

November, 2019
Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter
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2019 Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Conference

The 2019 Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Conference was held October 11 & 12 at Happy Corner Church of the Brethren. Highlights include:

- Moderator Carl Eubank began the Friday sessions with an address on the theme of “God Provides”.
- Workshops/insight sessions made up the day on Friday with sessions being led by staff from Brethren Benefit Trust, the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, and resource persons from our own district.
- Meals and other hospitality were provided by the host congregation. Appreciation is expressed to Happy Corner for this ministry to conference attendees.
- Friday evening worship began with a concert by The Southern Ohio/Kentucky Men’s Choir with various selections.
- Worship continued as planned by the Program and Arrangements Committee, with Brian Messler as guest speaker.
- Saturday brought the business items before the delegates and included one more workshop slot.
- Gifts Discernment presented the slate for district offices for the coming year with those presented being affirmed. Those called for the coming year were Nick Beam as moderator-elect; Jennifer Keeney Scarr, Ron Mack, Ann Stackhouse, Mike Yingst, and Jill Schweitzer to the District Board; Barb Saylor to the Program and Arrangements Committee; Fred Bernhard as Standing Committee delegate; and PJ Arndt as District Clerk.
- Andrew and Debi Wright were introduced as District Mission Ambassadors who will be sharing the district mission with congregations and gathering stories from congregations to share.
- Burt and Helen Wolf shared a BDM update.
- Various denominational representatives were introduced including Jay Wittmeyer of Ministry and Mission Board staff, Loyce Borgmann of Brethren Benefit Trust, Gail Connerley of Bethany Seminary, Carla Gillespie of the On Earth Peace board, and Nyampa Kwabe International Scholar-in-Residence at Bethany. Gail and Carla shared brief reports from their agencies and Professor Kwabe led our prayer for the lunch meal.
- We celebrated the completion of the Training in Ministry program for Dave Balmer (Flat Creek and Mud Lick), Jon Keller (Troy), Larry Lutz (Piqua) and Mike Yingst (Covington). TRIM is one of the approved training tracks for set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren.
- Fifteen ministers were recognized for ordination anniversaries.
- The District Young Adult Ministry was highlighted by Laura Brown who is coordinating this ministry.
- Various other ministries were highlighted including the Together magazine, District Deacons, partnership with the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, and the work of the District Board and commissions.
- 2018 Financials were presented along with an update of 2019 to date. The 2020 District Budget was presented and following significant conversation regarding the budget, it was approved by the delegates with the understanding that the board will be working on the future financial viability of district ministries.
- A recognition service and sending of the three withdrawing congregations was shared, led by board chair Jen Scarr.
- Delegates approved the request of the Bear Creek congregation to be disorganized (closed) by the end of the year. Prayer for the Bear Creek delegates and other congregational members was shared by Moderator-elect Sandy Jenkins.
- Several grant recipients from the Empowering Congregations, Empowering Leadership and Empowering Emerging Ministries grants shared stories of the impact of these grants.

- Moderator Carl Eubank passed the gavel and service cup to Moderator-elect Sandy Jenkins who shared a closing word with the delegates and attenders. Next year's conference theme is "Christ's Ambassadors" and will be held at the New Carlisle church on October 9-10, 2020.

New Carlisle Leadership Academy Announces an Upcoming Event...

Science Fiction and Theology: Take Two!
February 24-35, 2020
Steve Schweitzer, Leader

Steve Schweitzer writes, "Science Fiction is extremely popular in our wider culture. It engages theological themes and raises questions that our culture is asking. Based on a course I teach at Bethany, this workshop will explore key themes in popular SciFi series: The Matrix Trilogy, Star Trek, and the Marvel superhero movie Black Panther. Each one asks deep questions about the nature of existence, what it means to be human, the nature of violence and peace, and our responsibility to our communities and to the wider world."

Steve Schweitzer (PhD, Notre Dame) is Academic Dean and Professor at Bethany Theological Seminary. He regularly teaches a graduate seminar on Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah and a course on Science Fiction and Theology. Steve has preached, taught, and led workshops for several congregations and districts, including Bible studies and Insight Sessions at Annual Conference. Steve and his wife, Jill, have 3 children. They attend Cedar Grove Church of the Brethren in the Southern Ohio/Kentucky district.

Friday evening registration is free. Saturday registration is \$25.00 which includes lunch. CEU's are available. See Registration Form for more information.

Registration deadline is Friday, January 17, 2020.

Need more information or have questions, call or email Vicki Ullery at (937)845-1428, newcarlislec-ob@gmail.com.

Young Adult Gathering

In October the young adults visited the Brethren Heritage Center. They all enjoyed learning more about where we have come from in our history. If your young adults weren't able to come, they will be visiting again next year- there is always more to learn!

This month we are meeting twice:

Nov. 7 at 7pm at Happy Corner

Nov. 9 at 1:30 pm at Happy Corner, then Marion's for supper.

This event is different in that we will be helping set up and tear down Happy Corner's church bazaar. This will be a fundraiser event for us, with the funds being used later for young adults events (hopefully for young adult conference).

Planning ahead:

December 21 @ 7 PM at Carillon Park

January 25, 2020 Paint Night at Happy Corner CoB

All young adults ages high school graduates through 39 are welcome. Email Laura Brown if you have any questions..

Southern Ohio Disaster Ministries Update

BDM Bus – A small group of generous donors have made it possible for S. OH/KY BDMers to travel to our sites in one vehicle. They have given us a 15 occupant bus. We received the bus at our Oct. 3 meeting and held a bus dedication. The bus made it's first trip on October 12 heading to Jacksonville, FL. Then it transported a crew to the Brethren Service Center in MD. We are very appreciative and blessed to receive this gift.

Local Tornado Response - Much work has been done cutting trees and removing brush. S. Ohio/KY BDM has logged 665 volunteer days, worked 4,320 hours, and helped 293 families. Thank you to the many volunteers who have helped with the tornado response. In October a few houses were worked on with some assistance from BDM. There are some small rebuilding projects potentially pending for November.

Project Updates – Work continues in Lumberton, NC and is scheduled through April 2020. A new site opened September 1 in Jacksonville, FL and is scheduled through Dec. 2019. The site in Castaner, Puerto Rico has been extended through May 2020.

2020 Trips – Click here to see the 2020 trip schedule. Volunteers are needed for the early trips, January 19 – 25 and February 9 – 15. Both of these trips are to Lumberton, NC, where we're working on recovery from Hurricane Matthew (2016) and Hurricane Florence (2018). Invite a friend to join you! Sign up by calling or texting Burt Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com.

2019 Empowering Grants Given

By action of the 2015 Southern Ohio District Conference a percentage of the interest on monies received from The Nature Conservancy for their portion of the sale of the Camp Woodland Altars property has been set aside each year for use as grants to Empower Congregations and to Empower Leadership within the District.

We are happy to share that the following congregations have applied for and received grant money this year:

Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren	\$2800.00
Constance church of the Brethren	\$1500.00
Cincinnati Church of the Brethren	\$1100.00
Trotwood Church of the Brethren	\$ 550.00
Artistry Leads (Church Vitality Survey)	\$2000.00

Ecumenical Stewardship	\$225.00
Happy Corner Church of the Brethren	\$3000.00
Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren	\$3000.00
West Charleston	\$2000.00

Empowering Leadership Grants to Andrew Wright	\$295.00
Staci Williams	\$775.00

Purpose of the grants is to:

1. Provide financial support to any congregation within the District which seeks it for the development of new or expansion of existing missional efforts; or
2. Provide financial support for any member of a District congregation who is in a leadership position and wishes to obtain further training to enhance their leadership role or any member of a District congregation who wishes to seek training to prepare them for future church leadership.

If your congregation would like to apply for a grant go to the district website for more information including how to apply.

Prayer Needs

A very important way we can be supportive of each other is to lift each other up in prayer. The 2019 Prayer List for Congregations and the most current information on the church in Nigeria including prayer needs can be found on the district website.

-Virginia Crim, mother of Karen Dillon, Director of Camping and Retreat Ministries and Gary Crim, District Legal Counsel Gary Crim is critically ill. Please lift Virginia and the family in prayer.

- Larry Lutz, pastor of the Piqua congregation, had successful surgery to correct the problem that has continuously caused him to get diverticulitis. Larry is home and is still recovering, although it's going a little slower than Larry had hoped. Larry appreciates prayer of the district and congregations.

--Kevin Kessler, District Executive Minister of the Illinois/Wisconsin District, had surgery last week and is recovering at home.

--Russ Matteson, District Executive Minister of the Pacific Southwest District, is dealing with a blood clot in the calf of his leg.

- The Constance congregation continues to worship in space graciously provided by the nearby Hebron Lutheran Church. Our prayers for these sisters and brothers during this time of transition are appreciated.

- May we continue to lift Mary Sue Rosenberger, as she continues to deal with various health issues. Her husband Bruce reports the following update: prayers for MarySue are needed and deeply appreciated. October 16 marks six months that she has been under the care of hospice. She continues to use significant amount of oxygen 24/7 and I have a caregiver with her at all times when I cannot be with her myself. As her strength declines, we are grateful for God's care each day.

- Rob Raker, former pastor, continues to deal with the heart condition that has plagued him for some time now. He is hoping for a new procedure which may alleviate some of the issues he has been facing. Doctors continue to work with Rob as these heart struggles continue. Rob appreciates our prayers.

--May we remember those congregations in pastoral transition - **Beech Grove** has completed their profile and is in pastoral search, Larry Tyner is serving as interim; Fred Bernhard is serving as interim pastor at **Brookville** during this time of transition; they have formed their search team who will be meeting this week.

White Cottage has called Ricci Arthur, a retired United Methodist pastor, to serve as interim. Tara Hornbacker is serving as interim at **New Carlisle**, they too have formed their search team and will continue work on their profile this week. Mel Smith, pastor at **Charleston**, has announced that he will be retiring this year. The **Bear Creek** congregation has voted to close with the official date being the end of the year. May we offer our prayers of love and support for the members of this congregation as they seek new church homes.

- May we remember the possibility of a new church starts in various locations in our district as well as the urban ministry team for revitalizing some of our urban churches.

- 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.