

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Western PA District Church of the Brethren

March 2024

THE LION AND THE LAMB

I heard someone say it just the other day: “If you don’t like the weather, just wait five minutes. You’re in western Pennsylvania. It will change!” How true. And I’m sure you’ve often heard the phrase: “As changeable as the weather.”

As we enter the month of March, we remember that it is one of those months when the weather changes often and it often changes quickly. In March we can experience everything from blizzard-like conditions to warm sunny days.

Over the years people have said that “when March comes in like a lion it will go out like a lamb” or “when March comes in like a lamb it will go out like a lion”. This means that if the weather is “roaring” at the beginning of the month it will be “gentle” at the end of the month or the other way round. This doesn’t always hold true but it often seems to be the case.

The lion and the lamb: we see both in the weather conditions as we move through March. But I am reminded of another lion and lamb scenario at this time of year.

The lion and the lamb: we see both in Jesus Christ as we move through the season of Lent into Easter.

The prophecy in Isaiah 53:7, describing Jesus’ arrest, trial and execution, says “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

John the Baptizer proclaimed Jesus to be “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John

1:29). The season of Lent is to not only remember but to focus on the sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect lamb, whose blood was shed for our sin.

Yet the prophecy describing Jesus’ power over sin refers to Him as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” who has “triumphed”! (Revelation 5:5) This humble one who sacrificed his life is also the

mighty one who has conquered death! He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords and He WILL rule and reign forever and ever!!! Hallelujah! The slain Lamb is the risen King!

During this month of March, when you are tempted to complain about the changing weather, remember that as followers of Christ we are chosen by God to produce good fruit for Him. (John 15:16) Instead of complaining, let’s choose instead to use our words to praise the sacrificed Lamb and to proclaim the conquering Lion.

Ruby Mader, District Minister Team

FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE

The Highlights deadline for the **April 2024** issue is

March 10, 2023

Please send your information to tlehman@brethren.org.

DISTRICT STAFF:

District Minister Team

Pete Kaltenbaugh, Ruby Mader,
Chris Forry

Financial Clerk: Amy Bowman
wpacob@atlanticbb.net

District Secretary: Tina Lehman
tlehman@brethren.org

DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
8:30 am - 3:00 pm

Financial Clerk is in

Tuesday & Thursday
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

CONTACT US:

115 Spring Road
Hollsopple, PA 15935
814-479-2181

Website: www.westernpacob.org

2024 DISTRICT DIRECTORY

The 2024 District Directory has been sent out in January. Please be sure to send me any updates and/or corrections as soon as possible so I can list them in the Highlights.

If you would like a paper copy of the 2024 District Directory, please contact me at tlehman@brethren.org or 814-479-2181.

Thank you!
Tina

REQUEST FOR DIRECTORIES

It is very helpful to the District Office staff to have updated information from all the churches we serve.

If your congregation will be making a new directory for **2024** please send one to the District Office,
115 Spring Road,
Hollsopple, 15935
Thank you!

DISTRICT DIRECTORY UPDATES

As mentioned above, the District Directory has been sent out to the District. The emailed PDF version that you received was the most up to date version (at the time). Please note the following changes:

Page 9—Remove William & Rona Hemminger's phone #: 814-629-9868, change address to 207 Ralphton Road

Page 9—Change Herb Ewald's middle initial from J. to W.

Page 25—Change Linda Goodwin's email to GoodwinLL325@gmail.com

TO ALL MINISTERS

Reminder to be sure to update your clearances if you haven't done it already. Once you receive your updated info, please send a copy to the District Office, thanks!

Western PA District COB, 115 Spring Road
Hollsopple, PA 15935

ACROSS THE DISTRICT

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Ordination

Mike Kenney—Locust Grove

WITH SYMPATHY

To the family of **Rev. Juan Figueroa** as he passed away on February 13th. Rev. Juan had served at the Christian Community Center in Caimito, Puerto Rico which the District had supported for many years.

VIRTUAL SERVICES

Arbutus COB Sunday Services are streamed at 9:00 am <https://arbutuscob.org/>

Geiger COB Sunday Services are on Facebook at 10:30 am <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1709517105945633>

Hostetler COB Sunday Services are on Facebook at 10:30 am
<https://www.facebook.com/HostetlerCOBMeyersdalePa>

Meyersdale COB Sunday Services are on Facebook at 10:30 am
https://www.facebook.com/people/Meyersdale-Church-Of-The-Brethren/100064412810727/?eav=AfZ_hZTDR0BT2145UoR6btO6zS69_LKf8aq-ZM8IDloOJ_v6FfXuzfhRJn8YR1Nqs9g&ref=py_c&paipv=0

Rummel COB You can listen to podcasts of services on their church website at
<https://rummelchurch.com/sermons/>

Salisbury COB Sunday Services are on Facebook at 10:30 am
<https://www.facebook.com/Salisbury-Church-of-the-Brethren-211422968870314>

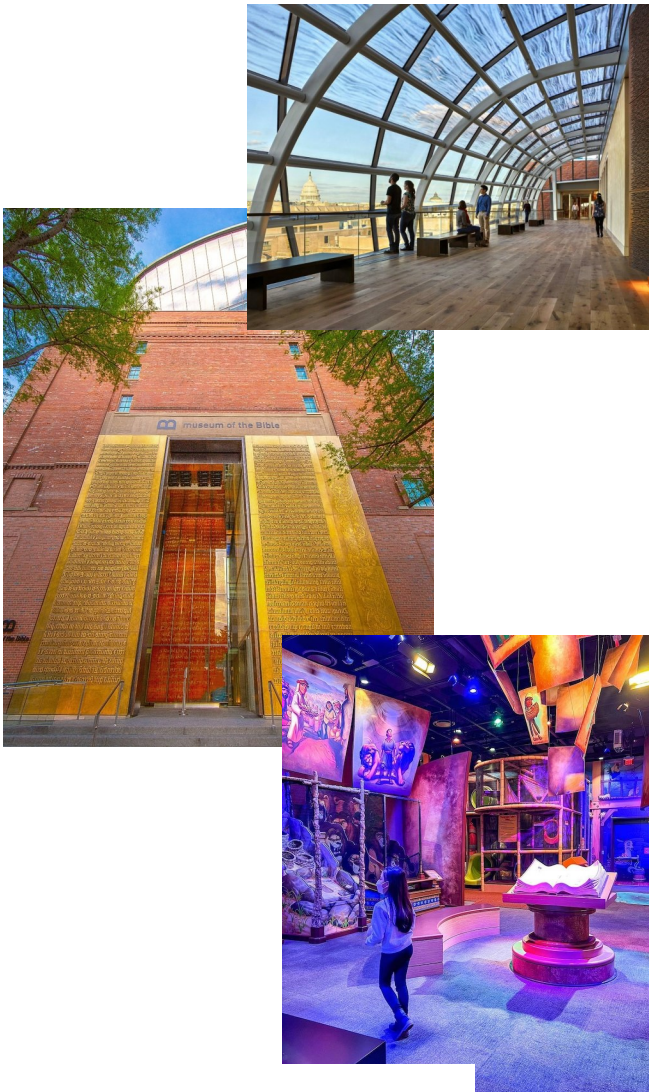
Walnut Grove COB Sunday Services are on Facebook at 10:00 am
<https://www.facebook.com/Walnutgrovecob>



ACROSS THE DISTRICT

MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

The District Outreach and Service Team is planning another bus trip to the Museum of the Bible in Washington D.C. on **August 17, 2024**. Mark your calendars and look in upcoming issues of the Highlights for more information.



museum
of the
Bible

CEU SPOTLIGHT

Worship Models from Genesis to Revelation

Pastor Leah Hileman will be leading this workshop on Saturday, April 13, 2024, from 9:00 am to Noon at Camp Harmony (In-Person or Zoom)

In-person: \$45.00 for .3 CEUs;
 \$35.00 for no CEUs

Zoom: \$35.00 for .3 CEUs;
 \$25.00 for no CEUs

How did churches end up with altar tables, tambourines, separate seating, call-and-response songs, house churches, and hymns?

How did the way God's people worship morph through the generations, adapting to culture shifts and changing in style, format, liturgy, and theology?

In this workshop, we will survey the scripture to see evidence that, while the Good News never changes, the ways and means by which we approach God in worship have undergone dramatic change.

We'll explore the biblical basis for large and small assemblies; varying styles of art, music, and architecture; and the "personality" of worship in high- and lowchurch traditions.

To register: email KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org or call 717-361-1450.

SERVING IN THE DISTRICT AND BEYOND

FOOD PANTRIES

Walnut Grove Food Pantry

<https://www.facebook.com/Walnutgrovecob/>

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

<https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/>

Please consider donating food to these or any other groups in our area.

PET FOOD PANTRY

The Pet Food Pantry is open the **SECOND** Saturday of each month from 10:00 am to Noon at the **Arbutus COB**. The pet pantry is currently accepting donations for any pet item that is no longer needed by your family. Suggestions for donations are: pet collars, beds, bowls, leashes, etc. These items will be offered free to the clients. The items can be dropped off at the church through the first set of glass doors into the entrance to the church. These doors are always open. The pet pantry would gladly accept donations of cat and dog food. The church is blessed to be able to offer this program to the community. For additional information call Cheryl Edmiston at 814-410-3151.

CALL FOR GOOD NEWS

**We can all use some good news now
and again right?**

Stories of serving in the community,
milestone birthdays and anniversaries,
academic achievements, etc.

I look forward to sharing more good news
from the District!

tlehman@brethren.org

EL HOGAR DE NIÑOS ENMANUEL SHOE PROJECT



El Hogar De Ninos Enmanuel Shoe Project

**THINKING OF SPRING CLEANING? REMEMBER
TO SAVE YOUR GENTLY WORN SHOES
FOR THE EL NINOS SHOE PROJECT!**

It's almost Spring, and we're hoping that as you Spring clean, you'll remember to save your gently worn shoes for the District shoe project. All varieties of shoes, sandals, slippers, and boots are needed to earn funds to supports the children's home in Honduras.

To participate , just place a rubber band around each pair of shoes, and deliver them to either the District Office during regular business hours; the Westmont COB—by arranging a drop off date by calling 814-255-2154; or by contacting a member of the shoe committee.

We are hoping to help outfit the new culinary arts center at the home, and every pair of shoes helps!

For more information, please call:

Marie Camut – 814-266-3010

April Mackell – 814-536-1589

Karen Nagyvathy - 814-244-6977

Together, we can make a difference!

AVAILABLE SPEAKERS

ORDAINED

ABRAHAM, FARREL – 4315 Seton Drive, Pittsburgh, 15227-1245 / 412-979-0067 / sharingpearls@comcast.net

BEACHLEY, LINDA—PO Box 723, Davidsville, 15928-0723 / 814-479-4802 / lrbeac@atlanticbb.net

BEACHLEY, RONALD – PO Box 723, Davidsville, 15928-0723 / 814-479-4802 / rondbeachley@gmail.com

BROADWATER, KEVIN—475 Keystone Street, Meyersdale, 15552-6943 / 814-442-5684 / pastorbroadwater@verizon.net

DERR, AMELIA – 1202 Roberts Street, Nanty Glo, 15943-1325 / 814-749-0262 / iamameliaderr@yahoo.com

DERR, HORACE - 1202 Roberts Street, Nanty Glo, 15943-1325 / 814-749-0262 / pastorbutch@gmail.com

HOUGHTON, SALLY - 124 Lindberg Avenue, Johnstown, 15905-3019 / 814-243-6448 / smh124@atlanticbb.net

KABLER, ERIC—126 Clermont Street, Johnstown 15904-2132 / 814-266-2734 / eric.kabler@kablerthomas.com

LONGWELL, ERIC— 240 Plumcreek Road, Shelocta, 15774-3144 / 724-599-8690 / kb3ttx@gmail.com

MANGES, JOHN – 137 Catskill Lane, Johnstown, 15904-7523 / 814-539-3332 / manges@atlanticbb.net

MARSHALL, HOMER - 369 W. Church Avenue, Masontown, 15461 / 724-583-7073 / hom.run2007@verizon.net

MARSHALL, PATRICIA - 369 W. Church Avenue, Masontown, 15461 / 724-583-7073 / hom.run2007@verizon.net

MOSORJAK, GARY – 1337 Roxbury Avenue, Johnstown, 15905-1224 / 814-659-5853 / wendel05@aol.com

PERUSO, RUSSELL – 151 Blackner Road, Johnstown, 15905 / 814-242-0549 / russperuso@gmail.com

PISARSKI, STANLEY – 511 Thrasher Street, Johnstown, 15909 / 814-410-3685 / spisarski1017@gmail.com

SMITH, A. HARRISON—506 Sciandro Drive, Greensburg, 15601 / 724-837-4491

STEIN, ROBERT - PO Box 375, Chalk Hill, 15421-0375 / 724-438-2226 / crid@verizon.net

SWICK, MICHAEL - 4127 Greenville Road, Meyersdale 15552-8518 / 814-634-8158 / preachmike101@comcast.net

WALKER, JUDY—425 Morningside Avenue, Jeannette 15644 / 724-522-5260 / larryewalker1@gmail.com

WHITED, JAMES—881 Treasure Lake, DuBois 15801 / 814-592-5714 / jrwhitedsr@gmail.com

LICENSED

BURNEY, OYANGO—137 N. 9th Street, Indiana, 15701/ 724-541-6850 / livingyourbestlifeinthepresent@gmail.com

COUGHENOUR, KAITLYN— 785 Red Dog Road, Salisbury, 15558 / 814-521-4649 / shellywithattitude@gmail.com

SHAULIS, TRAVIS—608 Second Street, Meyersdale, 15552 / 814-442-8626 / tanbadaner@gmail.com

LAY SPEAKER

RAMER, DONNA—102 Franklin Drive, Greensburg, 15601-1305 / 724 836-0594

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Growing in knowledge . . . Rooted in Christ



Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center

One Alpha Drive, Elizabethtown PA 17022

svmc@svmcob.org; 717.361.1450; www.etown.edu/svmc

The Susquehanna Valley Ministry Centers offers class on:

Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry

When: Saturdays, March 23 and April 20, 2024 -- 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Where: Bedford Church of the Brethren, 310 Donahue Rd., Bedford, PA 15522 (In person attendance is preferred, but a Zoom connection will be arranged for those who need it.)

Class Description:

You've been called to the ministry, but the job requires more skill in speaking, listening, and writing than you possess. Don't worry! We've got a class for you. This revamped course in *Communication Skills for Pastoral Ministry* from the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center will be geared, as much as possible, to the needs of individual students. Together, we will focus on the kinds of written and oral communication most often employed by pastors and other church leaders. We will use a variety of materials in print and online to address the need for concise, accurate language in church communications. Assignments will be in the form of short essays, letters, and reports. To complete the 15 hours required for the class, participants may be asked to join in an individual Zoom session or phone call.

Instructor Information:

Beckie Miller Zeek is a part-time minister at Bedford Church of the Brethren in Middle PA District. A graduate of the TRIM program, her first career was as a reading specialist in the public school system. She received her B.S. from Juniata College and her M.Ed. from Penn State University. She brings to the class 20 years' experience in ministry and 28 years' experience teaching reading and English to reluctant learners.

This course may be:

- counted as a "Ministry Skills" course in the ACTS program (cost = \$270.00)
- audited by anyone for increased communication skills (cost = \$90.00)
- audited and earn CEUs (cost = \$100.00)

TO REGISTER:

Contact Karen Hodges at KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org or 717-361-1450. Upon registration, an invoice and further information will be sent to you.

SVMC is a Church of the Brethren ministry education partner with Bethany Theological Seminary, Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, and the Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Middle Pennsylvania, Southern Pennsylvania, and Western Pennsylvania Districts.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center's

2024

Continuing Education Events

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center is offering a robust schedule of Continuing Education for clergy and interested laity in 2024. Ranging from Christian ID in the Age of AI, Worship Models, Grief Literacy, Suicide and your Congregation, Luke and ACTS, Autism and the Church, and Why Leadership Matters, everyone will find a topic of interest. While credentialed clergy can receive Continuing Education units which are needed for ordination renewal in 2025, laity will also benefit from these topics. Please be sure that deacons and other interested folks receive information on these topics as everyone is invited to register. The ordination renewal for ordained clergy is coming quickly in 2025, so be sure to register for these excellent sessions and bring other interested persons from your congregation. *To register, click on the event Title for each event and follow the registration links, or email KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org, or call 717-361-1450.*

Worship Models from Genesis to Revelation

Leah Hileman, Leader

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Camp Harmony, Western PA District (In-Person or Zoom)

In-person: \$45.00 for .3 CEUs; \$35.00 for no CEUs

Zoom: \$35.00 for .3 CEUs; \$25.00 for no CEUs

How did churches end up with altar tables, tambourines, separate seating, call-and-response songs, house churches, and hymns? How did the way God's people worship morph through the generations, adapting to culture shifts and changing in style, format, liturgy, and theology? In this workshop, we will survey the scripture to see evidence that, while the Good News never changes, the ways and means by which we approach God in worship have undergone dramatic change. We'll explore the biblical basis for large and small assemblies; varying styles of art, music, and architecture; and the "personality" of worship in high- and low-church traditions.

Christian ID in an Age of AI

Russell Haitch, Leader

Saturday, April 27, 2024, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Juniata College (In-Person or Zoom)

In-person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

Zoom: \$45.00 for .5 CEUs; or \$35.00 for no CEUs

The world is shifting, the foundations shaking, and no innovation seen before—not the printing press or automobile or Internet—will be able to rival the impending impact of Artificial Intelligence, combined with genetic engineering and other advanced technologies. This workshop is designed to help you develop or improve a Christian framework for thinking through all the new issues on the horizon. The world is going to look dramatically different, so too our churches and the lives of our children. We need to be ready to respond. The best, most faithful response will grow out of our identity in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Luke and Acts: Turning the World Upside Down

Chris Bucher & Bob Neff, Leaders

Thursday, May 2, 2024, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Elizabethtown College (In-Person Only -- No Zoom Option for this event)

\$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

This class will draw upon the 2023 book Luke and Acts: Turning the World Upside Down, co-authored by Chris Bucher and Bob Neff. Chris and Bob will discuss Luke's theme of "turning the world upside down" through the gathering of Jesus' followers into communities that practice healing, inclusivity, and sharing. Presentations will assist in the understanding of these two books as a guide for Anabaptists and Radical Pietists and will incorporate visual art that offers new ways to see the Biblical texts.

(More Events on Next Page)

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Suicide and Your Congregation

Julie Guistwite, Leader

Tuesday, June 4, 2024, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM – Zoom Only

\$35.00 for .3 CEUs or \$25.00 for no CEUs.

Suicide is a rising public health concern and faith-based organizations hold a vital role in ministering to survivors. This interactive workshop examines the dual role of clergy in postvention care. Best practices in caring for survivors, the congregation, and oneself forms the basis of a small group role-play focusing on a faith community's response to a member's violent death. Attendees will gain practical knowledge and skills relevant to engaging suicide issues across congregational settings.

Autism and the Church

Lisa Kruse, Tim Miller, David Crumrine, Stan Dueck, Leaders

Thursday, September 26, 2024 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Juniata College (In-Person or Zoom)

In-person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

Zoom: \$45.00 for .5 CEUs; or \$35.00 for no CEUs

The church is a place where people should feel welcome no matter what challenges they may have. Families with an autistic member need to feel the welcome and acceptance of a church who cares for their special circumstance. This Continuing Education event will provide information to pastors and other church leaders regarding autism, how to support families with an autistic member, and how to make the church a safe and welcoming place for families.

Grief Literacy

Julie Guistwite, Leader

Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM – Zoom Only

\$35.00 for .3 CEUs or \$25.00 for no CEUs.

Society's grief-avoiding mentality and limited community-based support initiatives affect the well-being of bereaved persons. This interactive case-based workshop examines the grief literacy movement in connection with Christ-Centered Ministry Leadership. Attendees will gain practical knowledge and skills applicable to enhancing the welfare of grieving congregational members and persons in their community.

The Question of Leadership: Why It Matters

Jeff Carter, Leader

Saturday, November 16, 2024, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Elizabethtown College - In-Person or Zoom

In-person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs or \$55.00 for no CEUs. Includes lunch.

Zoom: \$45.00 for .5 CEUs; or \$35.00 for no CEUs

What does it mean to lead in today's church and world? The American protestant church is in steep decline. The Church of the Brethren is experiencing schism. The pandemic accelerated the already changing patterns of religious life. Resources are scarce. Furthermore, Brethren are naturally suspicious of leaders; called, elected, or self-proclaimed. Values, such as humility, consensus, and the priesthood of all believers, lead to a flat hierarchy and a communal pragmatism. We celebrate leaders such as Dan West, Sarah Major, M.R. Zigler, and Anna Mow, but in their day, they stirred controversy by the manner of their leading. So, what does it mean to lead in today's church and world? I believe leadership begins by asking the first question and having the willingness and curiosity to pursue the second question. It is a way of thinking that results in effective doing. And yes, it is something we do together.

Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center is a Church of the Brethren ministry partnership that includes the districts of Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Middle PA, Southern PA, and Western PA, in addition to Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership and Bethany Theological Seminary. SVMC's mission is to equip leaders for ministry in a regionally based, Christ centered, culturally relevant context in ways that bear witness to the beliefs, heritages and practices of the Church of the Brethren.



Summer 2024

Join FaithX during Summer 2024 to serve, grow in faith, make friends, and experience something new! FaithX experiences are short-term service trips that challenge us to be more aware of ourselves, our communities, and our world so that we may learn to participate in God's vision of justice for all people. Participants will serve in a variety of ministry and non-profit settings, live and worship in community, make friendships, and explore a new place.

Registration for FaithX Summer 2024 opens on January 10, 2024 at 7:00pm (eastern time), and closes on April 1, 2024 www.brethren.org/faithx.

This coming year, FaithX participants will have the opportunity to serve in a variety of ministry and non-profit settings, live and worship in community, explore a new place, examine their values and beliefs, and have too much fun! A summary of the 2024 trip locations is below, but you can find the dates and more details at www.brethren.org/faithx/schedule.

Junior High – Roanoke, VA; Palmyra, PA

Junior/Senior High – Denton, MD (Camp Mardela);

South Bend, IN; Knoxville, TN; Winston-Salem, NC

Senior High – Cle Elum, WA (Camp Koinonia); North Fort Myers, FL

Adult – Ecuador; Eastern United States (Brethren Disaster Ministries)

Older Adult – Gotha, FL (Camp Ithiel)

Family – Petersburg, PA (Camp Blue Diamond)

We Are Able – Elgin, IL



Annual Conference 2024 DeVos Place Convention Center Grand Rapids, Michigan July 3-7, 2024

More info coming soon



Young Adult Conference May 24-26, 2024

[Shepherd's Spring Camp & Retreat Center](#)
near Sharpsburg, MD

Young Adult Conference (YAC) offers people ages 18-35 a chance to enjoy fellowship, worship, recreation, Bible study, service projects and more... with other fantastic young adults!

Registration is open! Register between 1/12 and 2/14 to get free [Nutter's Ice Cream](#) during YAC!

To Register go to:

<https://www.brethren.org/yva/yac/>

NEWSLINE SPECIAL for Feb. 7, 2024 **Church of the Brethren grieves withdrawal** **of Puerto Rican congregations**

[From the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team]

With deep sadness, the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team acknowledges news received of the withdrawal of all six congregations in the Puerto Rico District from the Church of the Brethren, as of Oct. 26, 2023.

The Puerto Rican congregations' decisions, which were affirmed by the Puerto Rico District board, came following contacts and visits by leaders of the Covenant Brethren Church—and each of the six congregations have since joined the Covenant Brethren Church.

“Our decision was made after all six of our churches and their respective pastors were praying, engaging in dialogue with their leadership, and fasting for 40 days as a District,” the Puerto Rico district leadership stated in a letter to the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team. “We have understood that after observing the direction, position, and vision of [the Church of the Brethren] with respect to many of the biblical standards, our conservative principles and values have confirmed our final decision to disaffiliate from the denomination.” [translated from Spanish]

Prior to the decision to disaffiliate, district executive minister José Calleja Otero had submitted his resignation on Oct. 6, 2023.

Denominational leadership express sorrow and raise questions

In a letter to the Puerto Rico District board, the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team—consisting of David Steele, General Secretary; Madalyn Metzger, Annual Conference Moderator; Dava Hensley, Annual Conference Moderator-Elect; David Shumate, Annual Conference Secretary; Torin Eikler, Council of District Executives representative; and Rhonda Pittman Gingerich, Annual Conference director (ex-officio)—expressed profound sadness for the absence of shared dialogue with Puerto Rico District leadership during

their deliberations and discernment.

“After many years of walking together in ministry partnership, we lament our exclusion from your time of dialog, praying, and fasting.... Even after [expressing a willingness to travel to Puerto Rico to] address questions and concerns,” the Leadership Team stated. “We are not all of one mind in the denomination, but as Brethren we are called to continual study and discernment of scripture together, to pray together, and trust together that the Holy Spirit will lead us to a shared understanding.

“Despite our differences, we are unified in Christ and called to continue working at this together,” the Leadership Team letter continued. “Separating and dividing may seem like the way forward, but the way of Jesus is one of love and reconciliation—which is not an easy thing in today’s culture.”

In addition to expressing sorrow, the Leadership Team communicated to the Puerto Rico District board that, according to denominational polity, congregations may choose to withdraw from the denomination—but entire districts do not. Additionally, individual congregational withdrawals must be approved by the district conference. Church of the Brethren leadership efforts are underway to work through questions and complications related to polity and property by means of an in-person visit of denominational representatives to Puerto Rico in the near future.

Church of the Brethren history in Puerto Rico

The Church of the Brethren’s history on the Caribbean island dates back to 1942, when the Brethren Service Commission partnered with the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration to establish a Civilian Public Service camp in the town of Castañer, located within Puerto Rico’s mountainous countryside. At the time, Castañer—and much of the island’s interior, rural areas—experienced severe shortages of doctors and medical services, and the Church of the Brethren collaborated with the Castañer community and government on medical and agricultural projects, including the construction of a 33-bed hospital.

NEWSLINE SPECIAL for Feb. 7, 2024—Continued:

Church of the Brethren grieves withdrawal of Puerto Rican congregations

The island's first Church of the Brethren congregation—Castañer, Iglesia de Los Hermanos—was established in 1948. Several more congregations, fellowships, and church plants emerged in the following decades, and the Puerto Rico District was formally confirmed as the denomination's 24th district in January 2014.

A time for grief and hope

The withdrawal of the six Puerto Rican congregations—as well as other churches across the denomination—brings heartache to many in the Church of the Brethren.

"We mourn the loss of any of our members and congregations," said David Steele. "There is very real grief and pain when saying good-bye to those we've had relationships with and who have walked alongside us on our shared faith journeys."

While this grief related to separations and schisms isn't new to Brethren, neither is our history of seeking healing and wholeness through collective prayer, worship, and community.

"As we grieve and honor feelings of loss or lamentation, we also can hold onto our hope and the expectation of things yet unseen," said Madalyn Metzger. "That hope includes our openness to the Holy Spirit's movement, and our anticipation of God's transforming future for ourselves, each other, and our denomination."

-- Written by the Church of the Brethren Leadership Team, with assistance from Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, director, Office of Ministry, and Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, director, News Services.

SUBCOMMITTEES REPORT DURING ZOOM MEETING OF DISTRICT DELEGATES TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Standing Committee of district delegates to the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, held an online meeting on January 29, 2024.

The **Subcommittee for Negotiating and Drafting Agency Covenants** received approval of its request for an additional year. The subcommittee is mandated to prepare covenants of agreement with the Annual Conference agencies—Bethany Theological Seminary, Eder Financial, and On Earth Peace. A "skeleton" document has been prepared as a model for the covenants, has been distributed to the agencies, and feedback is being received. The additional year will allow for Standing Committee to review the covenants at its in-person meeting in advance of Annual Conference this summer, and work with the agencies to prepare for the 2025 Conference. While Standing Committee will approve the covenants and present them to Annual Conference, Annual Conference will act on agency status based on the covenants.

The **Subcommittee for Developing a Process for Addressing Concerns with Annual Conference Agencies** reported on its work to develop and finalize a process for presentation to Standing Committee this summer. After a question was raised about whether the process is considered a Standing Committee document or needs Annual Conference approval, the Conference secretary responded that he will explore that concern.

A **task team reviewing the organizational structure of the Church of the Brethren** to address "deep dysfunction," reported on two documents it is writing in anticipation of the 2025 Review and Evaluation Committee. Such committees are named by Annual Conference every 10 years to study the organization of the denomination and recommend improvements. A "white paper"—a type of document often used to provide in-depth information on a specific topic—is intended to aid the work of the Review and Evaluation Committee. The team also created a mandate for that committee and shared it with the Annual Conference officers, requesting that it be presented to Annual Conference this year. The moderator responded that the request is on the agenda for the next meeting of the denomination's Leadership Team. Also discussed was the question of allowing Standing Committee members to continue on subcommittees after the end of their terms, in order to help complete the work. The moderator announced that this question will be decided at this summer's Standing Committee meeting.

March 7
6-8 pm



CAMP HARMONY FUNDRAISER DINNER FOR CAMPER SCHOLARSHIPS

Richland Fire Hall
1321 Scalp Ave.
Johnstown, PA 15904

RSVP by
Feb. 29

Catered by the
Churchwagon



SUMMER CAMP 2024

PROVIDING ADVENTURE & FUN WITH AN ETERNAL PURPOSE!

DAY CAMPS

\$106

GRADES K-8, 9AM -4:30PM

DAY CAMP #1: JUNE 10-14

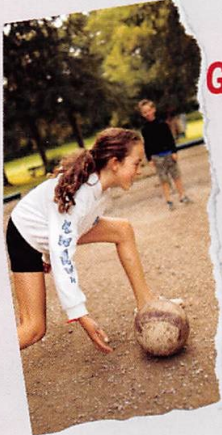
DAY CAMP #2: JUNE 17-21

DAY CAMP #3: JUNE 24-28

DAY CAMP #4: JULY 8-12

DAY CAMP #5: JULY 15-19

DAY CAMP #6: JULY 29-AUG 2



KICK OFF CAMPS

\$50

GRADES K-6, 10AM -3PM

@ PORTAGE DAY CAMP: JUNE 17-21

@ ROCKWOOD DAY CAMP: JUNE 24-28

@ INDIANA DAY CAMP: JULY 15-19

@ MEYERSDALE DAY CAMP: JULY 29-AUG 2



OVERNIGHT CAMPS

\$386

JUNIOR: GRADES 2-5

JUNIOR #1: JUNE 30-JULY 5

JUNIOR #2: JULY 21-26

JUNIOR #3: AUG 4-9

JUNIOR EXTREME: JUNE 16-21

JR HIGH: GRADES 5-8

JR. HI. #1: JUNE 30-JULY 5

JR. HI. #2: JULY 21-26

JR. HI. #3: AUG 4-9

JR. HI. EXTREME #1 JUNE 16-21

JR. HI. EXTREME #2: JULY 7-12

SIBLING DISCOUNTS AND
SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE !

YOUTH: GRADE 7-12

YOUTH #1: JUNE 30- JULY 5

YOUTH #2: JULY 21-26

YOUTH #3: AUG 4-9

YOUTH EXTREME: JULY 7-12

YOUTH ADVENTURE: JULY 28-AUG 2



\$64

PRE-K CAMPS

AGES 3-5, 9AM -12PM

PRE-K CAMP #1: JUNE 3-7

PRE-K CAMP #2: JULY 22-26



SAVE 50%

FOR YOU AND A FRIEND WHEN A
RETURNING CAMPERS BRING A
NEW-TO-CAMP-HARMONY-FRIEND!

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 1ST

WWW.CAMPHARMONY.ORG



CAMP HARMONY NUT & APRICOT ROLL FUNDRAISER

Put your orders in for a traditional and delicious treat that will also benefit Camp! The funds collected for each nut & apricot roll will directly support the ministry of Camp Harmony.

Nut Rolls - \$12 ea. or 2 for \$20

Apricot Rolls - \$15 ea. or 2 for \$25

Deadline to order is March 18

You may pick them up at Camp on
March 27 & 28 from 9-4 each day.

Rolls will be ready just in time for Easter!



814-798-5885
www.campharmony.org





3D ARCHERY SHOOT

APRIL 6TH
REGISTRATION & WARM UP AREA OPEN 7:00 AM
FIRST ARROWS FLY AT 8:15AM

For both novice and Advanced shooters

BENEFITS CAMP HARMONY SUMMER CAMPS

- 20 targets, of varying yardage and difficulty.**
- 1 Iron Target Shot Competition.**
- 1 Long Range Shot Competition.**

Meal, speaker, and awards to follow event!

Shoot as a team, or as an individual!

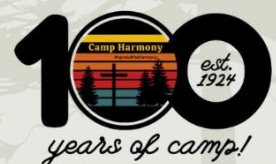
- 2-4 members per team - scores averaged for total, per target.
- Individuals: Best shot score per target.
- Prizes for individuals, and teams!
- Compound, Traditional, and Rangefinder permitted!

\$45 for individuals
Teams of 4: \$125

Prizes for:

- Best overall individual Compound shooter
- Best overall individual Traditional shooter.
- Best overall Team.
- Long Shot Competition.
- Iron Target Competition.

www.campharmony.org



☎ 814-798-5885

✉ Austin@campharmony.org

📍 1414 plank Rd. Hooversville, Pa 15936

2024 DISTRICT EVENTS AND MEETINGS

If your congregation, committee, or group would like to have information listed on the District Calendar, please send it in to the District Office by the 10th of each month. Thanks!

MARCH 2024

- 1 - WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
- 3 - THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT
- 9 - SVMC Class, Rummel COB
- 10 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
- 10 - **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS (Turn clocks AHEAD one hour)**
- 17 - FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
- 24 - PALM SUNDAY
- 28 - MAUNDY THURSDAY
- 29 - GOOD FRIDAY
- 31 - ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!

APRIL 2024

- 6 - SVMC Class
- 27 - SVMC Class

MAY 2024

- 2 - NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
- 5 - NATIONAL YOUTH SUNDAY
- 9 - Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, District Office
- 9 - ASCENSION DAY
- 11 - SVMC Class
- 12 - HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!
- 18 - District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA
- 19 - HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHURCH! (Pentecost Sunday)
- 27 - MEMORIAL DAY

JUNE 2024

- 16 - HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

JULY 2024

- 3 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE begins, Grand Rapids, MI
- 4 - INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 7 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE ends, Grand Rapids, MI

2024 DISTRICT EVENTS AND MEETINGS

AUGUST 2024

- 10 - SVMC class, District Office
- 17 - Bus Trip to Museum of the Bible (TBA)
- 24 - SVMC class, District Office

SEPTEMBER 2024

- 2 - LABOR DAY
- 12 - Core Leadership Team, 6:00 pm, District Office
- 14 - SVMC class, District Office
- 21 - District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA

OCTOBER 2024

- 6 - WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY
- 12 - SVMC class
- 19 - District Conference, 9:00 am, Camp Harmony
- 26 - SVMC Class

NOVEMBER 2024

- 3 - **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS (Turn clocks BACK one hour)**
- 7 - Core Leadership Team, 6:00 p.m., District Office
- 16 - District Leadership Team, 9:00 am, TBA
- 19 - SVMC class
- 21 - HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

DECEMBER 2024

- 1 - FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- 8 - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- 15 - THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- 22 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
- 24 - Christmas Eve
- 25 - MERRY CHRISTMAS!!
- 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Western PA District
Church of the Brethren
115 Spring Road
Hollsopple, PA 15935

THE HIGHLIGHTS

March 2024