

**February, 2021**  
**Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter**  
**Printable Version**



## **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. 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.

Themes, and presenters of each session can be found on the denominational website ([brethren.org](http://brethren.org)). We hope your congregation will plan to use this resource as part of your Spring 2021 Bible studies.

## **Christ's Ambassadors Club Invitation to Participate**

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*  
2 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.

One of the ministries SOKD has valued over the years is our Camping and Retreat Ministry. This ministry has continued to flourish during the pandemic, even though gathering at a camp and spending time together has not been possible. Here is what Susan Fitze from our Trotwood congregation shares about the 2020 Virtual Women's Retreat:

*After months of pandemic isolation, more than forty women joyfully gathered via zoom for the annual Woman's Retreat in the Fall of 2020. We came from throughout the Southern Ohio/Kentucky District of the Church of the Brethren – and beyond, as far away as Montana! The theme this year was prayer. We came hungry for a deeper understanding and commitment to prayer, and also for fellowship with our sisters in Christ. Four members of the planning committee each presented a different method of prayer: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication, offering fresh thoughts, ideas and insights about each. Then, through the wonders of technology, we were divided into groups of 3-5 women for discussion around the same. Deep conversations, fresh insights, open conversations, support and just plain fun happened in these small groups. We all came together again for a closing worship which challenged us to stay connected through prayer and at the*

*same time widen our table to welcome friends, neighbors, strangers. Bread and cup communion was shared. Each woman provided her own version of the bread (crackers, cookies) and cup (water, tea, juice), and we were reminded that we are the bread and cup to those we meet and to the wider world. As we said good-bye, we left with both deeply personal experiences and encompassing connections, through prayer and fellowship, with each other and with our God.*

Your participation in our Ambassador's for Christ Club helps support district ministries such as our Camping and Retreat Ministry. To date, 41 people have given or pledged \$16,755.00 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.

Go to the district website at [www.sodcob.org](http://www.sodcob.org) and click on the "Ambassadors for Christ" link to make a commitment for a future donation.

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

Contribute monthly by going to the district website at [www.sodcob.org](http://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.

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.

## **Conversations and Connections**

*Gifts and Challenges of Covid*

*February 19, 2021, 7:00 - 8:30 pm*

The District Women's Retreat Committee is sending an invitation to an evening for women to talk about living in a Covid world on Friday, February 19, at 7:00 pm, on a Zoom connection. The gathering will include devotions, discussion in small groups sharing Covid experiences, and other delightful activities to engage hearts and spirits. It will be an opportunity to connect with other women without masks and safe at home. Casual clothes, fuzzy slippers, and a cup of hot chocolate or tea will put everyone in a relaxed mood for the evening fun.

Registration is very simple. By merely sending Karen Dillon an email at [crimdill@aol.com](mailto:crimdill@aol.com) and saying, "I'll be there!" one will be registered. (Please include your name.) Karen will use that email to send the Zoom connection the day of the event, so it doesn't get lost in the mounds of emails one accumulates. The Committee hopes the joy of being together again will encourage women across the District and beyond, to set aside this evening and celebrate our shared sisterhood. A printable invitation which you can share with your friends is posted on the district website.

## **Racial Justice for Lent**

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. They would like to invite you to join them for a Lenten study: Racial Justice for Lent. The study will take place each Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. from February 16th - March 30th on Zoom. You can register to receive the Zoom link on the district website ([sodcob.org](http://sodcob.org)).

This team has also compiled a list of resources which will help you understand and talk about diversity within your congregation. These are posted on the district website. The Task Team will add to this list as they continue to meet and learn what resources are available.

## Southern Ohio/Kentucky Disaster Ministries Updates

**2021 BDM Sites** – Be a BDM volunteer this year serving at Bayboro, NC or Dayton, OH. The Bayboro, NC site, which is open through March, is in a rural area near the coast. The homes being rebuilt were damaged by Hurricane Florence in September 2018. The Dayton, OH site will open in April and remain open throughout 2021. Volunteers will be rebuilding homes damaged by tornadoes in May 2019. Overnight housing will be available at the former Memorial Presbyterian Church on S. Smithville Rd. or volunteers can return home each evening. Consider serving during 2021! A printable flyer with all the 2021 trip dates is posted on the district website. Sign up by calling/texting Burton Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com

**Sewing Bee** – Come join other sewers making school bags for Church World Service school kits. Bags are pre-cut, so just bring your sewing machine, an extension cord, and a sack lunch. The next Sewing Bee is on Saturday, February 20 at 9:00 AM at Greenville Church of the Brethren. For more information call Barb Brower at 937-336-2442. A flyer showing all the 2021 Sewing Bee dates and locations is available on the district website.

### *Prayer Needs*

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

The 2021 Prayer List for Congregations is posted on the district website (sodcob.org).

The most current information on the church in Nigeria including prayer needs is posted on the denominational website (brethren.org),

- 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.

- As a ministry affiliated with the District we have a longstanding and close relationship with the Brethren Retirement Community (BRC). Due to circumstances in the community and regulations, testing continues among residents and staff. Procedures are being conducted to keep our residents and staff safe. There have been a few positive cases and special care is being offered. Some vaccines have been administered with additional dates being scheduled. May we all hold the entire BRC family (residents and their families, staff and their families, BRC Board members and their families) in the light of God's grace, mercy, wisdom, and healing in the coming days.

- As the situation with the coronavirus continues with cases rising to record critical levels nearly every day across our country and state, 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.

- May we remember those congregations in pastoral transition - Sandy Jenkins has ended her service as pastor for the **Constance** congregation. The congregation is exploring a yoked arrangement with Cincinnati with the Cincinnati pastors providing leadership for the next few months. Andrew Wright is serving as interim at **Oakland**. **Donnels Creek** is using pulpit supply at this time. Mark Lancaster is serving as interim at **Good Shepherd** but the congregation has decided to call Mark to the called position, an installation is being planned; Fred Bernhard is serving as interim pastor at **Brookville** during this time of transition; their profile has been posted. **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**.