

Emergency Financial Aid for Nigerian Church

At their fall meeting, the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board approved up to \$1.5 million to begin funding an emergency response fund to the church in Nigeria. An allocation of \$500,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund was approved. The board also decided to commit \$500,000.00 from reserves and up to another amount of \$500,000 from reserves as a matching challenge to donors.

IMPORTANT UPDATE -- The District Board approved a donation of \$10,000.00 from District reserves (recently increased through receipt of some assets from the recently closed Poplar Grove congregation) to the Nigeria Crisis Fund which will be matched by an amount set aside by the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren. The Board is asking congregations and district individuals to consider gifts to this special fund as well. More information about EYN (the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), including how this money will be used can be found at the denominational website (brethren.org).

District Board Updates

During the 2014 retreat, your District Board spent considerable time looking at their purpose for ministry. Discussion centered around two questions: "What is the purpose of the District?" and "Why does it matter?"

We see ourselves as one large church that meets in more than 50 different locations. We believe we exist to help each of them effectively continue the work of Jesus--peacefully, simply, together. Following are the four areas that we feel are most important to strengthen as we assist each of our congregations become healthy, vital influence in their communities.

Empowering Congregations

Many of our congregations in Southern Ohio and Kentucky are sensing a new call sense of purpose as they seek God's mission for them in their respective communities. One such congregation happens to be the oldest congregation in our district, Lower Miami. Located in a neighborhood with a shrinking and aging population, they felt for years that missional ministry was impossible. However, in recent months, God has begun to reveal His purpose for their small congregation. They are sensing a call to serve their community by providing not only a free meal once a month, but also friendship to a community that desperately needs acceptance. As they have assessed what might be needed to offer this service, they've come to the realization that first they must upgrade their facility so that it will be a safe place for folks to meet. As a district, we dream of being able to offer financial assistance to congregations with a vision for missional ministry.

Empowering Leadership

Great leadership requires continuous learning. The way you do it this year may need to change next year. Even the most experienced leaders can improve by exposing themselves to new ideas, confronting new challenges, and rethinking their

leadership style. As John F. Kennedy wrote in a speech he was to give the day he was assassinated, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

Empowering Emerging Ministries

The needs of our congregations are always changing as they seek to meet the changing needs of our communities, necessitating creation of new ministries from time to time. We dream of ministering to our neighboring Hispanic population, reaching out to them in new and different ways. Of starting new churches that will reach out to the marginalized in new communities. Of providing tools for congregations to enable them to better serve their communities and much more.

Empowering Existing Ministries

Existing commissions perform the ministry and work of the District.

To learn more about each of these areas, please visit our website—www.sodcob.org

Communication is vital to the success of our ministry. Here are a few ways you can help us communicate.

"Like" us on Facebook and invite your friends to "like" us as well.

Each month, we produce a publication that is designed to be inserted in your church's bulletin or newsletter. If you are not seeing this monthly, ask your pastor or church office staff about it.

Other ways to get involved:

Contact Tom Bowser to volunteer to serve in a district ministry. (937-832-9865)

Financial donations to the Southern Ohio District are tax deductible. You can donate online at our website or mail a check to Southern Ohio District Church of the Brethren, 2293 Gauby Rd., New Madison, OH 45346.

Disaster Ministry Updates

Urgent Need for Volunteers— Brethren Disaster Ministries continues to work in New Jersey with Superstorm Sandy recovery. December 7 - 13 there is an urgent need for workers at Toms River, NJ. Currently there are only two volunteers from Shenandoah district signed up. We are hopeful of sending workers, for there is much to be done with the Sept. 1 deadline for completion of twelve houses. We already have one person who is available to go and willing to be a driver. Please consider this opportunity and share it with others. We are also needing volunteers for our regularly scheduled trips of January 11-17 and February 15-21. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Burton Wolf at 937-287-5902 or [click here to email](#).

Sewing Bee--We have already purchased the school supplies, and now we need to sew the

school bags! On Saturday, January 24, come join brothers and sisters as we sew school bags for Church World Service School Kits. A Sewing Bee is scheduled to begin at 9:00 AM at the Eaton Church of the Brethren, 1407 N. Barron Street. Sewers need to bring their sewing machine. Others are invited to bring scissors for cutting out bags or baby gowns. Lunch will be served.

Donations Needed for Cleanup Buckets--Church World Service has a continuous need for Clean Up Buckets. We are now purchasing items for buckets that will be assembled in March 2015. We appreciate and thank you for your support of this project. Click here to make donations through the Southern Ohio website. Checks may be sent to:

District of Southern Ohio Church of the Brethren
2293 Gauby Rd.

New Madison, OH 45346 Monday from 6:00 - 9:00PM. We appreciate their generosity, and invite you to visit their store.

Camping and Retreat Commission Updates

Summer Camp 2014 Wrap up video is available on YouTube. To view or download and use for promotion of next year's summer camping program, simply go to YouTube.com and search for "Southern Ohio District Youth Camp 2014". Registration will open sometime the beginning of 2015. Be watching for more information.

Youth Winter Adventure--Still looking for a Christmas gift for the youth on your Christmas list! Here's a great idea. Why not send them to the Winter Adventure on January 17-19, 2015 at Camp Wilson in Bellefontaine Ohio

Sponsored by Camping and Retreat Commission Southern Ohio District and led by Jon Keller and Seth Hendricks, the daily schedule will include meals, worship, tubing, tobogganing, skiing, hiking, devotions, games, etc. Unsure about skiing? There will be lessons for beginner through advanced skiers. Still unsure? Spend your time hiking, tubing, or tobogganing instead of skiing.

Ask your church office for a brochure with more information including cost and how to register.

NOAC (National Older Adults Conference)

Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center
Asheville, NC

September 7-11, 2015

Registration begins March 1, 2015

Registration brochures will be mailed to attendees of previous NOACs, congregations, districts, and retirement communities in late February 2015.