

**May, 2020**  
**Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter**  
**Printable Version**



## **A Message from our District Executive**

Isaiah 40:27-31 records these words as in the Message version -

Why would you ever complain, O Jacob,  
or, whine, Israel, saying,  
“God has lost track of me.  
He doesn’t care what happens to me”?  
Don’t you know anything? Haven’t you been listening?  
God doesn’t come and go. God lasts.  
He’s Creator of all you can see or imagine.  
He doesn’t get tired out, doesn’t pause to catch his breath.  
And he knows everything, inside and out.  
He energizes those who get tired,  
gives fresh strength to dropouts.  
For even young people tire and drop out,  
young folk in their prime stumble and fall.  
But those who wait upon God get fresh strength.  
They spread their wings and soar like eagles,  
They run and don’t get tired,  
they walk and don’t lag behind.

As we continue in the midst of our dealing with this pandemic, it might feel as though God is not listening as this marathon goes on. It was in early March that the first of the orders regarding public gatherings was issued, one of the first being no visitors to nursing homes and another being to limit public gatherings to 100, which was soon reduced in numbers. So our marathon of adjusting has been going on for nearly two months. Although some lifting of restrictions may be forthcoming, we are still running this marathon of adjusting how we meet and care for one another. But take heart that God does still care for us, God is listening. If we turn our waiting to a listening to God, our strength will be renewed for the marathon yet to come. Keep walking, keep running, keep using One Call and individual phone calls, keep using Zoom or other means of group meetings, keep streaming or uploading worship services as God renews our strength, our creativity, our love. We can witness to the communities around us to the power of the presence of God in our lives.

As we have struggled to adapt and creatively seek out ways to stay connected during this time when we must stay apart, we've added several elements to our district website.

A list of congregations who are offering some sort of electronic worship

A place to write any words of encouragement, share ideas, offer prayer, etc.

A list of resources which we hope will help our congregations minister to each other and to the communities we serve.

Check the website often for news and updates as we face new developments and move together through this historical time in our lives.

Please send a note to the District Office ([sodcob@brethren.org](mailto:sodcob@brethren.org)) if you have an update for this page.

## Returning to Worship

As states and businesses are slowly being allowed to open back up, our congregations are beginning to ask when and how we will be able to again gather for worship. The District Board will be talking about this and drafting some written guidelines at our ZOOM meeting on May 9.

In the meantime, here are links to some articles you may want to look at as each individual congregation will wrestle with and make decisions based on your unique circumstances.

## Would You Like to Support Health Care Workers at the Brethren Retirement Community?

Last week Brethren Retirement Community (BRC) was blessed by the generosity of EUM (Evangelical United Methodist Church) of Greenville. EUM gave each Care Partner (employee) a “goodie bag”, consisted of a bottle of water, candy, pretzels, chips, crackers, and granola bars.

BRC Care Partners are front line workers and they are doing an amazing job under very difficult circumstances because of COVID 19. Our Care Partners have worked tirelessly to keep all our residents safe. They have helped keep BRC virus free. The Care Partners have sacrificed much, all the while maintaining a positive attitude.

our congregation can help by showing our CARE PARTNERS how much you care. Each congregation can share by themselves or go in with other congregations to put together a token of your appreciation for BRC front line Care Partners.

If you would like to participate in this opportunity please call Todd Reish at 937.621.4172

We thank you for your prayers and thoughts.

## Southern Ohio/Kentucky Disaster Ministries Updates

**Cloth Masks** - Thank you to all the sewers who are making cloth masks. BDMers have given 535 masks to the Brethren Retirement Community (BRC), 350 to the Preble County Health Department and businesses, 150 to Fairborn Senior Services, and 320 to various care centers. All of these are very much appreciated. Additional cloth masks are needed for BRC, and we have received a request from BDM for masks for the rebuilding sites. Please keep sewing! Contact Barb Brower for the pattern and additional information. Email: [barb-brower51@yahoo.com](mailto:barb-brower51@yahoo.com)

**BDM Site in Dayton** – The current timeline schedules a rebuilding site for tornado recovery to be set up in July in Dayton. Not knowing how open or closed things will be, BDM is developing a new model for the initial phase of this project. Due to the uncertainty of travel between states and Montgomery County Health Department housing/meal regulations, BDM is counting on local volunteers to be the workers during the initial phase. There will not be any overnight lodging or meals provided during July. The plan is for rebuilding to begin on a smaller scale than usual, with a smaller crew. Details are being worked out for registering volunteers. When deemed appropriate by BDM leadership, the shift will be made to the groups of volunteers that are on the 2020 schedule. At that point, volunteer housing will be at Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1541 S. Smithville Rd., Dayton. We appreciate your patience and support as BDM works to develop a new model for safely serving disaster survivors.

**Youth Trip to the Brethren Service Center** – New this summer is the June 14-18 youth trip to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, MD. This includes two travel days and three days for processing school kits and hygiene kits for Church World Service. Youth must be at least 14 years old to participate. Lodging will be at Best Western in Westminster, MD. Transportation will be provided. Participants will cover their expenses for lodging and most food. Click [here](#) for the brochure which includes more information and a registration form. For additional information or questions, contact the trip leader, Tony Price, pastor of Cedar Grove COB (937-997-3675, [pastortonyprice@gmail.com](mailto:pastortonyprice@gmail.com)).

## Southern Ohio/Kentucky Camping and Retreat Ministry Updates

No one expected our global situation to unfold as it has these last months. Even during Christmas and Winter Blast, all of us had no picture of our world in March and April. We don't have a clear vision of what the summer and fall will bring. What we do know is that we all want to be safe and as healthy as possible. We want that health and safety for our friends and family, too.

To maintain everyone's well-being, the Camping and Retreat Ministries must suspend the summer camping season for 2020. Our hearts are broken over this decision, because we know it will be a lost time of building relationships with God, our friends and families, our natural environment, and our church and faith. Our time together in the camp setting will be deeply missed.

To ease the blow of not having camp this year, the Camping and Retreat Ministries will be working on ways to connect remotely through Zoom gatherings, Facetime, and other technological methods. Some opportunities may be age specific and others all inclusive. It won't feel the same as being together around the campfire, but we will still set aside time for each other. More information will come when ideas and plans are more firmly made.

Remember that camp changes lives even when our lives have been so drastically changed!

### *Prayer Needs*

- As the situation with the coronavirus affects persons, families, and travel, may we remember those affected by this outbreak. There are many changing directives, regulations and recommendations affecting our country and way of life, may we remember all those adjusting to this changing world. As some reopening is occurring, may our prayers be for keeping everyone as safe as possible.
- May we especially lift the Brethren Retirement Community in prayer as the regulations around nursing homes are rapidly changing and are creating stress on the staff and residents as they adapt.
- May we remember David and Nan Erbaugh and family as David continues living in the VA facility. David's health has reached the point that keeping at home was not possible. With the pandemic, visitors are not allowed making it more difficult for David to adjust. There have been some issues in the transition so prayers are most welcome.
- May we remember Jonathan Brumbaugh Scarr, husband of Trotwood pastor Jennifer, as he recovers from successful heart surgery. Jonathan is back at work.
- May we lift Kirt Chronister, son of Jim and Karen Chronister, who suffered a stroke and is in a process of recovery and rehabilitation.
- The Constance congregation continues to discern space needs, although temporarily on hold during the pandemic. 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. Mary Sue Rosenberger has been receiving care from Hospice since April 2019 because of Pulmonary Fibrosis which had been first diagnosed in the fall of 2017. I spoke with Mary Sue and Bruce recently and they expressed their appreciation for the love and support.
- 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 - Mark Lancaster is serving as interim at Good Shepherd; Fred Bernhard is serving as interim pastor at Brookville during this time of transition; their profile is now posted and the search team is meeting by Zoom this week. White Cottage has entered an agreement with a neighboring congregation to supply pastoral services during a time of transition and discernment. Tara Hornbacker is serving as interim at New Carlisle, their search team has completed their profile. Mel Smith, pastor at Charleston, has retired. May we offer our prayers of love and support for the members of the Bear Creek 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.

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.