

August, 2023  
Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Newsletter  
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## 2023 SOK District Conference

The 2023 Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Conference will be held October 6 & 7, 2023 at the West Charleston Church of the Brethren, 4817 St Rt 202, Tipp City, OH 45371. We are grateful to our sisters and brothers at West Charleston for providing this space where we can gather. This year, we are reaching out to all of you for your help as this is a District event. Would you be willing to serve as an usher, set up or take down, serve meals, etc. You will also need to register for the conference. [Click here](#)

Moderator Ty Pyles shares, "I am intrigued by the connection between science and spirituality. In nature we are able to see the Divine."

One example out of millions is trees. Trees do not live alone. Although we often think of them as individuals, standing by themselves with roots in the ground and branches in the sky, they need soil and water and air and sunshine. They also need cooperation and community. Ecologists have studied underground networks called mycorrhizae. In these networks, fungal fibers fasten tree roots, one to another, beneath the forest floor.

Trees are not lonely at all. They are bound together, deeply. Now it is true that a fungus is not an attractive image — milk-pale, inky and translucent fibers are kind of gross. But mycorrhizae illustrate how we receive nourishment from Christ and share it with each other. When we remain rooted in Christ, we find that the words of Paul to the Colossians come true: "*the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God*". Christians grow when they are rooted in Christ and connected through an ecosystem of communication, nourishment and sacrifice. All are invited to the 2023 Southern Ohio District Conference to learn, share and understand how to be Mycorrhizal Christians.

Your Program and Arrangements Commission is excited about CEU Opportunities.

- ◆ Jonathan Shively will help us take a look at the opportunities for growth presented in a post-pandemic church.
- ◆ Loyce Borgman from Eder Financial will be available during the conference for one on one appointments to envision retirement, whether for yourself or a family member.
- ◆ Nate Polzin will be our guest speaker for the worship service Friday evening. Moderator, Ty Pyles will lead a bible study around the conference theme.

Your Program and Arrangements Commission continues making plans. A partial schedule, a list of reports, more details about CEU and one on one opportunities, and more have been posted on the district website. Program and Arrangements will continue to share plans as they are finalized. Registration forms are available on the district website.



## Invitation to Participate in the SO/KY Racial Justice Team

The District Racial Justice team is excited to be working in conjunction with the *Standing With People of Color* team who presented at this year's Annual Conference. It is our purpose to find ways in which we here in our district can continue to become informed on issues concerning racial justice. We will work on projects together and develop Biblical resources that will assist us all in learning more about God's intention for us as followers of Christ in regard to the issues that revolve around justice, equality, and peace for all of God's children.

We are called, as a people to respond;

Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.

We invite you to consider joining our team as we move forward in the days ahead planning and working on short-term projects that will provide guidance and information to our congregations and to the members of the Church of the Brethren. Contact Lucas Keller at [jlkeller94@gmail.com](mailto:jlkeller94@gmail.com) to join us at our next meeting.

## Southern Ohio/Kentucky Disaster Ministries Updates

**Ice Cream Social** – Share-a-Meal tickets will be on sale for \$20 each. These are meals on a variety of dates hosted in homes. Choose by date, location, and menu. What a wonderful opportunity for fellowship! All proceeds support S. Ohio/KY BDM as we help disaster survivors through rebuilding homes and with Church World Service kits. Come and bring your friends!

Musical Entertainment:

4:30 - 5:00 Joyful Noise

5:00 - 5:20 Tom and Sue Devers

5:30 – 6:00 Rusty Curling and Phyllis Dodd

6:00 - 6:30 Mark Whitt and the True Blue Grass

6:30 - 7:00 Matt Shetler

Volunteer Now! [SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com](mailto:SouthernOhioBDM@gmail.com)

**Golf Scramble** – It's time to register or to become a sponsor! On Saturday, August 19 the annual Golf Scramble will be held at Beechwood Golf Course. Hole sponsorship and registration forms can be found on the district website, or ask in your church office. This event is sponsored by the S. Ohio/KY District Camping and Retreat Ministries and BDM. By August 14 send all registration & sponsorship forms and money to Kevin Dull 554 Westbrook Rd., Brookville, OH 45309. For more information contact Kevin at (937-604-3285), [montpres57@gmail.com](mailto:montpres57@gmail.com)

**Darke County Fair Parking** – August 18-26 BDMers will be parking cars for fair attendees. We'll be using the parking lot at Orthopedic Associates, 732 Sweitzer Street, Greenville. Volunteer for a three-hour shift parking cars in designated spots. We have shifts available throughout the fair. The work is light, and there will be times to get off our feet. Please call/text Burt Wolf at 937-287-5902 to volunteer.

**Sewing Bee/CWS Prep** – On Saturday, August 26 at 9:00 AM, a Sewing Bee/Church World Service (CWS) Prep will be held at Greenville COB, 421 Central Avenue. Sewers need to bring a sewing machine to make school bags for CWS. Non-sewers will prep items for CWS kits. Bring a sack lunch and come for a time of service and fellowship. For more information contact Barb Brower at 937-336-2442.



**School Kit Assembly** – This year we need to change our format for assembling school kits. Previously the August assembly has been at Bullens' warehouse in Eaton. Due to warehouse construction, this space is currently unavailable. Happy Corner COB contacted us wanting an assembly for their congregation. Therefore, they will be assembling the school kits this year. Thank you to all who faithfully help us with school kit assemblies!

## *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.

- Susan Liller, co-pastor at East Dayton Fellowship is recovering from surgery.
- Cathy Lutz, wife of Larry Lutz, pastor of Piqua Cob—broken shoulder
- Robert Jackson and fiancé, Christina— lost everything in house fire.
- For the victims and their families recovering from the never-ending cycle of gun violence.
- The Standing With People of Color Annual Conference study/action committee as they continue their important work.
- Andrew Wright is recovering well from his back surgery. The healing process is a slow one so continued prayers are appreciated.
- For Cleve Bowling who is on the pastoral team at Flat Creek/Mud Lick who has cancer in his throat and voice box and his health is continuing to decline.
- For the people in Ukraine living in fear, for the families who have lost loved ones, and for those who have been displaced because of the invasion.
- 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. Tara Hornbacker is serving as interim at New Carlisle. John Sgro is serving as interim pastor for the Prince of Peace congregation. Rusty Curling is serving as interim pastor at Trotwood. Tracy Knechel Sturgis is serving as interim pastor at Lower Miami. Sandy Jenkins is serving as interim pastor at Beaver creek. Jim Chronister is serving as interim pastor at Donnels Creek. Fred Bernhard is serving as interim pastor at Pleasant Hill. John Edwards is serving as the interim pastor at Trinity COB. Mark Bowman has retired from Eversole as of April 30.
- Congratulations to Staci Peterson from the Cincinnati COB who has accepted a call to be the Pastor of the Cedar Lake COB in the Northern Indiana district beginning on June 1.
- Andrew Wright has transitioned from Interim Pastor to Coordinating Pastor for the Oakland congregation.
- Brent Driver will begin serving as interim pastor for the Eversole congregation on June 1.
  
- 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.