

The Herald

NORTHERN OHIO DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE
BRETHREN

DECEMBER 2024

Northern Ohio District Response to Hurricane Helene

Hurricane Helene did much damage when it hit in September, much of it unexpectedly in the Ashville, NC area far inland. At the District Executive Committee meeting on October 1st, the committee approved the following assistance on behalf of the district from our District Disaster Fund:

- \$5000 to be sent to the Southeastern District (which includes the Ashville, NC area) to be used for immediate assistance.
- \$5000 to be sent to Church World Service to provide buckets and hygiene kits that are desperately needed now.
- Up to \$5000 in matching funds for contributions received by the district for Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) by the end of October.

That \$5,000 came in quickly. By the time the District Board met on November 9th, 2024 a total of \$14,012.54 had been received from individuals and churches for Brethren Disaster Ministries.

The board unanimously decided to match the full amount of the donations that had been received. **We sent a check out to Brethren Disaster Ministries for a total amount of \$28,025.08.**

Thank you for the generosity of this District and we want to thank you for the work you do for Christ's Kingdom. God is definitely doing good things!!

The hurricane relief work by BDM continues. Read about how to help through BDM and CWS at <https://www.brethren.org/news/2024/how-you-can-help/>. You can also send donations directly to the Southeastern District at Southeastern District Church of the Brethren P.O. Box 1241, Travelers Rest, SC 29690, Att: Disaster Response.

In This Issue

Northern Ohio Disaster Response..	1
Clergy Spouse Retreat.....	2
BBI Classes.....	2
Ordinations.....	2
Prayer Calendar.....	3
Mark Your Calendar.....	3
Pastoral Placement.....	3
Information for Church Treasurers..	3
BDM Trip to Kentucky.....	4
Ashland First Anniversary.....	5
Pictures from the BDM trip.....	5
Strategic Planning Committee.....	6
District Conference 2025.....	6
Marion CoB new members.....	7
Camp News.....	7
Annual Conference 2025.....	8
District Office Hours.....	8

2025 Clergy-Spouse Retreat

February 16-18, Quality Inn and Suites Richfield, Ohio

Our District Clergy-Spouse retreat will be held February 16th-18th at the Quality Inn and Suites in Richfield, Ohio. This is a time for relationship-building, renewal, learning, and rest. The food and facilities are great, but the fellowship is even greater! David Shumate will provide leadership for this event.

Single and married clergy and their spouses are encouraged to attend. Costs are \$325.00/couple, \$250.00/single, One day registration: \$130/couple, \$65.00/single. A flyer that includes the registration form is included with the Herald. You may also register online at <http://www.nohcob.org/clergy-spouse-retreat-2025>.

Please consider sending your pastor (and spouse if married) for this time of renewal and fellowship.

Buckeye Brethren Institute, Upcoming Classes

Evangelism/Outreach
Instructor: Mike Huffaker

Meeting dates: January 10, 24, and February 7, 2025; 9:30 am to 3:30pm

This introductory level BBI course on a Biblical and yet practical approach to Evangelism which is rooted in our Lord's Great Commission and Gospel message. Our course will seek to introduce, aid and expand the student's understanding, skills and practice of Christian Evangelism at both the personal and corporate church community levels.

This class is available to those interested in the ministry and to licensed ministers moving towards ordination. Ordained and Commissioned clergy can also take this class for CEU's (1.5 CEU's for attendance at all three Friday sessions) at a cost of \$25.00. And the class is open to anyone who would like to take the class for personal enrichment.

Visit our webpage www.nohcob.org/registerBBI to register or for more information.

Moses Siakula Ordained at Hartville CoB

There was a joyful spirit among the congregation as Moses Siakula was ordained at Hartville CoB on Sunday, December 1, 2024.

Moses serves as the Associate Pastor at Hartville. He completed his ministerial training through the Buckeye Brethren Institute (BBI) in August. Moses and his wife, Jocelyn, have 2 children.

The congregation celebrated Moses' ordination Sunday with a beautiful worship service and a carry-in dinner.

Some of Moses' family was able to join remotely from



Zambia and a number of those at church wore traditional Zambian clothing in his honor.

Tom Michaels Ordained at Eden CoB

Tom Michaels was ordained at Eden CoB on Sunday, November 24, 2024 where he is currently serving as Interim Pastor. Tom has served as an interim / transitional pastor in our district's congregations for 19 years as a Mennonite ordained pastor with special training in interim ministry and mediation. He has served as a mentor to many during that time. Tom has an MA in Christian Ministries from Malone and an MDiv from Ashland Theological Seminary.

Tom and his wife Cherri have two grown sons and 4 grandchildren.

The congregation celebrated during their Thanksgiving meal after the worship service.

We are delighted that Tom is now ordained in the Church of the Brethren.



Prayer Calendar

December:

Churches/Pastors

Silver Creek, Pulpit Supply
Sugar Creek West, Pulpit Supply
Sugar Creek East, Nelson Brown

District Leadership

Camp Inspiration Hills, Andrew Kaufman

Other Districts

Atlantic Southeast

National Leadership

Nancy Heishman, Director Office of Ministry

January:

Churches/Pastors

Swan Creek, congregation leading
Woodworth, Steve Simmons
Adrian, Dave Morton

Other Districts

West Marva, Western Pennsylvania

National Leadership

Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) Staff

2025 Self-Allocation Report

The national Church of the Brethren is no longer distributing an annual congregational giving packet and self-allocation form. But this information is important to the district and the camp as we project cost vs income for the upcoming year. Reports should be submitted electronically at <https://forms.gle/jPJKtMctrKtfSsk6>—there's only two questions and your contact information needed—or complete the paper form in the financial packet and return to the District Office by **December 31, 2024**.

2025 Financial Packets

The 2025 financial packets have been mailed to each church. The packet includes a year-end letter, self-allocation sheets for the district and camp, and mailing labels for the coming year. Please be sure that your treasurer received the packet.

Church Treasurer Training

In response to requests from Church Treasurers for training, a workshop will be held on Saturday, March 22nd from 10am—3 pm at the District Office. There will also be an option to join remotely via Zoom. Lisa Snyder, our District Treasurer, will cover areas vital to each church treasurer. Mark your calendars and watch for more information on registration.

Pastoral Placement

Congregations actively in the search process:

Center--Search Committee completing profile. **Mark Kell** resigned as of 12/2024.

Jonah's People--**Mark Self** called as interim pastor.

Sugar Creek West- Ministry Team providing pulpit supply.

Congregations that have not yet begun the Search process or have chosen not to seek at this time:

Akron First- Rebecca Ebie providing pulpit supply.

Bristolville --Ed Agler providing pulpit supply.

Brook Park -- **Ryan Lopez** serving as interim pastor.

Dupont -- **Solomon Okang** serving as preacher.

Eden- Tom Michaels serving as transitional pastor.

Freeburg-- **Ed Wartluft** serving as preacher.

Owl Creek- David Searcy serving as interim pastor.

Silver Creek-- pulpit supply.

Congregations that have completed the Search process:

Akron Eastwood—Called **Andrew Wenger** as Pastor, yoking with Akron Springfield beginning January 2025.

Mark Your Calendar

December 3— Strategic Planning Committee at District Office, Ashland , OH at 6:00 pm.

December 4—Western Area Pastor's Gathering at 12:30 pm.

December 12—Central Area Clergy Breakfast at District Office at 9:00 am.

December 12—Eastern Area Pastor's Gathering at the Front Porch Café, Hartville at 12:00 pm.

December 17—Northern Ohio Pastor's Gathering at 10:00 am.

January 6—Strategic Planning Committee at 6:00 pm at District Office.

January 15— Central Committee Meeting at 6pm at District Office.

Brethren Disaster Ministry Trip September 2024

(pictures continued on page 5)

My first BDM trip was to Neon in southeastern Kentucky in September of 2024 to help with recovery work from floods in the area. We had very hospitable and knowledgeable leadership that met us there. They treated us very well. We had a work team of about a dozen folks from both northern and southern Ohio and we developed great relationships with our fellow workers. We were divided into 3-5 teams depending on the day. Some of the jobs that were completed were building a storage shed; building a wall; replacing rotted and moldy flooring; cleaning out a basement full of mud; helping an elderly lady clean her apartment among other things. Our work day wrapped up about 4:30 so we could head back to headquarters to get cleaned up & and get ready for supper. We all took turns helping with cleanup after supper and with devotions.

We all worked hard and most of us got to develop some new skills as well. And, the best thing was getting to know the folks we were helping who were beyond grateful for our help and getting to know our coworkers better. Taking a week to serve with BDM will bless you more than it will those you go to help.

Submitted by Cindy Peel, Akron Eastwood



Pictured from left: Lisa Snyder, Bruce Morckel, Deb Rising, Sandy Humphrey, Cindy Peel, Dave Bassett, Amy Flake

“Serve one another in love” (Gal.5:13) is often found on shirts worn by Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) volunteers. Seven individuals from the Northern Ohio District put those words into action the week of September 8-14, 2024 as they traveled to Letcher County, Kentucky where BDM is working with HOMES, Inc. (Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service, Inc.), a non-profit housing agency that provides affordable housing to economically depressed communities in southeastern Kentucky. Already one of the most disadvantaged areas in Appalachia, the Letcher County area was severely impacted by catastrophic flooding that occurred in July, 2022. During the night of July 28th, raging walls of water tore down through the valleys, as 13” of rain fell overnight, killing 44 and devastating countless homes and businesses.

In September, the team from Northern Ohio District, along with a team from southern Ohio, were the first group to work at the Letcher County BDM site. Together, we worked to establish trust with the HOMES leadership and showed that we could work side by side with employees of HOMES, Inc. as they fulfill their mission to repair existing homes and work on new builds. Some of the jobs that we worked on included repairing a collapsed retaining wall, touch-up repair and painting of new drywall, seeding/strawing the lawn at a new house site, removing mud from a basement, removing/replacing damaged flooring, and starting construction of a storage shed. Those who went on the trip included Amy Flake, Sandy Humphrey, Bruce Morckel, Cindy Peel, Deb Rising, Lisa Snyder and Dave Bassett.

If you feel led to answer the call to “serve one another in love”, talk to one of the District’s Disaster Coordinators about getting involved in upcoming trips to Letcher County on May 4-10, 2025 or September 7-13, 2025.

Ashland First CoB 110th Anniversary

On Sunday, November 3rd, 2024 Ashland First celebrated our 110th Anniversary and Annual Homecoming with a few special friends, including Ashland's Mayor Matt Miller and his wife Melanie Miller, Ohio House Representative, for a total of 37 in worship.

Matt shared his appreciation for the contributions our church makes to the City of Ashland and beyond.

Following the morning worship service, we moved to the Fellowship Hall where six more people joined us and we feasted on a meal prepared with love by the hands of many.

Many memories were kindled by the stories shared with each other. We all had a good time, peacefully, simply, together.

Submitted by Pete Snyder, Ashland First CoB

Pictures from the September BDM Trip Continued from page 4



Strategic Planning Committee Formed

The district has seen substantial changes in the past 10 years as membership has decreased (even prior to the pandemic) and as churches have left. Because we have considerable financial reserves, we have been able to continue function with the same district model in leadership, staffing, and programming. This gives us the unique opportunity to assess, plan, and implement changes before crisis mandates an emergency response.

The Executive Committee has established a Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren Strategic Planning Committee to prepare a strategic plan for the district by:

- Gathering data on strategic planning, staffing, fellowship events, finances, and ministries in other districts, including hopes and limitations for moving forward.
- Gathering information from the committee, District Board, staff, clergy and other district members on how the district is perceived, hopes for the district, and ideas for creative fellowship and ministry.
- Reviewing and bringing recommendations for a new or modified mission/vision statement to center the work of a strategic plan.
- Bring a preliminary report to the May 2025 District Board meeting and 2025 District Conference and a written strategic plan with specific goals and implementation plan to the 2025-2026 District Board seeking a recommendation to bring to District Conference 2026.

The Strategic Planning Committee consists of Dave Bassett— Chair, (Pleasant View), Erin Beebe— secretary, (Maple Grove), Jessi Adams (Ashland Dickey), Karl Kelbly (East Chippewa), Cindy Peel (Akron Springfield/Eastwood), Sierra Swanson (Brook Park) with Kris Hawk (District Executive Minister) and Lisa Snyder (District Treasurer) serving ex-officio without vote.

At their initial meeting on December 3rd, they set the first priority to gather information from those in the district on what ministries are vital, input on the best use of financial and personnel resources, and what would be most helpful moving forward. We will be gathering information through both an electronic survey and a paper survey. Please watch your email for the link and the paper form. Forms will also be sent to each church. Your input is vital to this process as we plan for our future together in Northern Ohio.

**Save the Date for
District Conference 2025
August 8-9, 2025
East Chippewa Church of the Brethren
Orrville, Ohio**



Moderator Mike Conner (Pastor, Painesville) has chosen the theme, “Grace through Faith” focusing on Ephesians 2:8-10.

Each church should send two delegates plus others to join in the fellowship, planning, and worship. More information will be coming!!

New Members Received at Marion Church of the Brethren

Around Labor Day the question came up at Marion on how does one become a member of the church? The blue book, "For All Who Minister" had the details of the receiving members, but the thought developed that we should learn about the church history.

So we ordered the workbook a "Dunker Guide to Brethren Beliefs" from the Brethren Press. We decided that we would use our Sunday school time to begin the learning process and for a period of almost two months we went through the workbook answering those in the book and sometimes asking questions that required more homework.

When we finished the "New Members Training Course" the decision was made that prior to our annual pre-Thanksgiving potluck after church we would make the receiving of new members part of the worship service. In that service on November 24, 2024 we added ten members to the church and what a blessing it was and what a blessing it continues to be.

Praise be our Lord!

Submitted by Rick Hicks, Marion CoB



Camp News

Andrew Kauffman called as Camp Executive Director for Inspiration Hills



Andrew Kauffman, who has been serving as the Interim Executive Director at Inspiration Hills since December 1, 2023 is now the Executive Director. The Camp Administration Committee recommended that the District Board approve Andrew as the Executive Director. This recommendation passed unanimously at our District Board meeting on November 9, 2024. Since he joined in 2023 we have seen a lot of growth and positive changes at the camp. His work on increasing rentals is bringing a financial stability and his commitment to the ministry of the camp is inspiring.

Congratulations Andrew!



JR/JR HIGH WINTER CAMP AT INSPIRATION HILLS

For Grades 3-8 / \$180 per person

www.inspirationhillscamp.org

2025 Annual Conference Nominations have been extended

The Nominating Committee is calling on all of us to make nominations for the Annual Conference ballot in 2025. Please review the open positions, discern qualified candidates, and go to <https://www.brethren.org/ac/nominations/> to make your nominations or find more information.

You can help shape the future of the church! Each member of the Church of the Brethren is invited to recommend possible nominees for the 2025 Annual Conference ballot. As you pray about this, who comes to mind? Whom will the Lord prompt you to nominate?

We need nominees from every part of the church. The Nominating Committee has extended the deadline for submissions. **Nomination forms must be submitted by December 20th.**

Northern Ohio District Nominating Committee

The District Nominating Committee has been working hard to develop a ballot for the 2025 District Conference.

They are seeking individuals who have the passion and willingness to serve our Lord Jesus in this manner and they are hoping you can point them to those individuals. If you know someone who might be willing to do this, we ask that you please pass on those names to someone on the Nominating Committee.

They are looking to fill ballot slots for Moderator-Elect, District Board Members, Nominating Committee, and representatives to our Good Shepherd Home and West View Manor.

We hope and pray any of you can help them.

Annual Conference 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina

July 2-6

Koury Convention Center

3121 W Gate City Blvd

Moderator: Dava Hensley

Annual Conference 2025 registration opens up on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. For more information visit <https://>



Holiday District Office Hours

The District Office will be closed December 23rd through January 1st for Christmas and New Year's.

District Executive, Kris Hawk takes Monday as her day off. She can be reached at 330-612-2086 or krishawk@nohcob.org

Administrative Secretary, Laura Huffaker is in the office Monday through Friday, 9 am—2 pm. She can be reached at 419-281-3058 or laura@nohcob.org.

May you spread the Good News of Jesus so that all who hear it may share in the amazement of this Christmas gift! We hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Your Northern Ohio District Church of the Brethren Staff.



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6