

## **Prayers for Nigerian Church and the Kidnapped Girls**

Although few reports have come to us from Nigeria lately, the situation remains one of concern and prayer as violence and bombings continue. The Church of the Brethren is organizing efforts for temporary housing and meeting other basic needs. Click here for more information on these efforts.

In an attempt to further these efforts, the Southern Ohio District Board has given a donation of \$10,000 to the Nigeria Crisis Fund which has been established by the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren. This money came from District Reserves (recently increased through receipt of some assets from the recently closed Poplar Grove congregation) and will be matched by the Mission and Ministry Board.

The board is asking congregations and district individuals to consider gifts to this special fund as well. You can donate online at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org) or make out a check to Emergency Disaster Fund Church of the Brethren, 1451 Dundee Avenue Elgin, IL 60120.

## **Disaster Ministry Updates**

*2014 in Review*--As we reflect on 2014, it stands out as a very busy year for S. Ohio BDM. We sent fourteen crews, totaling 159 volunteers to New Jersey for Superstorm Sandy recovery. They worked at rehabbing houses in Spotswood, and both rehabbing and working on new builds at Toms River. The expenses of these trips were covered by S. Ohio BDM throughraised at the annual Ice Cream Social andfrom congregations, individuals, and businesses. There was no monetary cost to the volunteers who served. Working with Church World Service, we sentBaby Kits,Baby Blankets,Hygiene Kits,Clean up Buckets, and 643 School Kits.

Together as a district, we have shared God's love and made a difference in the life of disaster survivors. All are welcome to join in this ministry. Monthly meetings are usually the first Thursday of the month at Mill Ridge Village Community Center, 1000 Mill Ridge Circle, Union, OH 45322. Fellowship time is at 6:30 P.M. and the meeting begins at 7:00 P.M. Our January meeting is on the second Thursday, Jan.8, due to the holiday. Thank you to all for supporting S. Ohio BDM.

*Volunteers Needed: Crews of 26*--Brethren Disaster Ministries continues to work in New Jersey with Superstorm Sandy recovery.'s over two years now since the disaster, and many are still in need of housing.Thank you to those who responded for theDecember 7 - 13 trip. We sent sevenvolunteers to join workers from other districts.now need volunteers for our regularly scheduled trips ofFebruary 15-21 and March 15-21.is much to be done with the. 1 for completion of twelve houses in Toms River. To meet this need, a second house is being opened for lodging volunteers, and our crew size is being increased from fifteen to twenty-six.We need many workers!more information or to volunteer, please contact Burton Wolf at 937-287-5902click hereemail.consider this opportunity and share it with others.

*Sewing Bee and Assembly of School Kits* On Saturday, January 24, come join brothers and sisters

as we sew school bags and assemble school kits for Church World Service. The Sewing Bee is scheduled to begin at 9:00 AM 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 school bags or baby gowns. We'll also be assembling School Kits, using the bags that have already been sewn. Come join in a time of fellowship and service. 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

### **Camping and Retreat Commission Updates**

Summer Camp 2014 Wrap up video is available on YouTube. Click here to view or download and use for promotion of next year's summer camping program. Registration will open sometime the beginning of 2015. Be watching for more information.

#### **Watch for more information . . .**

*Volunteer Appreciation Banquet*, January 11, 2014 at the Salem Church of the Brethren. Invitations will be mailed during the first part of January.

*A Maple Syrup/Pancake Day* is being planned for sometime in February.

### **Wilbur Mullen Memorial Service**

The family of Wilbur E. Mullen will hold a public memorial and reception at 10:30 am on January 17, 2015 at Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, OH. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Wilbur's life. Wilbur died peacefully at the age of 96 on October 12, 2014. He is survived by his wife of nearly 62 years, Lena Belle Olwin Mullen, their four daughters and many family members throughout the U.S. In lieu of flowers, donations in Wilbur's memory may be made to On Earth Peace, P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188 or the Resident Aid Fund of the Brethren Retirement Community, Brethren Retirement Community, Department of Fund Development, 750 Chestnut St., Greenville, OH 45331.

**BBT ALERT:** *(Applies to those congregations who contribute to the purchase of individual medical insurance for an employee. Those who provide a group medical insurance plan may ignore this information.)*

IRS interpretation of ACA legislation has changed. If your congregation contributes to the purchase of individual medical insurance for an employee and money used to purchase this insurance is being reported on the employee's W-2 as taxable income, you are in violation of ACA law and may be subject to an excise tax of \$100 per day per violation (up to \$36,500) for each employee participating.

You can find more information concerning ACA legislation compliance at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org).

## **Upcoming Opportunities at Bethany Seminary for Youth and Young Adults**

*Explore your call . . .* This summer, come to Bethany. Live on campus and learn with professors. Expand your mind and expand your circle of friends. Have fun in nature. Explore different, exciting paths of Christian ministry. Explore where God is leading you next in life. Explore Your Call will be held July 24-August 3, 2015 at Bethany's Richmond, Indiana Campus. High school students are encouraged to apply now or go to the Bethany website ([www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu)) to find out more information. **Due to a generous grant, all qualified applicants will receive a full scholarship.**

### ***Write for the Bethany Peace Essay Contest Workshops***

Peacemaking, Creation Justice, and the Beloved Community is the topic for this year's Bethany Peace Essay Contest. High school, college, graduate school, and seminary students are encouraged to write and compete for prizes up to 42000. Essays will be accepted January 1-January 26, 2015. Essay guidelines can be found at the Bethany website ([www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu)).

### ***Workshops Offered by the Institute for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults Bethany***

Theological Seminary's Institute for Ministry with Youth and Young Adults offers workshops for districts and churches. There are six different workshops offered as suggestions but Institute Staff can work with you to tailor a workshop to your own needs. Workshop offerings can be found at the Bethany website ([www.bethanyseminary.edu](http://www.bethanyseminary.edu)).

### ***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.