2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Cincinnati, OH – July 4-8, 2018

Duke Energy Center

Theme: Living Parables

The 2018 Annual Conference will be held at Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati. Southern Ohio District will be hosting the conference with the theme of "Living Parables." Our district has the opportunity to be a "living parable" by assisting and serving in some capacity at the conference.

Volunteers are needed to assist with Early Childhood Care; Grades K-2, Grades 3-5, Junior High, Senior High, Young Adults, Single Adults, Conference Registration, Ticket Sales, Ushering, Unloading(7/3/18) and Loading(7/8/18) of equipment.

Contact Glenn and Linda Timmons, On Site Co-Coordinator at 937-832-2630 (H) or 937-623-5609

Camp Is for Everyone

Registration for summer camps of 2018 is open for everyone in the Southern Ohio/ Kentucky District. Most camps are held at Cricket Holler Boy Scout Camp near Vandalia and Dayton. It is a unique natural setting surrounded but apart from the urban communities in the area. Not quite as rugged as camping used to be, the life changing experiences now are just as profound to the campers who come and live with committed, faithful leaders. Friends at camp become family. God's great love is so tangible as we all work together to build His kingdom on earth at camp.

INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE CAMP is set up for volunteers to come learn and serve in several interesting ways. Daily Bible study lets campers envision what putting Jesus' teachings into practice might look like. Then campers go into the community to be the hands and feet of Christ in assisting existing programs that work to provide for the needs of homeless, disabled, challenged, lonely, hungry people living in our area. High school students can come for a few days and use the experience as part of their community service, a graduation requirement. Adults of all ages and abilities are encouraged to register for this simple camp. A special

camaraderie builds between adults and teens in this “working” camp as they talk, joke, and serve together. The fun continues as the camper spend an evening at a Dragon’s Baseball game, time around a campfire, and relaxing in the cabins. This camp has a very low cost of only \$50, which just covers the cost of food and the ticket to the game. Do you have the time to share your service in this simple outreach ministry through a camping experience? If so, please come to the 2018 Intergenerational Service Camp. It will change your life as you help others.

Camps for 2018

Adult/Child Camp June 7 - 10

Intergenerational Service Camp June 10 - 14 Camp Safari (Special Needs Camp) June 11 - 14 Family Camp June 14 - 17 Creative Arts Camp June 17 - 23

Quilting Camp (Bergamo Retreat Center) July 11 - 14

A complete schedule and registration forms can be found on the District website.

Southern Ohio Disaster Ministries Update

Dessert Auction– The S. Ohio COB Dessert Auction was held on March 24 at Salem COB. A soup and salad supper was followed by the auction which raised \$4,300 for Brethren Disaster Ministries. These funds will help with the national and international response of rebuilding homes, caring for children through Children’s Disaster Services, and providing assistance for our Nigerian brothers and sisters. Thank you to all who attended and for your ongoing support of BDM.

Sewing Bee – Calling sewers and nonsewers! A Sewing Bee will be held on Saturday, April 7 at 9:00 AM at Greenville COB, 421 Central Avenue. Sewers need to bring their sewing machine and an extension cord for sewing bags for Church World Service (CWS) school kits. Nonsewers will be preparing hygiene kit items for the upcoming assembly. All need to bring a sack lunch. For more information contact Barb Brower at 937-336-2442. [Click Here](#) for all the 2018 Sewing Bee dates.

Hygiene Kit Assembly Scheduled– The need continues for CWS hygiene kits with so many being used when the hurricanes hit in the fall of 2017. S. Ohio BDM has already sent 2,000 kits and will assemble an additional 1,000 hygiene kits on Thursday, May 10 at 7:00 PM. The assembly will be at Mill Ridge Village Community Center, 1000 Mill Ridge Circle, Union. These kits will be shipped to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, MD. From there they will go anywhere in the world to those in need.

Project Update/Volunteers Needed – The Eureka, MO BDM site closed the third week of March. BDM had worked here since the spring of 2017 doing flood recovery. A new site will be opening mid-April in Lumberton, NC. This will be recovery from Hurricane Matthew, which hit in October 2016. Volunteer housing will be at the First Presbyterian Church. Volunteers are needed for the May 27 – June 2 trip and upcoming trips. To sign up for a trip, contact Burt Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com.

Youth BDM Trips – Youth trips to Lumberton, NC are set for June 10-16 and July 8-14. Youth fifteen years and older are invited to help rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Matthew. Some adults will also be needed to join the crews. Transportation is provided in the BDM vans and expenses are covered. Contact Burt Wolf as listed above.

Mother's Day Gratitude Project

Honor a woman you know and love by celebrating and supporting mothers around the world! Global Women's Project announces our annual Mother's Day Gratitude Project! Rather than buying more material gifts for your loved one, express your gratitude with a gift that helps other women around the world. Your donation allows us to fund projects focused on women's health, education, and employment. In return, your chosen recipient(s) will receive a lovely, hand-written card indicating that a gift has been made in her honor, with a brief description of GWP.

To participate, send a donation to:
Global Women's Project
c/o Tina Rieman

508 Miami St
North Manchester IN 46962
(write checks to GWP)

Remember to include your name(s) and recipient's name and address. You may also make memorial donations, which will be honored on GWP's website: www.globalwoomensproject.wordpress.com. Gratitude cards will be mailed in time for Mother's Day if you send your request to Tina by May 6, 2018. After the 6th, she will mail them as soon as she receives your request.

Prayer Needs

There continues to be unrest and deep concern regarding the recent school shooting in Florida and additional violence and threats of violence at other schools. Students and others are leading a campaign for safety and better gun control measures. General Secretary David Steele recently wrote: "17 children and teachers have been murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, and their families will never hold them again. Our nation is crying out with grief. School buildings around the country are once again places to fear. Does it have to be this way? No. Must we acquiesce to this epidemic of gun violence? No. As our Annual Conference has repeated many times over the decades, in many different statements about violence and gun-related violence, we do not have to give in to fear. We may choose another way." May we be in prayer for this other way, a way of peace rather than fear.

- Jim Moore, member of Salem and a member of the District Board, has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Recent tests indicate a good prognosis and an exact treatment plan will be determined soon. Please keep Jim and his family in prayer.
- Rob Raker, former pastor, continues to deal with the heart condition that has plagued him for some time now. Rob spent some time in the hospital recently. Rob appreciates our prayers as this journey toward health continues.
- May we remember those congregations in pastoral transition - Prince of Peace has Doug Veal serving as interim; Painter Creek will be facing a transition as Pastor Dave Cummins will be retiring later this year.
- May we remember the possibility of a new church starts in various locations in our district.
- There are many issues and situations continuing to face us as we minister in our respective locations, including those who are serving in interim situations and others who are in discernment regarding placement or are considering a move. There are others facing health issues, please keep these situations in prayer.

Please contact me if you know of prayer situations of which I should be aware. May we lift each other in prayer as we work to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.