

December, 2023
Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter
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2024 SOK District Conference Theme Announced: "Breathe in the Beloved" by Moderator Tracy Knechel Sturgis

The Southern Ohio/Kentucky District conference will be held on September 27 & 28, 2024. Location is yet to be determined. Be watching for more information.

Caring, cranky, curious, cautious, or cruel, breath is an equalizer for human beings; we all need it to survive. Staying mindful of our breath not only can help regulate our body systems on a physical level, but by synchronizing our breathing within our beloved community, we can become in touch with a spiritual level that can lead us to thrive.

In this time of late Fall when the leaves finally are letting go of the branches, I, too, am reminded to let go. I am invited to fully empty my lungs, to release my clenched fists, and enjoy the free fall to the waiting ground. I cannot yet see my landing point, but the laws of gravity assure me that it will be somewhere on earth, and spiritual laws assure me that it will always be within God's sight and knowledge.

It is the time of year when the city assigns me specific days when they will come collect whatever-size pile of fallen leaves I can manage to rake to the curb. These deadlines are helpful for time and task management. It is the time of the year when the Christian Church assigns the weeks of Advent to function as helpful deadlines in our preparation to receive the rebirth of God among us.

God is about to breathe in the human community again! We will be inhaled by the One sent to save us from our worst selves by delighting us with fleshy toes, bright eyes, and his own little lungs that rise and fall with ours.

As we look forward the collective inhale at sight of God in body, may we be mindful to not hold our breath along the way. May we be open to the gifts of companionship, conversation, and challenge in our spiritual walk together this season. Remember that Christmas does not need to be complicated, it can be as simple as breathing and smiling.



Southern Ohio/Kentucky Disaster Ministries Updates

Appreciation Dinner – The annual BDM Appreciation Dinner was held on Saturday, Nov. 11 at Brookville Church of the Brethren. Twenty-two first-time volunteers were recognized for participating in a rebuilding trip during 2023. Two Service Awards were presented. Nina Rodeffer from Eaton Community Church was recognized for her longtime work sewing school bags for Church World Service school kits. She creatively adds denim pockets from old jeans and stencils on a design to make each school bag unique. Also receiving a Service Award was Korrekt Plumbing for responding to the urgent need for plumbers in Dawson Springs, KY. They sent eight employees to serve for a week which enabled the building process to move forward, ensuring that homes were ready in a timely manner. Appreciation was expressed for the many ways BDM is supported including Children’s Disaster Services, Church World Service kit assemblies, fundraising, donations, and prayer. Together we rejoice in the ministry accomplished in 2023 and look ahead to 2024.



Service Award - Nina Rodeffer



Service Award – Korrekt Plumbing

BDM Meeting – There will not be a monthly BDM meeting in December. Plan to come to the next meeting which will be on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at Mill Ridge Village Community Center. Fellowship Time is at 6:30 PM, and the meeting is at 7:00 PM. Hear from volunteers who served at the Brethren Service Center and from those on the October and November rebuilding trips to Kentucky. We’ll review the ministry accomplished in 2023 and look ahead to 2024 opportunities.

2024 Rebuilding Trips – S. Ohio/KY BDM has a rebuilding trip scheduled for most months of 2024. January through June will be to Dawson Springs, KY, where we will continue to work with Habitat for Humanity. No location has been determined for the last half of 2024. Note that on the July 21-27 trip, there is an emphasis on youth serving with adults. More info will be coming soon! for a flyer with trip dates. Call/text Burt Wolf at 937-287-5902 or SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com to join a crew.

Donations to support the work of S. Ohio/KY BDM are greatly appreciated. Checks to S. Ohio/KY District COB need to be footnoted BDM and sent to PO Box 785, Greenville, OH 45331.



Camp Sugarwood Updates

Cookie Camp Campers Wanted!

Come enjoy a time of fellowship with others while also helping in this fundraiser that benefits Winter Blast weekends for our children and youth. Cookie Camp begins Friday, December 1. The first shift is 12pm-5pm and the second shift is 6pm-9pm. The camp continues on Saturday from 9am-1pm. If you plan on mixing up cookies please bring your mixer and bowl. Other tasks that we need willing hands for are boxing cookies, unwrapping Hershey Kisses, and washing dishes.

Ordered cookies can be picked up from 2pm-4pm on December 2.

Cookie Camp is held at Salem CoB 6037 Phillipsburg Union Road, Englewood, OH. Any questions please contact Carrie Drees at 937-564-7346.

Registration is Now Open

Registration is now open for the Winter Blast weekends and the Quilting and Crafting Day Camp.

- ◆ Winter Blast for K-5th grade and accompanying adult is January 12 and 13. \$25 per person.
- ◆ Winter Blast for 6th-12th grades is January 19 and 20. \$25 per person.
- ◆ Quilting and Crafting Day Camp is February 8, 9, and 10. \$20 per day.

Registration forms are available on the district website, www.sodcob.org

Prayer Needs

A very important way we can be supportive of each other is to lift each other up in prayer. The 2023 Prayer List for Congregations can be found on the District website.

-**Chuck Cupp** fell at his home at the BRC and is now in the medical wing recovering and receiving rehab

-**Burt and Helen Wolf**—Burt is home recovering slowly but surely from open heart surgery.

-**The Standing With People of Color Annual Conference study/action committee** as they continue their important work.

-For the people in **Ukraine**.

-May we remember those congregations in pastoral transition

- ◆ **White Cottage** continues their agreement with a neighboring congregation to supply pastoral services during a time of transition and discernment.
- ◆ **New Carlisle**--Tara Hornbacker, Interim.
- ◆ **Prince of Peace**--John Sgro, Interim.
- ◆ **Trotwood**-- Rusty Curling, Interim
- ◆ **Lower Miami**--Tracy Knechel Sturgis, transitioned to part time Pastor
- ◆ **Beavercreek**--Sandy Jenkins, transitioned to part time Pastor
- ◆ **Donnels Creek**-- Jim Chronister, Interim
- ◆ **Pleasant Hill**--Fred Bernhard, Interim
- ◆ **Trinity**-- John Edwards, Interim
- ◆ **Eversole**-- Mark Bowman retired, April 30
- ◆ **Circleville**--Roger Crusier retiring Dec. 31, 2023

- 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 Nick if you know of prayer situations of which we should be aware. May we lift each other in prayer as we work to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together.