

January, 2021
Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter
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Christ's Ambassadors Club Q & A

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."
--II Corinthians 5:20

Looking back on 2020, we realize that it has been a rough year for everyone. Yet the work of Jesus in the Southern Ohio/Kentucky District continues.

Our 2020 virtual District conference theme, Ambassadors for Christ reminded us again who we are and what we are about as a district with first-person videos, inspiring worship, reports that inform the person in the pew, and challenging questions that seek future answers. With the conference theme still ringing in our ears, the Resource and Development Commission of our District Board is inviting you to join us along with the district staff and board and conference delegates in making a direct contribution to "The Ambassadors for Christ Club". This fund was established to help underwrite the varied ministries of our district in 2021.

To date, \$15,605 has been given or committed toward our goal of \$50,000. These are board members, staff and other individuals within our district who wish to see Church of the Brethren congregations in Southern Ohio and Kentucky flourish. Please consider making a pledge, or a donation in one of the following ways.

1. Go to the district website at www.sodcob.org and click on the "Ambassadors for Christ" link to make a commitment for a future donation.
 2. Donate now by check. Please mark Ambassador's Club on the memo line. Send your check via mail to:
Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Church of the Brethren,
P O Box 785
Greenville, Ohio 45331
 3. Contribute monthly by going to the district website at www.sodcob.org and click on the donate now tab. This will walk you through the process of making a monthly deposit using your credit card.
 4. You also can make a one time donation using your credit card in the same manner.
- Either way, with a larger or small gift, you will be helping to give shape to who our district is and what we are about – in providing resources, giving leadership assistance and services to/with congregations and pastors alike. We are in this together, stronger together than we are apart.

District Missional/Renewal Commission holds Conversations About Race Relations

Recent current events and news stories around such topics as racial justice, white privilege, equality/equity, etc. have spurred conversations within the Missional/Renewal Commission. As a result, in an effort to increase understanding within the district, a task team has been formed. Among other things, this team has compiled a list of resources which will help you understand and talk about diversity within your congregation. These are posted on the district website. [Click here](#) The Task Team will add to this list as they continue to meet and learn what resources are available. They also plan to offer other learning opportunities. Be watching for more information.

Denominational Compelling Vision Bible Study

The Compelling Vision Team is developing a 13-session Bible study series around the Compelling Vision. Designed for use by youth and adults, the series will be available at no cost on the Compelling Vision webpage in February 2021. (Sample sessions will be posted in mid-January.) Recognizing the importance of discerning the mind of Christ through communal study of scripture, it is our hope that this Bible study series will serve a two-fold purpose: to help congregations engage more deeply with the Jesus in the Neighborhood vision and to help congregations and their delegates prepare for the conversations to take place at Annual Conference as we move toward affirmation of the vision. Each of the thirteen sessions has as its focus a question that invites participants to explore a different word or phrase in the vision and has been written by a different person, creating a series that is rich in both breadth and depth. The project is being edited by Joan Daggett. Plans are also underway to translate this resource into both Spanish and Haitian Kreyol. We are grateful for the role each member of this diverse team has played in bringing this project to fruition. A complete schedule of themes and presenters can be found on the district website.

Moderator's Town Hall "Faith, Science, and COVID-19, Part Three" Slated for January 21,

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday has announced plans for the next Moderator's Town Hall on January 21, 2021, at 7:00 PM EST. The topic will be "Faith, Science, and COVID-19, Part Three." Dr. Kathryn Jacobsen will once again be the featured resource person.

The Town Hall will center on current trend lines related to the COVID-19 crisis along with relevant topics such as the rollout of vaccines to alleviate the pandemic. A special focus will be the role of churches in response to the crisis, as the faith community is called to grapple with the realities of both faith and science.

Dr. Kathryn Jacobsen is Professor in the Department of Global and Community Health at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. Dr. Jacobsen is a specialist in infectious disease epidemiology and global health who has consulted with several organizations during this pandemic. She is also a member of the Oakton Church of the Brethren, Oakton, Virginia, valuing her connection to faith and the Church of the Brethren.

To register for the Town Hall, please visit: tinyurl.com/ModTownHallJan2021. Interested persons are encouraged to sign up early, as the event is limited to the first 500 registrants. Questions about registering for this event or any other administrative matters can be emailed to cobmoderators townhall@gmail.com

Southern Ohio/Kentucky Disaster Ministries Updates

2020 Data – This year has presented unique challenges for S. Ohio/KY BDM due to the impact of COVID-19. Initially rebuilding trips were cancelled, but then new protocols were developed and put in place. There were 13 rebuilding trips with 89 volunteers. These trips were to North Carolina and Dayton, Ohio at a cost of \$2,500. Prior to the BDM site moving to Dayton, S. Ohio/KY volunteers repaired three tornado damaged homes at a cost of \$5,000. For Church World Service (CWS), 1,008 Cleanup Buckets and 1,084 School Kits were assembled for \$24,000. At six Sewing Bees, 40 participants sewed bags for school kits or prepped items for buckets/kits. This year we were unable to work at the Brethren Service Center processing CWS kits or to send volunteers to care for children through Children's Disaster Services. Support was given in many forms: as a rebuilding volunteer, assembling CWS kits, financial contributions, and prayer. All are greatly appreciated as together we bring hope and share God's love with disaster survivors.

2021 Rebuilding Trips – Volunteers are needed for rebuilding trips throughout 2021. The current site is in Bayboro, NC, and the site in Dayton, OH will reopen in April. Volunteers need to be at least fifteen years old, unless they go with a parent or guardian, and then they may be fourteen. Expenses are covered, and transportation is provided. COVID-19 procedures are in place during travel, at the housing site, and at the work site. BDM works hard at serving disaster survivors and keeping volunteers safe. Click here for a flyer with all the 2021 trip dates. Sign up by calling/texting Burton Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com

2021 Sewing Bees – Sewing Bees are scheduled for sewing school bags for Church World Service. They will be held at Greenville Church of the Brethren and Eaton Community Church. Click here for a flyer showing the dates and locations. The next Sewing Bee will be in Greenville on Saturday, February 20. For more information call Barb Brower at 937-336-2442.

Prayer Needs

A very important way we can be supportive of each other is to lift each other up in prayer.

- There are many reports of medical personnel being pushed beyond limits in caring for those in the hospital and in nursing homes. May we lift these persons into the light of God's grace and love as they minister to those who are hurting.
- With the election now behind us but with lawsuits remaining, may our prayers be for wisdom, for safety, for those elected and those continuing to serve.
- Nearly every day there are new reports of injustice and violence, with growing unrest and protests continuing, may we lift this situation in prayer. Racism is still a force of hatred, violence and anger in our country and in our world; we are compelled by the gospel to work to overcome injustice and hate. May our prayers this day be for peace and understanding.
- Brethren Retirement Community (BRC) residents, staff, BRC board and their families . . . Testing continues; Procedures are being conducted to keep our residents and staff safe. There have been a few positive cases and special care is being offered.
- Those affected by the coronavirus outbreak There are many changing directives, regulations and recommendations affecting our country and way of life.
- The Constance congregation continues to discern space needs, although temporarily on hold during the pandemic.
- May we remember those congregations in pastoral transition - Andrew Wright is serving as interim at Oakland; Donnels Creek is using pulpit supply; Mark Lancaster is serving as interim at Good Shepherd; Fred Bernhard is serving as interim pastor at Brookville-- their profile has been posted; White Cottage has entered an agreement with a neighboring congregation; Tara Hornbacker is serving as interim at New Carlisle.
- 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.