



February, 2018
Southern Ohio District Newsletter
Printable Version

Special District Meeting

The District Board and the Program and Arrangements Committee, including the District conference Officers, are calling a special all District meeting this spring. The date for this event is Saturday, March 17, 1:30-4:00 PM at Happy Corner Church of the Brethren. David Steele, General Secretary for the Church of the Brethren will be our guest.

The purpose of this gathering is to engage one another about some of the deep divisions that are becoming more prominent and are a distraction to our common witness of Jesus. The General Secretary's presence will be to share basic information from polity regarding the withdrawal process if congregations choose to begin those conversations. Denominational leadership and the council of District Executives are currently working on clarifying this process, but there is no specific timeline when this work will be completed.

All members of the district are invited to attend this event. We also ask that all members hold their congregation, the district, and the denomination in prayer as we face an uncertain future and the deep divisions of our fellowship.

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

The purpose of this gathering is NOT to encourage congregations to leave. Unfortunately, however, we have heard that some congregations in our district have already begun conversations about leaving the Church of the Brethren. Again . . . this is not our desire. We emphasize--congregations are NOT being encouraged to leave. In the current climate, we feel it is in the best interests of all to explain the process of withdrawal as well as the consequences of such an action.

It is our sincere desire that we stay together and share in "continuing the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, TOGETHER", but if there are those who feel they can no longer do this, we wish to explain the process of withdrawal. We do not desire a process utilizing legal action, but rather a process of discernment and prayer filled with grace, love, and care for one another.

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

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

More information and registration will be available soon, but mark the dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Refugee Resettlement Assistance Begins with Warehouse Reorganization

We ended our District Conference a few years ago with a time of brainstorming ways we could work together to make a difference. God laid the suffering of refugees around the world upon the hearts of several folks in the District at that time. Since then, a Task Force has teamed up with Catholic Social Services (CSS) assisting refugees who wish to resettle in the Miami Valley. One area where CSS has expressed a need for assistance is in organizing and maintaining a running inventory of items that are donated and stored in a warehouse. When a refugee family comes to this area, they have access to the items in the warehouse to set up their homes and begin their new life.

The organization portion of the project begins at the warehouse on Monday, February 12th at 9 am. We will also work on Wednesday, February 14th beginning at noon. The inventory phase begins at 9:30 am on Friday, February 16th. Please call Linda Brandon (937-667-0647) or email lindabrandon76@gmail.com and let her know if you would like to help and which dates work for you so they will know how many folks to expect.

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. Volunteer forms can be found online. Just download the form, check your interests, provide your contact information and send it to Glenn and Linda Timmons, On Site Co-Coordinator by February 1, 2018. (4481 Valleybrook Drive, Englewood, OH 45322) If you have questions, call us at 937-832-2630 (H) or 937-623-5609.

Winter Blasts Big Hit

What do you get when you mix fun and games, ice and snow, lots of campers, and all the hot chocolate you can drink? You get Winter Blasts!

Safari Winter Blast and the Second Annual Winter Blast, sponsored by the Camping and Retreat Ministries, were held at Cricket Holler in January. Although only one weekend actually had any snow, the campers and adults attending these two events experienced a wonderful time together exploring nature in winter, the fun of playing new games, sleeping in a warm cabin, and relaxing with old and new friends.

Safari Winter Blast, a camp for special needs campers, created a safe, accepting atmosphere that encouraged campers to relax and enjoy the experience of staying overnight away from home, some for the first time. For a few campers’ parents, it was a new experience having their children away all night. After an evening swim at the Vandalia Recreation Center, snacks and hot chocolate, the campers gathered for devotions. To round off the night, the campers played table games before hitting the bunks. Following a pancake breakfast, the campers were treated to the wonder of identifying trees in the winter with Tom Hissong. Who knew a tree could make a square twig?

Safari Winter Blast was the lucky weekend with snow. Some of the campers had never been sledding before. The hill for the quick trips downhill were greeted with squeals of delight and lots of laughter. Snowballs flew back and forth between campers and adults. Melting snow down the back of jackets and coats caused shivers and shakes from the happy kids. Even a huge snowman made its appearance when everyone worked together to roll the packed snow and construct the traditional form. In the late afternoon, parents came to pick up their

tired, muddy, smiling kids who were happy but reluctant to have the end of camp come so quickly. The Second Annual Winter Blast on the following weekend was a bit more boisterous. Having forty-six campers from kindergarten to grandparent age might have added to the amount of activity. Everyone settled into their cabins quickly because they wanted to get to the swimming pool for their time in the water park. Our devotions that night centered around small acts of kindness and how one act of encouragement can grow and impact our world in a mighty way. Snacks and a movie made for a late night, but there was no early bell to wake up the campers. A traditional pancake breakfast was leisurely eaten. Morning meditation gave the camp time to think about dreams and how God will use people in ways they may never have considered. Again, Tom Hissong came to share some of his Alaska trip pictures and take campers on a wet look at the winter trees. Rain did not keep the campers from playing outside. The center at Cricket Holler has a large porch completely surrounding the hall where relay games with lots of running and cheering were held. The big things at Winter Blast this year were red cups and the Dum-dum game. This camp was rather unique, since the age range was so wide. It didn't matter how old or young a person was, because everyone was positive and encouraging in all the activities. By the end of Winter Blast, the campers felt like they were part of a special family, the family of God.

Southern Ohio Disaster Ministries Update

Hygiene Kit Assembly - On Thursday, February 15 at 7:00 PM, one thousand hygiene kits will be assembled at Mill Ridge Village Community Center, 1000 Mill Ridge Circle, Union. Church World Service (CWS) needs more hygiene kits due to the large number distributed this fall when hurricanes struck Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Plan to come! Many hands are needed as we assemble the hygiene kits for our brothers and sisters in need. This project is funded by donations that exceeded the cost of our October CWS cleanup bucket project.

Appreciation Dinner – The annual BDM Appreciation Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 3 at 6:00 PM at Eaton COB. There will be a recognition of first time volunteers and a celebration of the ministry of S. Ohio BDM. Supporters, trip volunteers, sewers, and those who want to learn more about this ministry are all invited. Please RSVP by February 21 to Burt Wolf at southernohiobdm@gmail.com or 937-287-5902.

Sewing Bee - Come sew school bags on Saturday, March 3 at 9:00 AM at Greenville COB, 421 Central Avenue. Bring your sewing machine, an extension cord, and a sack lunch. These bags will be used for CWS school kits. Come not only to sew, but for great fellowship too. For more information contact Barb Brower at 937-336-2442. [Click Here](#) for all the 2018 Sewing Bee dates.

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) Training – Register now for the CDS training scheduled for April 20 - 21, 2018 at Trotwood Church of the Brethren. [Click here](#) to register. Those who previously reserved a spot need to also submit this official registration with the \$45 fee. After March 23 the fee is \$55. More information can be found online about Children's Disaster Services and their work setting up child care centers in shelters and disaster assistance centers.

2018 Trip Schedules – In 2018 ten rebuilding trips are scheduled ([Click Here](#)), with room for fifteen volunteers on each trip. Current sites are Eureka, MO and Marion, SC, with new sites opening later in the year. Volunteers need to be at least fifteen years old, unless they go with a parent or guardian, and then they may be fourteen. The June and July trips are for youth and their leaders. Expenses are covered, and transportation is provided in the BDM vans. Sign up for a trip by contacting Burton Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com.

Prayer Needs

A very important way we can be supportive of each other is to lift each other up in prayer. The 2018 Prayer List for Congregations is available on the website.

--The most current information on the church in Nigeria including prayer needs can be found at brethren.org

-- Roxanne Hill, recovering from surgery

--Jim Baker, recovering from knee surgery

--Jim Moore, prostate cancer

--Rob Raker, heart condition

--Congregations in pastoral transition-- Prince of Peace, Doug Veal interim; Bear Creek, Fred Bernhard has ended his time as interim, Angela Asamoah has begun her service

--May we remember the possibility of 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 Dave (937-475-6377) if you know of prayer situations of which he should be aware. May we lift each other in prayer as we work to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.