



# Southern Pennsylvania District Church of the Brethren

## BEING JESUS.....

BEING Jesus in your neighborhood  
BEING Jesus in blue jeans  
BEING Jesus to someone you meet

What does it mean "Being Jesus?"

I am sure that question can be answered in several different ways, especially depending upon one's age, one's background, one's upbringing; and one's life experiences. Important too, is one's desire to bring and to learn ways to live out one's understanding of Jesus' commands to us and to the church. With that being said, I would like to share the following article from a Gettysburg COB Brother in the faith, Larry Swartz (Church Deacon and just recently, a newly approved licensure candidate). Georgia

Brother Larry's comments to the Gettysburg COB folks:

We have been utilizing the above (title slogans/phrases) during the last six months or so at Gettysburg Church. They are kind of catchy slogans, but what do they mean to our church and you and I as individuals? How is it to be Jesus in the community?

Being outward focused, or focused on those around us, is biblical and commanded by Jesus. In Matthew 25-35-36, Jesus discusses the works of mercy that are a sign of righteousness in a believer.

Such as: Someone is hungry - provide food  
Someone is a thirsty - provide something to drink  
Someone is a stranger - invite them in  
Someone needs clothes - provide clothing  
Someone is sick - care for them  
Someone is in prison - visit them

Note that each of the above is a need. In today's society, may people don't know Jesus. Some have never been to church. They may not understand the true meaning of Christmas or Easter. These folks are not coming into our church building looking for Jesus. It is the church's mission to be outward focused and to take Jesus to our community by being Jesus to others. Before we can share the life changing message of salvation, people need to know we care for them. One direct way to show we care, is to assist them in meeting their needs. The following are some ways/areas that Gettysburg COB is reaching out to our community:

- \*\*Working with CARES Program
- \*\*Serving meals at the Recreation Park
- \*\*Donating items to Tender Care Pregnancy & Children's Aid Society and other agencies
- \*\*Providing Small Care Packages to our members to have in their vehicle and share when appropriate
- \*\*Provide buckets of cleaning materials for our denominational disaster care program

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JUNE/JULY 2025

Vision Statement:  
Working together to  
empower disciples for  
ministry & mission through:  
Leadership Development,  
Mission & Service Opportunities,  
& Creative Resourcing

Christ - SO PA Dist. Mission: Create New Testament communities committed to personal transformation thru Jesus Christ

## Being Jesus.....Continued from Page 1

We could look at the above and pat ourselves on the back and feel we are doing a good job at reaching out to those who do not know Jesus' Way. However, how and where can we increase our outreach focus and/or our AREA of FOCUS?

....What do you and I do as individuals, to reach out and touch individuals in our community?

....Do we offer ourselves to God at the beginning of each day and ask Him to show us someone who He desires us to help?

The words of Jesus in Matthew 25: 45 demand our attention and should call us to action. We cannot just pass by those around us. Do not let these words of Jesus describe your or our church: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did NOT do for one of the least of these, you did NOT do for me?" (Matthew 25:45).

Larry Swartz, Gettysburg COB Deacon

### SOPA District Office

Monday - Friday

*Call for Hours*

Office Phone: (717) 778-2264

Georgia Markey, Interim District Executive

Email: gmarkeyfarmgirl114@gmail.com

Cell: (717) 887-3905

Office (717) 778-2254

Linette Quinn, Admin Assistant

Email: sopadistrict@brethren.org

Address: SOPA District COB

3375 Carlisle Rd, Suite A

Gardners, PA 17324

Website: <https://www.cob-net.org/church/sopa/>



### District Search Processes

**York Second COB**—Pastor (currently being served by Lay Minister)

**SOPA District Office**—District Executive (currently held by Interim DE, Georgia Markey)

*York Second—Interested Candidates, please reach out to the District Executive.*

**For the D.E. Position, contact—Sister Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, 847-429-4381,  
[nsheishman@brethren.org](mailto:nsheishman@brethren.org)**

## District Events / News

### SOPA District Picnic

July 27, 2025

Enjoy sharing time with fellow SOPA District Church members!

### Little Buffalo State Park

Pavilion #2

(Near the pool and playground)

Potluck picnic at 4:30

Please bring a side dish or dessert to share!

Meat will be provided by the District.

Vesper Service led by Chris Elliott at 5:30

Music by Cody and Ali Toms



Hope to see you there!

RSVP: SOPA District Office 717-778-2264 or [sopadistrict@brethren.org](mailto:sopadistrict@brethren.org)

### West York COB—Yard Sale

August 1st, 8-5

August 2nd, 8-1

For additional details visit:

[www.westyorkcob.org](http://www.westyorkcob.org)

### Mechanicsburg COB—Yard Sale

Saturday, August 23, 2025



## HOLD IN PRAYER

**Ken and Kim Geisewite** lost a grandson and great grandchild in a recent automobile accident. Please keep the family in your prayers.

District Board Member, **Leroy Keeney and wife Judy**, their daughter, Stacie M. Keeney, passed away in April. Please keep the family in your prayers.

**H. Roger Miller**, former District Board Treasurer, passed away after a battle with cancer. He served our District well. Please keep the family in your prayers.

**Pastor Betty Malenke** passed away on Thursday, May 22, 2025. Please keep Betty's husband John and extended family in your prayers. Betty was a former Chaplain at Cross Keys Village of the Brethren Home.



### Church of the Brethren Denominational News

Mid-Atlantic District—Charlotte Bear and Rusty Curling have been called by the district leadership team to fill two Regional Ministry Associate positions.

Keith Call has been hired by the Church of the Brethren as the Director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives.

The Church of the Brethren is announcing an open position for Mission Advancement Advocate for Mission Advancement. Qualified candidates are invited to send a cover letter and resume to [COBApply@brethren.org](mailto:COBApply@brethren.org)

The Rev. Tabitha Rudy will join the staff of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership (BAML) as part-time Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs, with a start date of May 1, 2025.

The Shanandoah District COB has called Kevin Daggett and Rebecca House to serve as co-district executive ministers beginning Sept. 15, 2025. Each will serve a one-half position carrying out the varied responsibilities of the position as determined through their partnership with the district's Leadership Team.

## UP~COMING EVENTS

### June 2025

**Monday & Tuesday, June 2 & 3, 2025** District Nurture Commission, Women's Camp, Camp Eder

**Thursday, June 5, 2025** District Witness and Outreach Commission Meeting, ZOOM, 6:30 PM

**Sunday, June 8, 2025** Day of Pentecost

**Tuesday, June 10, 2025** District Stewards Commission Meeting, ZOOM, 6:30 PM

**Saturday, June 14, 2025** Flag Day

**Sunday, June 15** Father's Day

**Monday, June 16** Nominating & Personnel Committee Meeting, ZOOM, 7:00 PM

**Wednesday, June 18, 2025** District Nurture Commission Meeting, ZOOM, 7:00 PM

**Friday, June 20, 2025** First Day of Summer

**Saturday, June 21, 2025** Carlisle COB Summer Concert Series—Frank N' Bob, 7:00 PM

**Monday, June 23, 2025** District Executive Committee Meeting, Carlisle COB 6:30 PM

**Thursday, June 26, 2025** District Ministry Commission Meeting Carlisle COB 6:30 PM

**Thursday, June 26, 2025** Franklin County Golf Outing, Supports CAS Francis Leiter Center in Chambersburg, register at [www.cassd.org](http://www.cassd.org)

**Monday—Wednesday, June 30—July 2, 2025** Council of District Executives Mtg., Greensboro N.C.

### July 2025

**Wednesday—Sunday, July 2—6, 2025** COB Annual Conference, Greensboro N.C.

**Friday, July 4, 2025** Independence Day, District Office Closed

**Wednesday, July 16, 2025** FINAL District sponsored Ethics Training for Ordained persons, Chambersburg COB, 6:00—9:00 PM, Registration Required

**Saturday, July 19, 2025** District Board Meeting, Gettysburg COB, 8:30 AM Danish/Beverage, 9:00 AM meeting begins, 1710 Biglerville Rd, Gettysburg

**Thursday, July 24, 2025** District Ministry Commission Meeting, Carlisle COB, 6:30 PM

**Saturday, July 27, 2025** SOPA District Picnic, Little Buffalo State Park, (see page 3) ***Please encourage SOPA Congregants to join in on the fun and fellowship!***



## UP-COMING EVENTS CONTINUED

### August 2025

**Friday/Saturday, August 1 & 2, 2025** West York COB Yard Sale, (see page 3)

**Tuesday, August 12, 2025** Stewards Commission Meeting, ZOOM, 7:00 PM

**Thursday, August 21, 2025** District Executive Committee Meeting, Carlisle COB, 6:30 PM

**Saturday, August 23, 2025** Mechanicsburg COB Yard Sale (see page 3)

**Thursday, August 28, 2025** Ministry Commission Meeting, Carlisle COB, 6:30 PM

### September 2025

**Monday, September 1, 2025** Labor Day, District Office Closed

**Sunday, September 7, 2025** National Grandparents Day

**Saturday, September 19-20, 2025** SOPA District Conference, Hanover COB, 601 Wilson Ave, Hanover, PA 17331 (see page 8)

**Monday, September 22, 2025** First Day of Autumn

### Action Taken by SOPA District Ministry Commission

During a recent meeting of the SOPA District Ministry Commission, it was brought to our attention of a bill coming before Pennsylvania Lawmakers to legalize marijuana in the state of PA. Our District Ministry Commission discussed the repercussions of approving this bill and added the Ministry Commission's opposition to such approval along with other PA entities, who opposed the bill. It should be noted that we will need to continue to be vigilant on this issue as well as others to be in support of God's Word and the families of Pennsylvania.

*HB 1200 ("Cannabis Health & Safety Act") aimed to legalize recreational marijuana for adults 21 and older, with sales managed through state-run stores. The bill narrowly passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The Senate Law and Justice Committee voted against advancing HB 1200 to the floor, effectively halting its progress in its current form. Proponents will undoubtedly try again.*

## Nurturing Spiritual Growth

### District Nurture Commission



Nurture Commission is here to help individuals, families and congregations to grow spiritually in the Lord Jesus Christ, so our lives, families and churches will be equipped to share the gospel.

- Share faith stories of what God has done
- Share God's love, design, will and ways
- Be Jesus in the Neighborhood
- Grow our missions impact in the world

“Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”

- Deut. 4:9

### Events

District Women's Retreat  
Camp Eder  
Monday & Tuesday,  
June 2-3, 2025

57 enjoyed the Women's  
Spring Luncheon held at  
Huntsdale COB  
Sat., April 12, 2025

25 enjoyed the District Men's  
Outdoorsman Day at  
Camp Eder  
Sat., May 3, 2025

### Chaplain in the Park

Codorus & Gifford Pinchot  
State Parks

Sunday Worship Services  
Memorial Day thru Labor Day:

**Take your Youth Group or Sunday School Class** to lead Children's Sunday School at Codorus on a Sunday, during Worship In The Park, and take a picnic to enjoy for after services.

Questions or Information Contact:

Beth Nonemaker, Nurture Chair

717-761-3047

## 2025 SOPA District Conference Update

Moderator Pastor Eric Reamer



We have an exciting and meaningful District Conference planned for you this September 19th and 20th. Our theme this year is “Prayer Changes...” as we consider how God desires to use prayer to change us, others, and things in our lives. On Friday morning we will have a three hour seminar on prayer in the local church centered around our theme text, Hebrews 4:14-16. We are expanding the business session of the conference to begin on Friday at 1:30 pm. This will allow us to have time for four prayer themed bible studies during our business sessions.

We are also planning to have a love feast celebration together during lunchtime on Saturday.

Also, on Friday evening our focus will be prayer. We will devote the bulk of our time together to petitioning God for a change in our churches and our District. We need God’s supernatural hand to be upon us. Watch for more details to come. Please plan to gather together as we seek God and His activity in our lives, our churches and our District.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

**IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS**

Make this keepsake to express love for your dad or another special man this Father's Day.

**What you need:**

- White construction paper (11" x 13" sheet)
- Pencil
- Black permanent marker
- Crayons or paint

**What you do:**

1. In the center of the paper, trace your foot in pencil. Darken the outline with marker.
2. Color or paint the footprint. Let it dry.
3. Trace your father's foot (same side) on top of your footprint (with yours in the middle of his).
4. Color or paint his footprint. Let it dry.
5. Sign your names and the date at the bottom.





## 2025 SOPA Meat Canning Project Report

The District would like to thank all of the congregations who supported and volunteered at our annual meat canning project. This year, we were able to process 17,920 lbs of chicken in four days of canning. As in past years, the canned meat is divided three ways—a third goes to the Mid-Atlantic District Church of the Brethren for their distribution within their District; a third to Southern PA District for distribution to our churches and a number of local food banks. The final third this year is being directed to western North Carolina, specifically to the areas of Burnsville and Martinsville. These areas, which are slightly west of Ashville, NC, were hit particularly hard during Hurricane Helene in 2024, that came through, taking out roadways, bridges, homes, etc. It is our understanding that getting to some of the residents in the mountainous areas has been happening via mule teams as there are still people who are living in very temporary facilities. Thus the need for assistance and food is still great in this area of North Carolina.

The District Witness and Outreach Commission coordinated the chicken distribution to North Carolina through Loretta Tharp. Loretta is associated with the Shady Grove Ruritan Club. Shady Grove is located between Waynesboro and Greencastle, PA. The Ruritan Clubs are the nation's largest volunteer service organization with clubs in rural communities across the country. This group got involved in Western North Carolina at first by providing campers for displaced persons to live in while they were getting their lives back together. Since Hurricane Helene, they have been working on a regular basis with groups who provide meals at a soup kitchen feeding volunteers and locals alike. They have also provided food for distribution to those in need in several small communities near Ashville. The Ruritan Club intends to use the canned chicken in their soup kitchen as well as distribute it to those in need.

God Bless this outreach!

## 2025 COB Annual Conference Update

It takes a village of volunteers to staff Annual Conference. There are many ways you can help.

- Caregivers and chaperones are needed for our age group activities (early childhood-Sr. High youth).
- 25-30 Ushers are needed for each worship service.
- Tellers are needed to help with vote counts and distribute materials to the delegate body.
- Around 550 delegate packets need to be stuffed on Wednesday evening after worship.
- Assistance is needed with registration and ticket sales.
- Folks are needed to staff the silent auction.
- People who are bilingual in English and Spanish are needed to assist with simultaneous interpretation during business and worship services.
- Doctors, nurses, and EMTs are needed to staff the first aid room.
- Caring companions are needed for some attendees with accessibility needs.

**If you have an hour or two or more to spare and would like to be part of our volunteer village, please visit: <https://cobrethren.wufoo.com/forms/p1gyzz3002y6t3j>**

**on the Church of the Brethren Website**



## CROSS KEYS VILLAGE

*We want to Visit you!*



THE BRETHREN HOME  
FOUNDATION

### Church Visits

The Brethren Home Foundation is excited to reconnect with your congregation! We would love the opportunity to visit your church and share updates about the mission and ministry happening at **Cross Keys Village - The Brethren Home Community**. Contact us to schedule a visit and learn more about how we can work together in faith and fellowship. 717-624-5208

### The Good Samaritan Fund

The Good Samaritan Fund offers vital financial assistance to residents who have exhausted their personal resources, ensuring they continue to receive essential daily care. As the need for charitable care at Cross Keys Village continues to grow, it has now reached 5 million dollars annually. Supporting this fund is central to our mission of providing compassionate care to those in need, regardless of their financial situation.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are essential to our organization, embodying our core values of mission-driven service. We would love to share more about the many volunteer opportunities available. We have opportunities that fit talents of all kinds and interests!



[m.kovacs@crosskeysvillage.org](mailto:m.kovacs@crosskeysvillage.org)

2990 Carlisle Pike  
New Oxford, PA 17350

717-624-5208  
[www.crosskeysvillage.org](http://www.crosskeysvillage.org)





## Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center

### Continuing Education Offerings

**Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center** has curated a series of timely and engaging continuing education events for clergy and interested laity on themes ranging from caring for congregants going through difficult times to faithful use of technology to ministering out of our weaknesses. While credentialed clergy can receive continuing education units, laity will also benefit from these topics, so please share these events with others, as everyone is invited to register. To register, you may either: 1) click on the event title and follow the registration link; 2) visit [www.etown.edu/svmc](http://www.etown.edu/svmc) and select "Continuing Education"; 3) email [KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org](mailto:KarenHodges@SVMCcob.org); or 4) call 717-361-1450.

### Supporting Congregational Members Following Divorce

**Tuesday, June 3, 2025 • 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM • Zoom Only**

**Leader: Julie Guistwite**

**Fee: \$35.00 for .3 CEUs or \$25.00 for no CEUs**

*Divorce is a life-altering loss experience that a rising number of congregational members confront. The encounter profoundly affects their biopsychosocial-spiritual well-being and often leads to disenfranchised grief. This interactive workshop examines three types of spiritual struggles that often occur in connection with three spiritual coping methods that can facilitate healthy adjustment. Attendees will gain skills in applying the methods to supporting congregational members navigating loss and grief using a case study.*

### The Shape of Ministry in a High-Tech World

**Monday, September 15, 2025 • 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM • Elizabethtown College & Zoom**

**Leader: Dan Poole**

**Fee for In Person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs; \$55.00 for no CEUs**

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

*From the barrage of social media platforms to website presence to electronic communications enabled by computers and smartphones to a 24/7 cultural expectation of availability, the shape and landscape of ministerial leadership have needed to shift to thoughtfully incorporate these tools into one's ministry practices. In this daylong workshop, we will address several key concepts and questions related to the use of tech tools in one's ministry. For instance, in this new digital age, how can one ensure that the practices of ministry remain grounded in the core principles of pastoral care and discipleship? How does the ministerial leader carefully live into a high-touch ministry that utilizes high-tech gadgets? What is the role of the ministerial leader in reminding communities of faith about healthy boundaries in the building of community that furthers the life of discipleship through electronic platforms and social media? How does the ministerial leader maintain healthy Sabbath practices in a 24/7 connected world? Addressing these and other participant-generated questions, we will focus on appropriate and theologically grounded responses as we examine the responsible engagement of digital tools in the work of serving God's people as ministers of the Gospel.*

## Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center Continuing Education Offerings

### Caring for Congregational Members at the End-of-Life

Tuesday, October 7, 2025 • 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM • Zoom Only

Leader: Julie Guistwite

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

Nearing death is as much a part of life as living. Drawing on a trifold model of terminally-ill ministry, this interactive workshop explores strategies for empowering adult congregational members at the end-of-life. Consideration of best practices in managing core ethical dilemmas persons navigate during this final lifespan stage will interweave across the discussion. A small group role-play activity provides the opportunity to apply the methods to assisting dying persons from the home to healthcare setting.

### Weakness Transformed in the Gospel of Matthew

Saturday, November 1, 2025 • 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM • Stone Church of the Brethren & Zoom

Leader: Dan Ulrich

Fee for In Person: \$65.00 for .5 CEUs; \$55.00 for no CEUs

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

Paul was the apostle who heard Christ say, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9); Paul was not alone, however, in teaching that God works through human weakness in powerful ways. In this continuing-education workshop, we will find inspiration from the Gospel of Matthew to minister faithfully in situations where we or our congregations feel weak. Visual and performative arts will help us engage imaginatively with selected scriptures to deepen and strengthen discipleship. Since the Revised Common Lectionary features Matthew in 2025-26, preachers may encounter ideas they can develop into sermons for the coming year.

## Events Sponsored by Other Organizations

SVMC will provide CEUs for the following events sponsored by organizations other than SVMC for \$10.00 per event. **Please note that registration for these events is NOT handled through SVMC.** To request CEUs please complete a separate form for each event (

or contact SVMC) and submit the form along with a payment of \$10.00 per event. Send to:  
Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center  
One Alpha Drive  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

### Sponsored by the Young Center, Elizabethtown College

For registration information, please visit:  
or call them at 717-361-1470.

- July 22-24, 2025: Early Anabaptism in Global Perspective -- Past, Present, and Future at 500 Years

### Sponsored by Mt. Gretna Bible Festival

For registration information, please visit:

- Friday, June 20, 2025: Demonstrating Jesus' Kingdom in Friendship with Muslim People
- Friday, June 27, 2025: Putting on our Blue Jeans: Igniting Activism for God's Justice, Love, and Deliverance

**TO: THE BRETHREN BIBLE INSTITUTE**

155 Denver Road  
Denver, PA 17517

Date \_\_\_\_\_

( ) PLEASE SEND \_\_\_\_\_ PACKET(S) OUTLINING MORE COMPLETELY THE 2025  
SUMMER BIBLE INSTITUTE (APPLICATION FORMS INCLUDED)

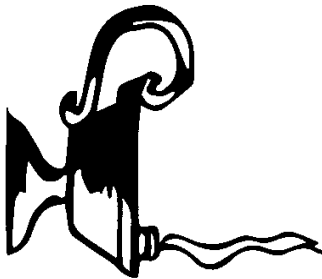
**PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

# 52ND ANNUAL BRETHREN BIBLE INSTITUTE



**SUMMER TERM**  
**JULY 21-25, 2025**  
**(ON THE CAMPUS OF**  
**ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE,**  
**ELIZABETHTOWN, PA)**

\*\*\*\*\*

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the  
word of God.” - ROMANS 10:17

Sponsored by the  
**BRETHREN REVIVAL FELLOWSHIP**

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**BRETHREN LIFE AND THOUGHT** - This course will acquaint the students with the history and teaching of the Brethren from the early 1700's down to the present day. Essential themes of Brethren belief and practice will be highlighted. This is a two-part class. Plan to take both parts.

**THE BOOK OF ROMANS** - Systematic theology cannot be complete without including the Book of Romans. Within its depths, we mine the reality of universal sinfulness; justification made available to all mankind; sanctification as evidence of the new life in Christ; and the future glorification of saints. The practical applications written at the conclusion of this letter are useful to mature believers and those starting the Christian life.

**STUDY OF DAVID** - From obscurity to kingship, David exhibits a heart devoted to God. This study will help develop and apply life principles, observe types of Christ, and explore key themes in the life of this exciting Bible character.

**GOING THE NEXT STEP: DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL MATURITY** - It should be the goal of every believer to grow more like Jesus Christ and develop and mature in our faith. This class will focus on several spiritual disciplines or habits every Christian needs to develop in this process of spiritual maturity.

**WOMEN SET FREE: A STUDY OF WOMEN IN THE GOSPELS** - In a culture where they were often treated as second-class citizens, Jesus welcomed women into his kingdom. We will study Mary and Martha, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery and more as we look both at the role of women in the ministry of Jesus and in the church today.

**OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY** - This course will be a general introduction to the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures). Attention will be given to the content, outline, and general theme of each Old Testament book. Theological implications of each book will also be considered. This is a two-part class. Plan to take both parts.

**THE SPREADING FLAME: STUDIES IN ACTS** - This course will look at the birth of the Church, and its growth and expansion from a small group in Jerusalem to a world changing faith. The major themes and personalities of the early church will be noted, and practical applications will be made.

**CREATED IN HIS LIKENESS** - We have been uniquely created by God in His image, which gives each of us incredible value, purpose, and dignity. Understanding this important concept helps us to know how to live out our identity in Christ, and how to honor God through our actions, relationships, and choices.



# INSTRUCTORS

**Craig Alan Myers** – Ordained minister...serving as pastor in the Blue River Covenant Brethren Church in Indiana...assistant editor of BRF WITNESS...BRF chairman...on the executive board of CBC...M. Div. from Ashland Theological Seminary.

**Eric Brubaker** – Ordained minister...serving in the Middle Creek Church...editor of BRF WITNESS...self-employed draftsman...M. Div. from Evangelical School of Theology.

**Carl Brubaker** – Ordained minister in the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren...BRF treasurer...BMF treasurer...evangelist for revival meetings.

**Wilmer Horst** – Ordained minister...member at Hade's Brethren Church...high school teacher at Maranatha Christian School.

**John Minnich** – Post-High Sunday School teacher at White Oak Church...retreat leader and speaker...a technologist in the Cardiology Department at Lancaster General Hospital.

**Steve Hershey** – teacher, speaker, mentor, storyteller at White Oak Church...field services specialist for Lancaster DHA...dairy farmer.

## Principal/Coordinator

**Kenneth Leininger** – Ordained minister in the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren...antiquarian book dealer...BRF event coordinator.

# JULY 21-25, 2025

## BRETHREN BIBLE INSTITUTE COURSES

8:50 - 10:20

BRETHREN LIFE AND THOUGHT PT 1 ..... (Myers)  
THE BOOK OF ROMANS..... (Horst)  
STUDY OF DAVID..... (Minnich)

10:30 - 12:00

BRETHREN LIFE AND THOUGHT PT. 2..... (Myers)  
DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL MATURITY..(Carl Brubaker)  
WOMEN IN THE GOSPELS..... (Hershey)

1:30 - 3:00

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY PT 1 .....(Eric Brubaker)  
STUDIES IN ACTS..... (Myers)  
CREATED IN HIS LIKENESS..... (Horst)

3:00 - 4:30

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY PT. 2 .....(Eric Brubaker)

## COST

Dormitory Students.....\$300.00  
Commuting Students..... \$125.00

## TO REGISTER

For application forms, write to:  
**Brethren Bible Institute**  
155 Denver Road, Denver, PA 17517  
Please send for an application form early.  
Your application process must be completed by June 25, 2025.

## BRETHREN BIBLE INSTITUTE

BBI is intended to provide systematic instruction in the Bible for any person 16 years of age or older. Students may take one, two, or three courses. The cost is the same regardless of how many courses are taken. It is expected that dorm students take at least three classes, unless special arrangements have been made with the principal prior to the opening of the institute. Students will meet for chapel each morning at 8:10 AM with classes to follow. Classes meet every day, Monday through Friday. Each class is 1 ½ hours in length.

Total cost for dormitory students (including room/board/tuition) is \$300.00 for the week. The cost for commuting students is \$125.00.

## SCHOLARSHIP AID

Scholarship aid is available to students who cannot afford the tuition. To apply for the scholarship aid you should write a letter requesting the aid, and supply the name, address, and phone number of your pastor, elder, minister, or other church leader to whom you are accountable. Send requests to the BBI address.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

A certificate of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be offered for ordained ministers at a rate of one tenth of a CEU for each hour spent in class. Therefore, each completed course will count as .75 CEU. Ministers should request the certificate when they register.

## LICENSED MINISTER TRAINING

The Brethren Life and Thought class and the Old Testament Survey class can be applied toward licensed ministers training for ordination within the Church of the Brethren. Both classes are double periods. Plan to attend both periods. Call Kenneth Leininger at 717-336-1287 for details.

## DISCLAIMER

BBI is sponsored by the Brethren Revival Fellowship. Elizabethtown College is not affiliated with and does not necessarily endorse the opinions, beliefs, statements, writings, methods, or philosophies expressed by this conference/event or its individual participants.

## In the Shadow Theological Questions

Teaching theology and pastoral studies in Africa has been a special challenge for me. At least part of this stems from the simple reason that I don't have much teaching experience. As a pastor of nearly 40 years, I have preached weekly (hopefully not weakly) and taught hundreds, if not thousands, of Bible studies and lessons to a wide range of people. But daily instruction in an institution of higher learning has not been on my resume. I'm finding that such teaching requires an entirely different set of disciplines: lesson plans, examinations, etc.

On top of this shift of emphasis is the challenge of teaching to a language and a culture far removed from my own. I must rely on translators to convey my thoughts to the students. Sometimes theological concepts are transmitted well. At other times, I can see by the facial expressions of my translator or my students that the process is not going well.

Cultural differences bring what I will euphemistically call "unique opportunities for reflection." I like to think that as an American Christian, I've had a fairly broad exposure to theology across the spectrum, from main-line Protestantism to KJV-only fundamentalism. Yet, teaching in Africa has taught me how little I actually know. Or, to state it more positively, I've realized how much there is for me to learn.

Until only recently, I had spent my entire life in small rural churches. The little congregation that I served as pastor for 35 years is tucked away in the mountains of central Pennsylvania. Since most of the members came from non-Brethren backgrounds, they were not sectarian and were quite accepting of the other churches and denominations in the community, all of which fit into the range mentioned above. They all do though, lean towards the right theologically, socially and politically. Now that I think about it, maybe my exposure hasn't been as broad as I thought...

This has encouraged me to do a lot of reading, which has opened my eyes to how contextual theology is. When Christianity was brought to East/West/South Africa (it had been in North Africa since the first century), it came by American and European missionaries. The Christian faith was viewed by the locals as the white man's religion. It took many decades for the development of culturally relevant and contextual forms. As believers across Africa (similarly in Asia and Latin America) began reading and applying the Bible for themselves, they developed their own worship styles, hymnody, and in some cases, theology. The late Ghanaian theologian Kwame Bediako wrote that the greatest thing that the missionaries did for developing churches was to translate the Bible into their local languages.

But, these developments bring a whole new dynamic to the global church, especially in our day of instant communication. Concerns arise when developing theologies move away from orthodoxy. Practices from traditional religions such as animism and the occult are sometimes woven into the Christian faith. The Roman Catholic Church has been criticized for centuries for allowing syncretism. It might be argued that the farther away a congregation is from the home church the more possibility there is for doctrinal compromise or error. All too often though, the American church, including evangelicals, have had a really high view of themselves, with an ethnocentrism that has convinced us that our version of the faith is the purely distilled one, without seeing the ways



## IN THE SHADOW, CONTINUED....

**Faithful New Expressions** So, I have a few questions: Am I viewing culture through the lens of Scripture or am I reading Scripture with my cultural eyes? Is the development of theology a cut and dried science where one studies the Scriptures, understands its meaning and moves forward with the application as an essentially once and done process? If indeed that is the case, we need only to take what we know in one culture or society and pass it on to the next. But the biblical authors, inspired as they were by the Holy Spirit, nevertheless wrote using metaphors, symbolism and phraseology that were quite unique and contextual within their respective cultures. For my part, as a farmer, I have always appreciated Jesus' use of agriculture based stories and parables. But does our European, reformation-based, enlightenment era mindset hold an edge over thinking patterns from the global south? Could we be missing significant insights for understanding and appreciating God and the Gospel if we ignore them?

The last thing I want to do is to lose the basic doctrinal and theological principles that are the unchanging truths of Scripture. But I believe that we can give emerging churches some space as they grapple with the issues of biblical interpretation. I believe as well that God is far bigger and the well of Scripture far deeper than all of our cultures put together, let alone making the claim that any one of us are the sole proprietor of knowledge and wisdom. I've been very impressed as I've walked among African church groups identifying with us (Brethren) at their desire to be faithful to the Bible. Missiologist Paul Hiebert writes, "Churches in different cultures can help us to understand the many-sided wisdom of God, thereby serving as channels for understanding different facets of divine revelation, truths that a theology tied to one particular culture can easily overlook."

I recently returned from a week of visiting with the Church of the Brethren in Burundi. They began, by their own initiative, in 2015. From one congregation at the time, they now have 50. Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has only been during the past three years that we have had any connection with them. We have since then been offering some support, but it has been minimal, relative to the size of their denomination. They have done, with God's help, an incredible work. They began their own pastoral training program back in 2016. It might not be quite up to the standards of expectation for a US based church, but the pastors have been serving very effectively and are incredibly loyal.



This is not to suggest that the Burundi Brethren and the other emerging Brethren bodies in Africa haven't and won't make mistakes - theologically, ecclesiastically or otherwise. But they are teachable and are eager to learn "how we do it." At the same time, we shouldn't expect them to neatly fit into our little box. We have much to learn from each other!

For the Master, Chris Elliott with the Church of the Brethren Burundi.

Hiebert, Paul G. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 1986. Baker Academic. 2